

Personnel Security Investigation
Policy On Electronic Questionnaire For Investigative Processing (e-QIP)
U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Security

Introduction

H.R. 2458, the "E-Government Act of 2002," legislation builds upon the current E-Government initiative and assists in expanding the use of the Internet and computer resources in order to deliver Government services, for a citizen-centered, results-oriented, and market-based Government. A major element of the "e-Government" initiative is the electronic Security Clearance (e-Clearance) Initiative.

The e-Clearance Initiative will implement three new components to improve the current security clearance process. The Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP) is an automated online version of the security clearance application (SF-86). With e-QIP, certain current work processes will change from a paper-based environment to an electronic environment. All other investigative forms, SF-85 and SF-85P will soon be added to e-QIP. The second component of the e-Clearance initiative is development and implementation of a cross-agency Clearance Verification System (CVS). The CVS initiative captures the concept of providing access for all Agencies authorized users to the personnel security investigation and clearance records of the government. The third component of e-Clearance is to image investigative records held by the myriad investigative agencies and make them available, among all authorized federal users, electronically. By doing so, e-Clearance will facilitate the exchange of previous investigative results thereby maximizing cost avoidance by eliminating redundancy.

The new electronic forms will eliminate the need to re-enter information that has not changed since a person's last clearance. E-QIP will save the government and private industry time and resources, and it will save the taxpayers about \$260 million over 10 years.

Purpose

Consistent with E.O. 10450, Security Requirements for Government Employment and E.O. 12968, Access to Classified Information, the intent of this policy is to institute within the Department of Commerce the requirement for using e-QIP to complete all requests for personnel security and suitability investigations actions:

Policy

All personnel affiliated with the Department of Commerce, to include employees, applicants for employment, official committee members, consultants, contractors, etc., who require an investigation for employment, access to Department facilities, or access to

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National Security information are required to complete the necessary security forms. This will be accomplished via the e-QIP program. Once implemented, the Department will no longer accept paper copies of the security application paperwork. The only exception will be the release forms required to allow investigators access to credit, medical, or other Privacy Act information.

In September 2004, in support of OPM's e-Clearance initiative, the Department of Commerce will institute the use of e-QIP for all employees requiring periodic reinvestigations (conducted five years or 10 years after their last clearance), depending on clearance level or risk designation. All employees requiring a periodic reinvestigation will receive an e-mail notification with appropriate links to help them complete their security forms on-line at the OPM website. Because the electronically submitted forms will be resident on OPM's database, subsequent submissions for periodic investigations will only require employees to provide updated information. In FY05, this process will be expanded to include all requests for security and suitability investigations. The implementation of e-QIP within the Department does not change any previously agreed to procedures for suitability and security processing currently in place between OSY/OHR. The only change is the transition from paper to e-QIP.

**Initial Investigation -Applicants/Contractors/Consultants/Interns, etc:
(Suitability only)**

The Servicing Office of Human Resources (OHR) will notify applicants, that they must submit the required security paperwork (SF-85, SF-85P or SF-86) utilizing e-QIP. The servicing OHR will initiate the applicant in e-QIP and notify them that they have 10 days to go on line, complete the appropriate electronic forms, and submit the signed releases for credit, medical, etc., to the servicing OHR.

In addition, applicants must have their fingerprints taken and submitted to OPM. Fingerprints may be taken electronically through the "Live Scan" system being used by Department Security Officers. The results of the fingerprint check completed through the "Live Scan" system will be scanned into an electronic format and submitted as attachments to the security file.

**Initial Investigation – Applicants/Contractors/Consultants/Interns, etc:
(Access to National Security Information, with or without suitability)**

The servicing OHR or servicing Security Office, as appropriate will notify applicants, that they must submit the required SF-86 utilizing e-QIP. The servicing OHR or Security Office, as appropriate, will initiate the applicant in e-QIP and notify them that they have 10 days to go on line, complete the appropriate electronic forms, and submit the signed releases for credit, medical, etc., to the initiating Office. Applicants must have their fingerprints taken and submitted (or if via "Live Scan" the results of the fingerprint check) to OPM with the signed releases. "Live Scan" results will be scanned into an electronic format and submitted as an attachment to the security file.

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Periodic Reinvestigations – all cases (Security Clearance and high risk positions)

Current employees, contractors, consultants, etc., will be notified by their servicing Security Office to submit the required security paperwork (SF-85P or SF-86 as appropriate) utilizing e-QIP. The servicing Security Office will initiate the applicant in e-QIP and notify them that they have 30 days to go on line, complete the appropriate electronic forms, and submit the signed releases for credit, medical, etc., to the servicing Security Office. Employees must have their fingerprints taken and submitted (or if via “Live Scan” the results of the fingerprint check) to OPM with the signed releases. “Live Scan” results can be scanned into an electronic format and submitted as an attachment to the security file.

Individuals requiring a periodic reinvestigation are required to complete the forms within 30 days of notification. Failure to complete the security questionnaire may result in an individual’s access to classified information being suspended until the security questionnaire is completed.

Further details concerning e-Clearance initiatives and e-QIP implementation can be found at: <http://www.opm.gov/e-qip/>.

Additional Information on the e-QIP process within the Department of Commerce may be obtained by visiting the Office of Security website at: www.osec.doc.gov/osy.

Questions concerning e-QIP at the Department of Commerce can be addressed to Linda Guier, Personnel Security Program Manager, CE Division, at 202-482-8115.

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