



CDSE

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PULSE

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CDSE Pulse

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THIS MONTH'S FOCUS

Security Awareness Month: Staying Secure for the Holidays

By Matt Wright

December is a time for festivals, family gatherings, and an abundance of holiday cheer.

But with many people focused on gift buying and decorations, bad actors are more than ready to play grinch.

Each year, thousands of unsuspecting Americans are the victims of fraud and scams. This includes too-good-to-be-true deals on the latest items to fake charities tugging at good-natured hearts.

It is estimated that **non-payment and non-delivery scams** accounted for more than \$309 million in 2023, with credit card fraud accounting for \$173 million in losses.

With the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), it is easier than ever for criminals to take your hard-earned money.

"Cyber criminals are using AI in order to deceive us into handing over our data information and money in our wallets," said Eric O'Neill, cybersecurity expert and founder of Georgetown Group.



"One of the biggest scams happening right now is a cyber-criminal will use AI to clone the voice of a loved one."

O'Neill says the voice could replicate a loved one pretending to be stuck in jail, and they need to be bailed out. He says the emotion and urgency puts pressure on people to pay.

He says questioning the person on the phone with a pre-arranged word to confirm their identity or other questions that only they would know are ways to help prevent scammers from succeeding.

The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has **created steps** you can take to help protect your devices and personal information.

They include updating software, using strong passwords, using a password manager, and turning on multifactor authentication.

They also encourage good cybersecurity hygiene when it comes to phishing attempts.

Beware of phishing attempts that include malicious links from cyber criminals posing as legitimate businesses.

Do not click on unfamiliar attachments or download anything you are not sure of.

Be skeptical of requests for personal information. Legitimate businesses will not ask for personal information via email. If you are unsure, locate the number of the institution and call them.

If you receive a suspicious email, report it and then delete the email.

These bad actors realize many consumers will go online for their holiday shopping this season. To help encourage safe spending, CISA has created the **12 Tips for SAFE Holiday Online Shopping poster**.

For further resources on cybersecurity, including job aids, eLearning courses, and toolkits, visit CDSE's Cybersecurity **page**.



CYBERSECURITY

Instructor-Led Training: Assessing Risk and Applying Security Controls to National Industrial Security Program (NISP) Systems (CS301.01)

The cybersecurity team is offering a new training, **"Assessing Risk and Applying Security Controls to NISP Systems."** This course provides guidance on applying policies to protect information delineated by the Risk Management Framework (RMF) process and a comprehensive review of contractor requirements under the NISP.

The target audience for this training includes information system security managers (ISSMs), information system security officers (ISSOs), and facility security officers (FSOs) involved in the planning, management, and execution of security programs for cleared industry.

In-person courses will be offered at Linthicum, Md., on the following dates:

- Feb. 2-6, 2026
- Aug. 17-21, 2026
- May 4-8, 2026
- Register via STEPP [here](#).



INSIDER THREAT

FY26 Insider Threat Detection Analysis Course (ITDAC) Schedule Released

CDSE released the FY26 schedule for the highly acclaimed **"Insider Threat Detection Analysis Course (INT200.10)" (ITDAC)**, specifically designed for insider threat analysts. The virtual course will be offered on the following dates:

- Jan. 12-16, 2026
- Feb. 9-13, 2026
- March 16-20, 2026
- April 13-17, 2026
- May 11-15, 2026
- June 8-12, 2026
- July 13-17, 2026
- Aug. 17-21, 2026
- Sept. 21-25, 2026

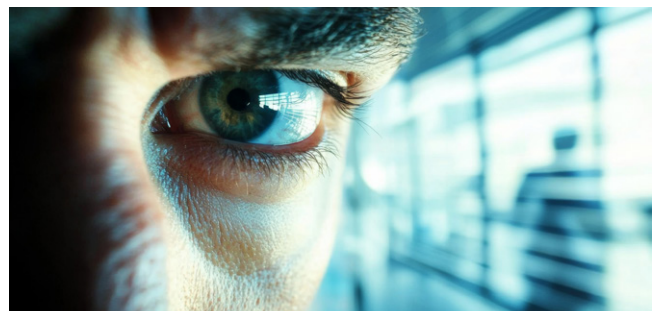
The ITDAC provides counter-insider threat analysts hands-on practice applying critical thinking skills and structured analytic techniques to potential insider threat indicators. The course uses simulated insider threat cases to analyze reports, seek additional information, build context, and develop effective mitigation strategies. To register, click [here](#).

Behavioral Threat Analysis Center Bulletin

The Behavioral Threat Analysis Center (BTAC) Bulletin is a monthly newsletter offering timely and relevant insider threat guidance on applicable issues and contains links and references to research and publications.

