

Explanation of Instructions for Completing Standard Form 86 (SF86) Questionnaire for National Security Positions

Blocks 1 – 7 of Standard Form 86 requests information that **helps identify you**.

Questions include your Full Name, your Date of Birth, your Place of Birth, Social Security Number, Other Names Used (e.g., maiden name, name(s) by a former marriage, alias(es) or nicknames), Mother's Maiden Name, your Identifying Information (height, weight, hair color, eye color, gender), and Telephone Number(s).

Block 8 requests **your contact information** (home and work e-mail addresses, home, work and mobile telephone numbers).

Block 9 asks for information about your **citizenship**.

Block 9 determines whether you are a U.S. Citizen or national by birth in the U.S. or U.S. territory/commonwealth; a U.S. citizen or national by birth, born outside the U.S.; a naturalized U.S. citizen. Documentation for these various categories is required (e.g., U.S. Passport, Citizenship Certificate, Naturalization Certificate, etc.) and, if applicable, your Immigration Status.

The fourth section (Block 10) asks for information about **multiple citizenship**.

Block 11 asks **where you have lived**, beginning with your present residence (#1) and working back 7 years [if a Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI) you are asked to go back 10 years].

Residences for the entire 7 year period must be accounted for without breaks. Indicate the actual physical location of your residence (a post office box is not allowed) and be as specific as possible (e.g., do not list only your base or ship; list your barracks number or home port). Include the Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code.

For any address in the last 3 years, list a person who knew you at that address and who preferably still lives in that area. Do **not** list people for residences completely outside this 3-year period, and do **not** list your spouse, former spouse, or other relatives. Do **not** list residences before your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum of 2 years of residence history.

Block 12 asks you to list the **schools you have attended** beginning with the most recent (#1) and working back 7 years (if an SSBI go back 10 years).

You are asked to list all College or University degrees and the dates they were received. If your most recent degree or diploma was received **more than 7 years ago (10 years for an SSBI)**, list it below no matter when it was received.

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Block 13 asks you to list **all of your employment & unemployment information**, beginning with the present (#1) and working back **7 years (if an SSBI go back 10 years)**.

You should list all full-time work, part-time work, paid or unpaid, consulting/contracting work, all military service duty locations, temporary military duty locations (TDY) over 90 days, self-employment, other paid work, and all periods of unemployment.

The entire period must be accounted for without breaks. You should **not** list employments that occurred before your 18th birthday unless it is necessary for providing a minimum of 2 years of employment history. Use a continuation sheet (SF 86A) if you require additional space.

Part 13(A) asks you to list details of your employment (e.g., Dates, Type of Employment (including your position title/Military rank), the Employers/Verifier's Name, Address and Phone number, the Physical Location of your work and Phone Number at that location, your Supervisor, etc.)

Part 13(B) asks you to provide information about Former Federal Service, excluding Military Service, **NOT** Indicated in Part (A).

Part 13(C) asks about your employment record. If over the last **7 years** you have been fired from a job, quit a job after being told you'd be fired, or left a job under unfavorable circumstances, you will be asked to provide the specific date of the action, the reason, the employer's name and address.

Part 13(C) also asks whether you received a written warning, been officially reprimanded, suspended, or disciplined for misconduct in the workplace or for violating a security rule or policy. If you answered "yes" to these questions, you will be asked to provide the Name(s), Date(s) of Incident(s), Month/Day/Year of Official Action(s), Location(s), or Facility(ies) of Incident(s) and the Nature of the Violation(s).

Block 14 asks about your **selective service record**.

If you are a male born after December 31, 1959, you will be asked whether you have registered with the Selective Service System. If you answer "yes," you will be asked to provide your Registration Number; if you answer "no," you will be asked to show the reason for not registering.

Block 15 asks for your **military history**.

This section asks: whether you **EVER** served in the U.S. military or the U.S. Merchant Marine; whether you **EVER** served in a foreign country's military, security forces, merchant marine, militia, or other defense forces; whether you **EVER** received a discharge that was not honorable.

Block 15 continues with questions to determine whether, in the last **7 years (if an SSBI go back 10 years)** you have been subject to court martial or other disciplinary proceedings under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. If you answer "yes," you will be asked for details about the action(s).

You are also asked to list your Branch of Service, Periods of Service, your Service Number, whether you were an Officer or Enlisted, your Status (active, active reserve, etc.) and Country. You will also be asked to provide the Type of Discharge (Honorable, Dishonorable, etc.).

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Block 16 asks you to **list three people who know you well.**

These people should live in the United States and should be good friends, peers, colleagues, college roommates, etc., whose combined association with you covers as well as possible the last **7 years (if an SSBI go back 10 years)**. You should **not** list your spouse, former spouses, or other relatives, or anyone listed elsewhere on this form.

