

Transforming Federal Personnel Vetting

Introduction:

This short provides an overview of the Federal Personnel Vetting:

- Policy Framework
- Concepts Driving Integration
- Role Personnel Vetting Reforms play in a trusted workforce

Course Objective

Given the instructional material, the learner will be able to recognize the Federal Government reform policies, processes, and tools used to vet its civilian, contractor, and military personnel to ensure a trusted workforce.

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Introduction

Why is the Government reforming the personnel vetting process?

The current personnel vetting process is decades old. Today's complex missions, societal norms, threat landscape, and changing workforce calls for a new approach.

Modern technologies, methods, and data analytics provide an opportunity to create a personnel vetting model designed for the challenges of today and tomorrow.



Policy/Regulation

Every member of the trusted federal workforce has a shared responsibility for the successful outcomes of the Federal personnel vetting programs.

Executive Order, or E.O. 13467

Federal personnel vetting governance framework is set forth in Executive Order (E.O.) 13467, Reforming Processes Related to Suitability for Government Employment, Fitness for Contractor Employees, and Eligibility for Access to Classified National Security Information, which assigns key governance roles and responsibilities to:

- Director of National Intelligence (DNI) as the “Security Executive Agent (SecEA)” and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as the “Suitability & Credentialing Executive Agent (SuitEA)”
- The Security, Suitability, and Credentialing Performance Accountability Council (PAC).
- Department and agency heads
- Authorized personnel vetting investigative service providers (ISP)

E.O. 13764

E.O. 13764, “Modernize the Executive Branch-Wide Governance Structure and Processes for Security Clearances, Suitability and Fitness for Employment, and Credentialing, and Related Matters,” modernizes the executive branch enterprise to ensure all persons performing work for, or on behalf of the Government, are and continue to be loyal to the United States, reliable, trustworthy, and of good conduct and character, and use mutually consistent standards and procedures.

This executive order revised E.O. 13467; Vetting Enterprise, Reciprocity, Continuous Performance Improvement, and established the PAC.

For more information, view the Course Resources and E.O. documents.

Federal Personnel Vetting Core Doctrine

The SuitEA and the SecEA issued the ***Federal Personnel Vetting Core Doctrine***, or Core Doctrine, which establishes the philosophy for transforming the U.S. Government personnel vetting process and defines the guiding principles, governance structure, key supporting processes, and policy priorities.

What the Core Doctrine Does:

- Describes the overarching framework for a single modern vetting program
- Affirms responsibilities of entities that comprise federal personnel vetting governance
- Outlines the elements and intended outcomes of successful personnel vetting and policy
- Underscores shared responsibility to establish and maintain a culture of trust across the federal workforce

Core Doctrine and measures were developed to facilitate improved risk mitigation. Core Doctrine sets forth the defining elements of a successful program for vetting individuals who make up a trusted federal workforce.

Federal Personnel Vetting Guidelines

In alignment with the Core Doctrine, the Federal Personnel Vetting Guidelines define the intended outcomes associated with **investigations**, **adjudications** and **personnel vetting management practices** and describes the essential components for **identifying and managing human risk** to ensure a trusted workforce.

Components of Federal Personnel Vetting

- ***Federal Personnel Vetting as Part of Holistic Risk-Management*** – Agencies must employ risk management across all personnel vetting domains to assess risk and possible threats and vulnerabilities when making a trust determination.
- ***Determining Trust*** – determinations consider the characteristics of a trusted person with applicable adjudicative criteria when assessing risk.
- ***Three-Tier Investigative Model*** – Three investigative tiers — Low, Moderate, and High— aligned to support trust determinations
- ***Five Personnel Vetting Scenarios*** – depending on mission need, the relevant circumstances of the individual, responsibilities of the position, and management of human risk.

Trusted Workforce 2.0

The Core Doctrine establishes the philosophy for the Government's Personnel Vetting Program, serving as the foundational document that guides *Trusted Workforce 2.0 (TW 2.0)* transformative efforts.



What is TW 2.0?