The bulletin is produced by a multidisciplinary team of experts in threat assessment/threat management, law enforcement, counterintelligence, behavioral science, employee management relations, and cyber security.

View the November BTAC [here](#).



SPECIAL ACCESS PROGRAMS

FY26 Special Access Programs Course Calendar Released

The FY26 Special Access Program (SAP) training calendar for “Introduction to SAPs” is now available. The course introduces new SAP security professionals to the security requirements outlined in the DoDM 5205.07 utilizing practical exercises. Both **in-person** and **virtual** training options are available.

In-Person Course Schedule

- March 3 - 6, 2026 (Korea)
- March 10 - 13, 2026 (Hawaii)
- April 21 - 24, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- May 12 - 15, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- Aug. 4 - 7, 2026 (San Diego, CA)
- Aug. 25 - 28, 2026 (Cincinnati, OH)

VILT Course Schedule

- Dec. 1 - 9, 2025 (Virtual)
- June 1 - 9, 2026 (Virtual)

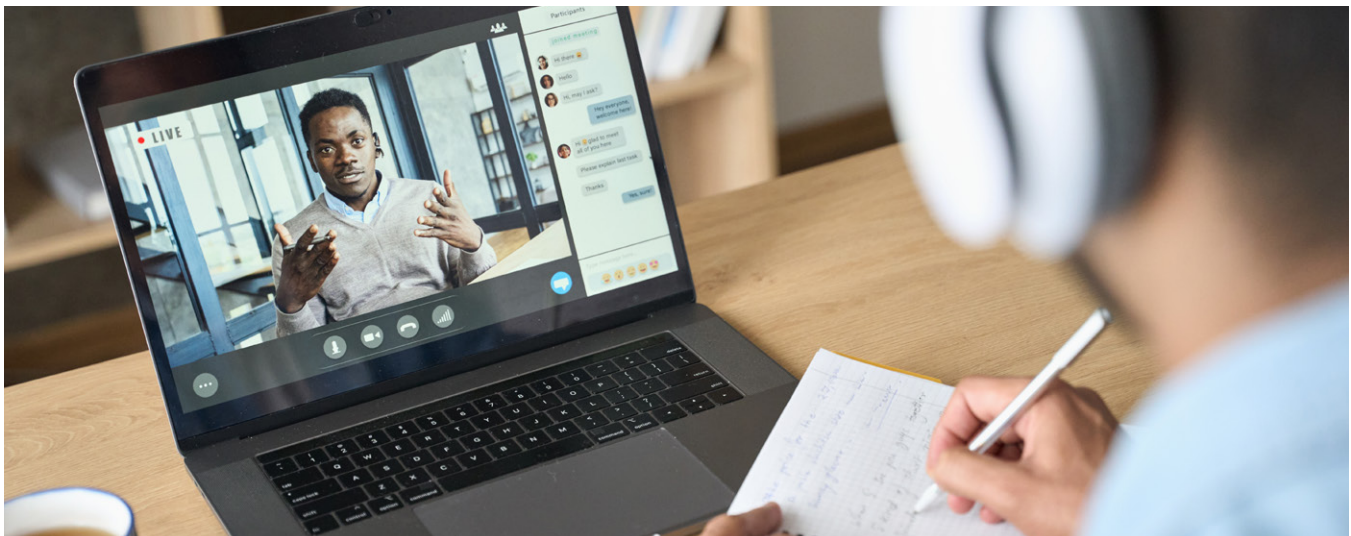


INFORMATION SECURITY

Activity Security Manager INFOSEC VILT Course Schedule for FY26

The “**Activity Security Manager (INFOSEC)**” (IF203.10) virtual instructor-led training (VILT) course provides students with knowledge to implement information security (INFOSEC) policies and procedures to mitigate and manage risks associated with developing, managing, and evaluating an information security program (ISP). Lessons emphasize key activity security manager responsibilities in relation to protecting classified national security information and controlled unclassified information (CUI).

This mid-level course includes security classification, downgrading, declassification, safeguarding and handling, access and dissemination control, accountability, storage, disposal, destruction, transmission and transportation, security incidents, and security education and training awareness. Register [here](#) to secure your spot!



FY 2026 UPCOMING COURSES

Registration Now Open

CDSE courses are a great way to gain security knowledge, gain awareness, and expand skill sets. Secure your spot now as classes fill quickly! **Available** instructor-led training (ILT)/VILT courses are listed below.

Cybersecurity

Assessing Risk and Applying Security Controls to NISP Systems (CS301.01)

- Feb. 2 - 6, 2026 (Linthicum, Md.)
- May 4 - 8, 2026 (Linthicum, Md.)
- Aug. 17 - 21, 2026 (Linthicum, Md.)

