

FEDERAL SECURITY/SUITABILITY CLEARANCE CHART

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What does this chart say?

This chart identifies the sensitivity levels applied to all federal jobs and most federal contractor jobs. It shows the related application forms, investigations, security/suitability clearance determinations, and reinvestigations. Some jobs are designated as both Public Trust and National Security positions. When this occurs the Public Trust consideration for the job will demand a more thorough security investigation than is required for National Security Clearance at the Confidential or Secret levels.

SENSITIVITY LEVEL ¹	CATEGORY	APPLICATION FORM	TYPE OF INITIAL INVESTIGATION	SECURITY/SUITABILITY CLEARANCE DETERMINATION	REINVESTIGATION
Level 1	Non-Sensitive	SF85	None, NAC, or NACI ²	None, HSPD-12 PIV Card	None, every 5 years for PIV Card
Level 2	National Security Non-Critical Sensitive	SF86	NACLC or ANACI ³	Secret ⁴ or DOE "L" ⁵	NACLC every 10 years
Level 3	National Security Critical Sensitive	SF86	SSBI	Top Secret	SSBI-PR every 5 years
Level 4	National Security Special Sensitive	SF86	SSBI ⁶	Top Secret w/SCI eligibility or DOE "Q"	SSBI-PR or PPR ⁷ every 5 years
Level 5	Public Trust ⁸	SF85P ⁹	NACI + Credit	Moderate Risk (for contractors only)	NAC+Credit (recommended) ¹⁰
Level 5	Public Trust	SF85P	MBI or LBI	Moderate Risk	NAC+Credit (recommended)
Level 5	National Security & Public Trust	SF86	MBI or LBI ¹¹	Secret & Moderate Risk	NACLC every 10 years
Level 6	Public Trust	SF85P	LBI or BI	High Risk	PRI (recommended)
Level 6	Public Trust	SF85P-S	LBI or BI	High Risk involving designated duties ¹²	PRI (recommended)
Level 6	National Security & Public Trust	SF86	LBI or BI	Secret & High Risk	PRI or NACLC

Footnotes:

- Degree of sensitivity is not related to the numerical values of Sensitivity Levels. For example Sensitivity Level 4 is more sensitive than Sensitivity Level 6 and more sensitive than Sensitivity Level 2.
- NACI is the minimum investigation required for federal employment. Generally there is no requirement for any investigation for contractor non-sensitive positions; however, if a "Personal Identity Verification" Card is required under Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 12, an NACI may be required for contractor non-sensitive positions.
- ANACI investigation is a combination of a NACI and NACLC and is only used for federal employment applicants.
- Applicants requiring on a Confidential clearance are subject to the same requirements as a Secret clearance, but their reinvestigation need only be conducted once every 15 years.
- DOE uses the term "Access Authorization" rather than "Security Clearance."
- Some designated Sensitivity Level 4 positions require a polygraph examination.
- PPR (Phased Periodic Reinvestigation) may be requested as an alternative to the SSBI-PR, when no information of security/suitability concern is listed on the applicant's SF86.
- Code of Federal Regulations only requires appropriate federal "competitive service" positions to be designate Public Trust positions; however OPM recommends that equivalent federal excepted service and contractor positions also be similarly designated and subject to appropriate investigations. Most federal agencies follow OPM's recommendation.
- Applicants granted a Public Trust position based on an SF85P or SF85P-S are not eligible for a Confidential or Secret clearance regardless of the investigation conducted.
- Except for designated IT positions, reinvestigations for Public Trust positions are not required by federal regulation; however, regulation regarding reinvestigations of personnel in federal "competitive service" positions is currently being revised. Government agencies that require reinvestigations for Public Trust positions based on internal policy generally specify 5-year intervals for reinvestigation.
- MBI, LBI, and BI are necessary because the investigative requirements for the Public Trust duties are greater than the scope of an NACLC for a Secret clearance.
- Designated duties include those involving public safety and fiduciary responsibilities.

DESCRIPTION OF INVESTIGATIONS

NAC (National Agency Check)—A review of the records of the FBI-HQ (name check), FBI-ID (fingerprint check), SII (OPM's Security and Investigations Index), & DCII (Defense Clearance and Investigative Index), and records of other federal agencies, as appropriate, plus an Interpol records checks on all non-military personnel who resided outside the U.S. for six months or more within the past five to ten years (depending on the type of investigation) or when there is information indicating they may have engaged in criminal activity overseas.