Overseen by the interagency PAC, these reforms are collectively referred to as the TW 2.0 initiative.

TW 2.0 is the most far-reaching reform of the Federal Government's personnel vetting system ever. TW 2.0 will reduce the time required to onboard new hires, simplify workforce mobility, and enhance risk management by identifying potentially problematic behavior sooner.

The TW 2.0 reforms seek to streamline policy and tailor personnel vetting activity to an individual's circumstances. These features, along with a focus on *continuous vetting*, allow for better *risk management*, rapid onboarding of trusted individuals, increased workforce mobility, and greater awareness of potential security concerns.

TW 2.0 is being implemented in two phases. *Phase One* addressed the sizeable background investigation inventory and timeliness of investigations. Phase Two focuses on transforming personnel vetting from the ground up.

The *Phase Two* work is divided into three sub-phases.



Phase 2a establishes a new personnel vetting framework.

Phase 2b implements transitional states of continuous vetting for the national security sensitive population to deliver early results while progress is made on finalizing policies and building new capabilities to support the new framework.

Phase 2c involves full implementation of the TW 2.0 future state.

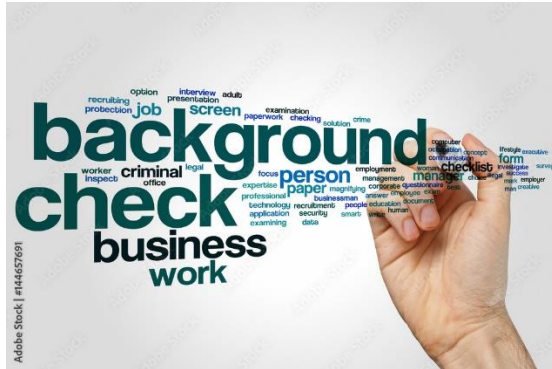
Personnel Vetting Concepts



It is of utmost importance that the Federal Government's workforce, which includes civilians, contractors, and military service members, can be trusted to effectively perform the mission, provide excellent service, and demonstrate effective stewardship of taxpayer funds. Establishing and maintaining trust is the core goal of the Federal Personnel Vetting Program.

Personnel Vetting

Personnel Vetting describes the process in which trusted Government personnel evaluate the reliable and relevant information from background investigations and other reliable sources in order to make security related determinations, suitability/fitness determinations, or determinations related to a person's ability to access Government facilities or information systems. The traditional vetting process relies on an initial investigation followed by periodic reinvestigations every ***five*** to ***10*** years.



Continuous Vetting

In ***Continuous Vetting***, agencies gather information from a broad range of data sources to increase insight into workforce behavior in near real-time.

Information sources include automated record checks of Government and commercial databases, agency-specific records, and information derived from as-needed investigative activity.

In continuous vetting, automated record checks pull data from criminal, terrorism, and financial databases, as well as public records, at any time during an individual's period of eligibility.

New Investigation

A critical path to achieving the **TW 2.0** vision is modernizing the Government’s approach to investigations used in the personnel vetting process.

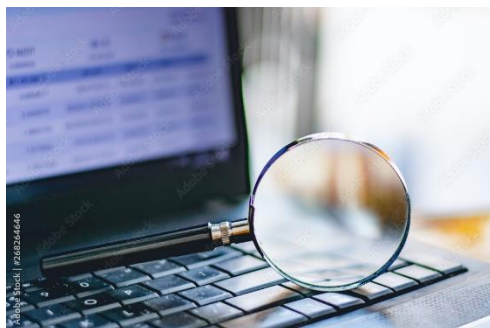
While aspects of investigations were modified as new threats were identified, significant changes to agency mission complexity, societal norms, the threat landscape, and technological capabilities provide the impetus for transformational reform.

The new Federal Personnel Vetting Investigative Standards establish a three-tier investigative framework to replace the current *five investigative tiers*.

