



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
MANUAL OF SECURITY  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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## **Chapter 9 - Personnel Security Policies**

### **901 Purpose**

The Manual of Security Policies and Procedures ("Security Manual") implements the policies and procedures that govern the management and administration of the security programs in the Department of Commerce. Section II of the Security Manual prescribes the policies, procedures, and standards that govern the granting of eligibility for access to national security information; the procedures required to process security and suitability investigations; the adjudication criteria for determining eligibility for access to national security information; the conditions that may result in the suspension, revocation, downgrade, or denial of an individual's eligibility for access to classified national security information; and the requirements for allowing an individual access to special classified programs.

### **902 Application**

**A.** Security and suitability investigations provide an assessment of an individual's potential likelihood to promote the efficiency and integrity of the Department's operations when filling a particular position. The investigations are also used to determine if employment or retention in employment is consistent with the national security. The Personnel Security Program ensures that all personnel working within the Department are suitable for employment and are trustworthy.

**B.** The policies, procedures, and standards prescribed in this section apply to the employment of employees and applicants in the Department as well as contractors, guest researchers, committee members, students and trainees, and other persons designated by the Secretary of Commerce to have access to classified information. In addition, senior managers, supervisors, and employees are responsible for familiarization and compliance with all personnel security regulations and procedures at their installations.

**C.** Questions concerning personnel security policies should be referred to the servicing security officer for review by the Director for Security. The Director for Security shall provide the Department's interpretation of security policy or procedures and, as necessary, provide written guidance to heads of operating units or departmental offices. Policy or procedural questions concerning suitability should be referred to the servicing human resources management office.



## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE MANUAL OF SECURITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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### **903 Personnel Security Policies**

Policies pertaining to the Department's personnel security program are listed below.

**A.** The Department of Commerce will employ and retain in employment only those persons whose activities, associations, and backgrounds are consistent with the national interests, principles, and practices of the United States.

**B.** The use of the suspension and removal procedures authorized by 5 U.S.C. § 7532 shall be limited to cases in which the interests of the national security are involved. Maximum use of normal civil service suspension and removal procedures shall be utilized where, in the judgment of the General Counsel, such procedures are adequate and appropriate to support and promote proper security practices and to achieve the highest level of protection for national security information.

**C.** Individuals with access to classified and sensitive information are subject to the provisions of all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures of the Security Manual to protect and safeguard such information from unauthorized disclosure. Individuals shall not disclose classified or sensitive information to any employee, to his/her counsel or representative, or to any other person not clearly authorized to have such information. Such a disclosure would compromise investigative sources or methods or the identity of confidential informants.

**D.** The Director for Security shall review adverse information relevant to an individual's access to classified information and may suspend, deny, revoke, downgrade, or restrict the level of an individual's access to national security information in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Security Manual.

**E.** Individuals will be appointed to a position in the Department of Commerce only in accordance with the investigative requirements for suitability under the Department of Commerce Handbook for Suitability and the investigative requirements for access to classified national security information provided in the Department of Commerce Security Manual.

**F.** Citizens of foreign countries normally are denied employment with the Federal Government, but can be employed under special provisions. Legal aliens, who meet requirements set by the Office of Personnel Management and who are proposed for affiliation with the Department, will undergo an appropriate background investigation.

**G.** Nominees for membership on departmental advisory committees who require access to classified



## **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE MANUAL OF SECURITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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information must undergo an appropriate background investigation.

**H.** The Director for Security has the authority to grant eligibility for access to classified information for non-employees associated with the Department such as research associates, guest workers, and trainees.

**I.** Work assignments or visits of foreign nationals that involve access to restricted areas or to classified or other sensitive materials are discouraged. Access to national security information by a foreign national may be granted with sufficient justification, an appropriate background investigation, and review of the intended area of assignment or working area.

**J.** Individuals must inform the Director for Security directly, or through the appropriate security contact or servicing security officer, of any information that indicates the retention of any officer or employee of the Department is not consistent with the interests of national security. After a thorough review of all pertinent information, the individual's eligibility for access to national security information may be suspended by the Office of Security pending an investigation and review of the issues. After the appropriate investigation is completed, the individual's eligibility for access to national security information may be reinstated or revoked based on applicable laws, Executive Orders, and Federal regulations pertaining to national security.