Block 17 asks for your **marital status.**

Part 17(A) Current Spouse. If you are currently married, you will be asked your Spouse's Full Name, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Social Security Number, Other Names Used (specify maiden name, names by other marriages, etc., and show dates used for each name), Country of Citizenship, Date Married, Place Married. **If separated**, you will be asked to provide the Date of Separation; and if legally separated, where the Record of Separation is located. You will also be asked to provide the Address of the Current Spouse. **If your spouse was born outside the U.S.**, you will be asked to indicate one type of documentation that he/she possesses (e.g., U.S. Passport, Citizenship Certificate, Alien Registration, etc.) along with the document number(s).

Part 17(B) Former Spouse(s). This part asks you to provide information about your Former Spouse(s), including Full Name, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Date Married, Place Married (City, include Country if outside the U.S.), whether you were Divorced/Widowed/Annulled and the Corresponding Date. If divorced or annulled, provide the Location of the Record (City, Country, State, ZIP Code). You will also be asked for the Last Known Address and Telephone Number of the Former Spouse.

Part 17(C) Cohabitant. Cohabitant is defined as "a person with whom you share bonds of affection, obligation, or other commitment, as opposed to a person with whom you live for reasons of convenience (i.e., a roommate)."

If applicable, provide the Cohabitant's Full Name, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Social Security Number, Other Names Used (include maiden names, names by other marriages, and show dates used for each name), Country(ies) of Citizenship. If the cohabitant was born outside the U.S., indicate one Type of Documentation that he or she possesses and the Document Number.

Block 18 asks you to **identify your relatives** and to include their Full Name, Whether Deceased, Date of Birth, Country of Birth, Country(ies) of Citizenship, Current Address, [Street, City and State (and Country if outside the U.S.)].

If the relative was born outside the U.S. you are asked to indicate one type of documentation he or she possesses (e.g. FS 240 or 545, DS 1350, Citizenship Certificate, Naturalization Certificate, U.S. Passport, etc.) and the document number.

Block 19 asks about your **foreign contacts**, specifically, whether you have or had close and/or continuing contact with foreign nationals within the last **7 years** with whom you, your spouse, or your cohabitant are bound by affection, influence, and/or obligation.

Include associates, as well as relatives, not already listed in Block 18. (A foreign national is defined as any person who is not a citizen or national of the U.S.).

In this section you are asked to provide the contact's Full Name, Dates Known, Countries of citizenship, Country of Residence, Nature of Relationship (business, personal, other (with explanation), the Type of Contact (e.g., telephone, in person, written correspondence, electronic correspondence, other (with explanation)).

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Block 20 asks about your **foreign activities** over the last 7 years.

Part 20(A) asks about **your foreign financial interests**. Answers to the questions in Part A are **not limited to a time period** and should include stocks, personal property, company shares, investments, or ownership of corporate entities. You should exclude U.S.-based fund managers and accounts managed through your employer.

Part 20(B) inquires about **your foreign business, professional activities, and foreign government contacts**. The answers to questions in this section should indicate whether the activity was on U.S. Government business.

Part 20(C) asks about **foreign countries you have visited in the last 7 years (10 years for an SSBI)**. You will be asked to indicate the purpose of your visit (e.g., Business/Professional Conference, Tourism, etc), as well as the time frame of your visit (Month/Year to Month/Year), Number of Days and Name of the Country.

Block 21 asks about **your mental & emotional health records**.

In the last **7 years (10 years for an SSB)** years, if you have consulted with a mental health professional regarding an emotional or mental health condition or you were hospitalized for such a condition, you are asked to provide the name and address of the therapist or doctor. You do **not** have to answer “yes” if you were only involved in marital, grief, or family counseling not related to violence by you or strictly related to adjustments from service in a military combat environment.

Block 22 asks about your **police record**.

Questions in this section ask whether **in the last 10 years** you have been issued a summons, citation or ticket to appear in court in a criminal proceeding against you or whether you are on trial or awaiting a trial on criminal charges, or are you currently awaiting sentencing for a criminal offense.

Other questions ask about **any** arrest record, whether you have **EVER** been charged for a Felony, firearms or explosives offense(s); or **EVER** charged with any offense(s) related to alcohol or drugs. If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, you are asked to explain your answer(s). You will not need to report convictions under the Federal Controlled Substances Act for which the court issued an expungement order under certain circumstances.

Block 23 pertains to **illegal use of drugs or drug activity**.

Questions in this section include: whether **in the last 7 years** you have illegally used a controlled substance; whether you **EVER** illegally used a controlled substance while possessing a security clearance or while employed as a law enforcement officer, prosecutor, or courtroom official; or while in a position directly and immediately affecting the public safety.

You will also be asked whether **in the last 7 years** you have been involved in other illegal activities relating to controlled substances.

You will also be asked whether you received counseling or treatment or been ordered, advised, or asked to seek counseling or treatment as a result of your use of drugs.

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Block 24 inquires about your **use of alcohol** over the last 10 years.