NACI (National Agency Check and Inquiries)—NAC plus written inquiries to current and past employers, schools, references, and local law enforcement agencies covering the past five years and if applicable, of the appropriate agency for any identified arrests. All DoD NACIs include a credit search.

CREDIT SEARCH—Verification of Subject's financial status through a search of all three major credit bureaus covering all locations where the subject has resided, been employed, or attended school for six months or more for the past seven years.

NACLC (National Agency Check with Local Agency Check and Credit)—NAC plus credit search and checks at local law enforcement agencies where the subject has lived, worked, and/or attended school within the last 5 years, and if applicable, of the appropriate agency for any identified arrests.

ANACI (Access National Agency Check and Inquiries)—NACLC plus written inquiries to current and past employers, schools, and references covering past 5 years.

MBI (Minimum Background Investigation)—NACLC plus a Personal Subject Interview (PRSI) and written inquiries to employers, schools, and references for past 5 years.

LB (Limited Background Investigation)—NACLC plus PRSI; interviews at employment, schools, and residences for past 3 years; and review of any court actions for past 3 years.

BI (Background Investigation)—NACLC plus a PRSI; interviews at employment, schools, and residences for the past 5 years; and review of any court actions for past 5 years.

PRI (Periodic Reinvestigation)—NACLC plus PRSI and written inquiries to references.

SSBI (Single Scope Background Investigation)—NAC plus credit search; PRSI; NAC on spouse or cohabitant; interviews at employment for past 7 years; interviews at schools and residences covering the past three years; review of any court actions covering the past 10 years; interview of any former spouse divorced within the past 10 years, interview of 4 social references who collectively cover at least the past 7 years; checks at local law enforcement agencies where the subject lived, worked, and/or attended school within the last 10 years, and if applicable, of the appropriate agency for any identified arrests; verification of citizenship or legal status of all foreign-born immediate family members and cohabitant.

SSBI-PR (SSBI Period Reinvestigation)—NACLC plus PRSI; NAC on new spouse or cohabitant; employment and reference interviews covering past 5 years; interview of neighbors at current residence; review of any court actions covering the past 5 years; and a check of the Department of Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) database.

PPR (Phased Period Reinvestigation)—NACLC plus PRSI; NAC on new spouse or cohabitant; employment interviews covering past five years; review of any court actions covering the past five years; and a check of the Department of Treasury's Financial Data Base.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

1. Security clearances issued to state and local officials by the FBI are based on the same National Investigative Standards as all other federal security clearances and enjoy the same degree of reciprocity among federal agencies.
2. Within DOE, holders of "L" clearances are not authorized access to Secret Restricted Data. However, holders of Secret clearances granted by other federal agencies may have access to Secret Restricted Data made available to those other federal agencies by DOE.
3. As indicated in footnote #9 to the chart (above), security clearances can not be granted to applicants previously accepted for Public Trust positions whose investigations were based on an SF85P or SF85P-S. Their chances of getting a Secret security clearance are similar to the chances of an applicants who previously had a security clearance, but who are now ineligible to have their clearances reinstated because of time limitations associated with a "break in service" or the date of their last investigation/reinvestigation.
4. Holding a Moderate or High Risk Public Trust position based on an SF85P or SF85P-S, may make an applicant eligible for an interim Top Secret clearance prior to the completion of the NAC portion of the SSBI. Normally an interim Top Secret clearance can not be granted without the favorable completion of basic NAC components.
5. There are two other seldom used investigations available for High Risk Public Trust positions. They are the PT-SBI (Public Trust-Special Background Investigation) and the PRIR (Periodic Reinvestigation and Residence Coverage). Basically the PTSBI is a little more comprehensive than the BI and the PRIR adds residence coverage to a PRI.
6. Investigative requirements for contractors in non-sensitive and public trust positions vary depending on the government agency involved. Some agencies may require no investigation for a contractor in a non-sensitive position. Others may require a basic NAC or a NACI. Investigations for Moderate Risk positions vary from NACI plus Credit to LBI and for High Risk positions from LBI to BI. At some agencies the type of investigation required for the same position differs for U.S. citizens and non-citizens.