General Security

DOD Security Specialist (GS101.01)

- Feb. 3 - 11, 2026 (Redstone Arsenal, AL)
- March 17 - 25, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- June 2 - 10, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- Aug. 11 - 19, 2026 (Germany)
- Sept. 15 - 23, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)

DOD Security Specialist VILT (GS101.01)

- Jan. 5 - Feb. 1, 2026 (Virtual)
- April 6 - May 3, 2026 (Virtual)
- July 6 - Aug. 2, 2026 (Virtual)

Industrial Security

Getting Started Seminar for New Facility Security Officers VILT (IS121.10)

- Jan. 13 - 16, 2026 (Virtual)
- March 24 - 27, 2026 (Virtual)
- May 12 - 15, 2026 (Virtual)
- July 21 - 24, 2026 (Virtual)

Information Security

Activity Security Manager VILT (IF203.10)

- Jan. 25 - Feb. 22, 2026 (Virtual)
- April 19 - May 17, 2026 (Virtual)
- July 26 - Aug. 23, 2026 (Virtual)

Insider Threat

Insider Threat Detection Analysis Course VILT (INT200.10)

- Jan. 12 - 16, 2026 (Virtual)
- Feb. 9 - 13, 2026 (Virtual)
- March 16 - 20, 2026 (Virtual)
- April 13 - 17, 2026 (Virtual)
- May 11 - 15, 2026 (Virtual)
- June 8 - 12, 2026 (Virtual)
- July 13 - 17, 2026 (Virtual)
- Aug. 17 - 21, 2026 (Virtual)
- Sept. 21 - 25, 2026 (Virtual)

Personnel Vetting

Advanced National Security Adjudication VILT (PS301.10)

- June 1 - 11, 2026 (Virtual)
- Sept. 14 - 24, 2026 (Virtual)

Fundamentals of National Security Adjudications VILT (PS101.10)

- April 20 - 29, 2026 (Virtual)
- July 20 - 29, 2026 (Virtual)

Physical Security

Physical Security and Asset Protection (PY201.01)

- Feb. 2 - 6, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- April 6 - 10, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- May 11 - 15, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- June 8 - 12, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- Sept. 14 - 18, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)

Physical Security and Asset Protection VILT (PY201.10)

- Feb. 23 - March 13, 2026 (Virtual)

Special Access Programs

Introduction to Special Access Programs (SA101.01)

- March 3 - 6, 2026 (Korea)
- March 10 - 13, 2026 (Hawaii)
- April 21 - 24, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- May 12 - 15, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- Aug. 4 - 7, 2026 (San Diego, CA)
- Aug. 25 - 28, 2026 (Cincinnati, OH)

Introduction to Special Access Programs VILT (SA101.10)

- Dec. 1 - 9, 2025 (Virtual)
- June 1 - 9, 2026 (Virtual)

Orientation to SAP Security Compliance Inspections (SA210.01)

- Feb. 18 - 19, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)
- Aug. 31 - Sept. 1, 2026 (Cincinnati, OH)

SAP Mid-Level Security Management (SA201.01)

- July 13 - 17, 2026 (Linthicum, MD)

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Staff Spotlight: Steve Fowler, Senior Advisor, CDSE

By Tammi Bush



Stephen Fowler, Senior Advisor at the Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE), has played a key role in shaping security education and operational processes within the organization. With a career rooted in both military intelligence and security, Steve's journey

at CDSE has been defined by his commitment to innovation and collaboration.

"I've always been motivated by the mission," Steve shares. "There's nothing more rewarding than tackling challenges that support national security. It's what keeps me inspired every day."

Steve's career began in the military, where he served as an artillery officer before transitioning into the role of an intelligence officer. In his intelligence role, Steve often took on responsibilities as a security manager, which deepened his understanding of the critical relationship between intelligence and security.

"The foundation of national security is built on the coordination of intelligence and security," Steve explains. "Intelligence provides the vital information needed to understand threats, while security ensures that sensitive information and assets are protected from those threats. They work hand in hand, and without one, the other cannot succeed."

This perspective has shaped Steve's approach to his work at CDSE, where he continues to support the mission of national security through education and process improvement.

At CDSE, Steve focuses on ensuring the standardization and effectiveness of policies and processes that guide course development and instructor certification.

Steve explains, "I'm working to solidify these processes, especially with new team members and retirements

over the years. Standardization is key to helping contract instructors and course developers deliver consistent, high-quality training."

One of Steve's most notable accomplishments is his work on the Instructor Certification Program Virtual Learning Hub, which earned CDSE the Federal Government Distance Learning Association (FGDLA) Innovation Award in 2025. By transitioning the program online, Steve created a streamlined, accessible platform for onboarding new instructors and curriculum managers. The program, now hosted on STEPP, is divided into two phases: orientation and task-specific certification. Steve explains, "This allows us to track progress online and ensure that new instructors and curriculum managers have the resources they need to succeed. I monitor the program regularly, adding new participants, tracking their progress, and ensuring they have access to the tools they need to complete their certification(s)."