The Federal Personnel Vetting Investigative Standards: Then and Now			
Current Investigative Tiers	Position Designations by Tier	TW 2.0 Investigative Tiers	Position Designations by Tier
Tier 1	Low Risk Non-Sensitive Physical and Logical Access (HSPD-12) Credentialing	Low Tier	Low Risk Non-Sensitive Physical and Logical Access (HSPD-12) Credentialing
Tier 2	Moderate Risk Public Trust	Moderate Tier	Moderate Risk public trust Non-critical sensitive Secret/Confidential "L" Access
Tier 3	Non-critical sensitive Secret/Confidential "L" Access		
Tier 4	High Risk Public Trust	High Tier	High Risk public trust Critical Sensitive Special Sensitive Top Secret Sensitive Compartmented Information "Q" Access
Tier 5	Critical Sensitive Special Sensitive Top Secret Sensitive Compartmented Information "Q" Access		

This move to three tiers aligns investigative requirements for federal personnel vetting for suitability, fitness, national security (eligibility for access to classified information or to hold a sensitive position), and credentialing decisions and will enable greater workforce mobility.

Vetting Scenarios



The new Standards map the investigative requirements for five personnel vetting scenarios based on mission needs, position designation, and an individual's relevant personnel history information. The vetting scenarios are:

- **Initial Vetting** – Conducts the vetting needed to establish trust with an individual not previously vetted; includes a preliminary determination process to onboard individuals based on the early results of high-yield records checks
- **Continuous Vetting** – Assesses risk in near real-time to provide insight into trusted insider behavior

- **Upgrades** – Quickly raises the level of vetting when an individual requires a higher level of trust within the same agency
- **Transfer of Trust** – Streamlines movement of trusted individuals between agencies and organizations
- **Re-establishment of Trust** – Simplifies the re-entry of trusted insiders back into the workforce after a break in service

TW 2.0 Reforms Improves Risk Management



TW 2.0 reforms, including continuous vetting, improves risk management by alerting agencies to concerns much earlier than before, and allows them to address and mitigate concerns before they become larger problems.

A key component of continuous vetting involves improving information sharing between agency components, such as Human Resources and Insider Threat, to ensure that vetting practitioners have the information they need when they need it to make informed decisions that protect agencies' people, property, information, and mission.

New Information Technology Capabilities

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA), the Government's largest investigative service provider (ISP), is developing the **National Background Investigation Services (NBIS)**, which will be the enterprise-wide personnel vetting IT backbone for most agencies.

NBIS will improve existing capabilities and create new ones, including maintaining end-to-end situational awareness; processing fingerprints and biometric data; providing continuous vetting and adjudication support; validating data from multiple sources; and integrating case management with automated workflow—to name just a few of its planned features.

Benefits of Implementing the New Investigative Standards

Implementing new ISPs to more efficiently and effectively deliver the critical information agencies need to establish and maintain a trusted workforce.

The Standards focus information collection on obtaining the most relevant sources of information and put less emphasis on seeking specific numbers of each type of source. In addition to these structural changes, the Standards also introduce a ***modern spectrum*** of investigative methodologies to allow ISPs maximum flexibility to collect information as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

Knowledge Check #1

Now, let's review what you've learned.

Which of these Personnel Vetting scenario assesses risk in near real-time to provide insight into trusted insider behavior?

Select the correct answer.

- ☐ Initial Vetting
- ☐ Continuous Vetting
- ☐ Transfer of Trust

Knowledge Check #2

Which of these statements is **NOT** a benefit of TW 2.0?

Select the correct answer.

- ☐ Reducing the time required to onboard new hires
- ☐ Simplifying workforce mobility
- ☐ Enhancing risk management by identifying potentially problematic behavior sooner
- ☐ Adding complexity to an already complex system

Knowledge Check #3

The New Federal Personnel Vetting Investigative Standard consists of how many investigative tiers?

Select the correct answer.

- ☐ Three Tiers
- ☐ Two Tiers
- ☐ Five Tiers

Conclusion

As a closing reminder, TW 2.0 vision is to modernize the Government's approach to investigations used in the personnel vetting process.

To access more information on this Transforming Federal Personnel Vetting short, please visit the Course Resources.