This section focuses on whether your use of alcohol had a negative impact on your work performance, your personal or professional relationships, your finances, or resulted in an intervention by law enforcement/public safety personnel; whether you have been ordered or advised to seek counseling or treatment as a result of your use of alcohol; whether you have received counseling or treatment as a result of your use of alcohol.

Block 25 pertains to your **investigations & clearance record** (i.e., whether the U.S. Government ever investigated your background and/or granted you a security clearance.)

Part (a) provides space to identify the investigating agency and the Month/Year of the investigation;

Part (b) asks whether you ever had a clearance or access authorization denied, suspended, or revoked, or whether you ever have been debarred from government employment. If you answer “yes” in this section, you will be asked to provide the Date of the Action as well as the Name of the Department or Agency taking the action.

Block 26 asks questions about your **financial record**. You are asked to disclose **all** financial obligations, **going back 10 years**, including those for which you are a co-signer.

Questions cover bankruptcy, foreclosure, taxes and tax liens, judgments, loan defaults, credit card suspensions/charge offs/cancellations, evictions, delinquent alimony or child support payments, garnishment of wages/benefits/assets, debt delinquencies, and financial problems due to gambling.

Block 27 requests information about your **use of information technology systems** over the **last 10 years**.

In this section, you are asked: whether you have illegally or without proper authorization entered into any information technology system; whether you have illegally or without proper authorization modified, destroyed, manipulated, or denied others access to information residing in an information technology system; and, whether you have introduced, removed, or used hardware, software, media in connection with any information technology system without authorization, when specifically prohibited by rules, guidelines, or regulations?

Space is provided to describe the date of the incident, the nature of the incident/offense, the location of the incident, and the action taken.

Block 28 asks about any **non-criminal court actions** in which you may have been involved in the last 10 years.

If you have been a party to any public record civil court action(s) not listed elsewhere on this form, you are asked to provide information about each action, including the Date, Nature of the Action, Result of the Action, Name of the Principal Parties involved, and Court information (Court Name and Address).

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Block 29 pertains to your **association record**.

Questions in this section ask whether you have **EVER** associated with, been a member in, or contributed to an organization: dedicated to terrorism; dedicated to the use of violence or force to overthrow the U.S. Government; that unlawfully advocates or practices the commission of acts of force or violence to discourage others from exercising their rights under the U.S. Constitution or any State of the U.S. with the specific intent to further such unlawful activities.

You are also asked whether you have **EVER**: advocated any acts of terrorism or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; **EVER** knowingly engaged in any activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; **EVER** engaged in any acts of terrorism; **EVER** participated in militias (not including official state government militias) or paramilitary groups?

At the bottom of this form, you will be asked for your signature and date to certify that your answers are “true, complete, and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.”

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Purpose of Form SF 86

- This form is used in conducting background investigations and reinvestigations of persons under consideration for or retention in national security positions as defined in 5 CFR 732 and for positions requiring access to classified information under Executive Order 12968.
- Any information that you provide is evaluated on the basis of its recency, seriousness, relevance to the position and duties, and consistency with all other information about you.
- Withholding, misrepresenting, or falsifying information will have an impact on a security clearance, employment prospects, or job status, up to and including denial or revocation of your security clearance, or your removal and debarment from Federal service.
- This form is a permanent document that may be used as the basis for future investigations, security clearance determinations, and determinations of your suitability for employment. Your responses to this form may be compared with previous security questionnaires. It is imperative that the information provided be true and accurate to the best of your knowledge.

The Investigative Process

- Background investigations for national security positions are conducted to gather information to show whether you are reliable, trustworthy, of good conduct and character, and loyal to the U.S. The information that you provide on this form may be confirmed during the investigation.
- The investigation may extend beyond the time covered by this form when necessary to resolve issues. Your current employer may be contacted as part of the investigation, even if you have previously indicated on applications or other forms that you do not want your current employer to be contacted.
- In addition to the questions on this form, inquiry also is made about your adherence to security requirements, honesty and integrity, vulnerability to exploitation or coercion, falsification, misrepresentation, and any other behavior, activities, or associations that tend to show the person is not reliable, trustworthy, or loyal. Checks of Federal agency records may be made about your spouse or other cohabitant.
- The information that you provide on this form is confirmed during the investigation.

Your Personal Interview

- Some investigations will include an interview with you as a normal part of the investigation process. This provides you the opportunity to update, clarify, and explain information on your form more completely, which often helps to complete your investigation faster. It is important that the interview be conducted as soon as possible after you are contacted.
- You will be asked to bring identification with your picture on it, such as a valid State driver's license, to the interview. There are other documents you may be asked to bring to verify your identity as well. These include documentation of any legal name change, Social Security card, and/or birth certificate.
- You may also be asked to bring documents about information you provided on the form or other matters requiring specific attention. These matters include (a) alien registration; (b) delinquent loans or taxes, bankruptcy, judgments, liens, or other financial obligations; (c) agreements involving child custody or support, alimony or property settlements; (d) arrests, convictions, probation, and/or parole; (e) other matters described in court records.