Steve's contributions have been integral to the growth and evolution of CDSE's training programs. His expertise in instructional design and curriculum development has helped CDSE expand its offerings dramatically over time.

"CDSE has transformed security training for the Defense Security Enterprise," Steve says. "We've gone from a few courses to over a thousand virtual products, saving the government significant resources while reaching a much larger audience. It's been incredibly rewarding to be part of that growth."

Steve Fowler's work at CDSE reflects his dedication to improving processes and supporting the Defense Security Enterprise through practical solutions and collaboration. By leveraging his extensive experience in security and intelligence, Steve has helped standardize and enhance training programs that benefit security professionals across the enterprise. His efforts ensure that CDSE continues to provide effective tools and resources to meet the evolving needs of the national security community.

CDSE NEWS

Value Add of The Defense Security Training Council

The Defense Security Training Council (DSTC) is an advisory body comprised of representatives from each Military Department, the Intelligence Community, and Defense Agencies and Field Activities (DAFA). It serves as a collaborative forum for addressing key challenges in security education and training across the Department of Defense (DOD). Chaired by the Director of the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency, who is the Functional Manager for Security Training, Education, and Certifications, the DSTC plays a critical role in ensuring that training initiatives align with the strategic goals of the Defense Security Enterprise (DSE) and support the evolving needs of the security workforce.

One of the primary challenges in security education is adapting to the rapidly evolving threat landscape. As new risks such as cyberattacks, insider threats, and advanced technologies emerge, training programs must remain agile and responsive. CDSE works closely with the DSTC to ensure that its training reflects these changes, equipping the workforce with the skills needed to address current and future challenges.



Another challenge is maintaining standardization across the DOD's diverse components, each with unique missions and operational requirements. The DSTC provides a forum for collaboration and input, helping CDSE refine frameworks like the Defense Security Skill Standards (DS3) to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility for specific needs.

CDSE also engages with the DSTC to recruit subject matter experts from across the DOD to contribute to maintaining and updating the Security Professional Education Development (SPeD) Certification Program. These experts provide valuable insights that help shape certifications to meet the needs of security professionals and enhance their capabilities.

The DSTC is an invaluable resource, enabling CDSE to address the challenges of integrating modern technologies, balancing resources, and aligning training initiatives with the strategic goals of the DSE. This partnership ensures that CDSE's training programs and certifications remain impactful, relevant, and responsive to the needs of the security community, reinforcing the shared mission of safeguarding national security.

ABOUT DCSA

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) provides industrial security engagement and counterintelligence support to secure the trustworthiness of the U.S. government's workforce, contract support, technologies, services, and supply chains.

Our Role

We protect America's trusted workforce, trusted workspaces, and classified information. To do so, we have two fundamental missions: personnel security and industrial security. Supporting these two core missions are counterintelligence and insider threat and security training. For over 50 years, our agency has used each of these missions to meet the threats of our nation's adversaries.

How We Serve

DCSA is the largest investigative service provider in the federal government, supporting over 100 federal entities. We oversee 12,500 cleared facilities under the National Industrial Security Program (NISP). We rely on the following directorates to ensure the security of our nation's technologies and information.

Personnel Security

We deliver efficient and effective background investigations, continuous vetting, and adjudications. In doing so, we safeguard the integrity and trustworthiness of the federal and contractor workforce. We conduct background investigations for 95% of the federal government, including 105 departments and agencies. We also adjudicate 70% of the federal government's adjudicative determinations.

Industrial Security

At DCSA, we oversee 12,500 cleared facilities under the National Industrial Security Program (NISP). We make sure companies are protecting their facilities, personnel, and associated IT systems from attacks and vulnerabilities.

Counterintelligence and Insider Threat

Counterintelligence and insider threat supports both our personnel security and industrial security missions. Counterintelligence focuses on foreign insider threat while insider threat is focused on internal threat. In this mission center, we identify and stop attempts by our nation's adversaries to steal sensitive national security information and technologies.

Security Training

Our agency is comprised of nationally accredited training centers. These centers provide security

CDSE CONTACT LIST

training, education, and certifications for security professionals across the federal government and industry.

Mailing/Postal Address

938 Elkridge Landing Road
Linthicum, Md 21090

STEPP (Learning Management System) Help Desk

Submit an online support request ticket or call the Help Desk at 202-753-0845 within the Washington, DC area or toll free at 833-200-0035 on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

508 Compliance and Accessibility

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