

Student Guide

Guideline E: Personal Conduct

Objective	To help the learner identify Personal Security concerns as outlined in the Security Executive Agent Directive (SEAD) 4, National Security Adjudicative Guidelines, effective June 08, 2017.
Estimated Completion Time	20 Minutes

Screen 1

Meet Teresa Aldo. She is a 42 year old Budget Analyst employed by a U. S. government contractor. Recently, she was promoted to a position with Top Secret eligibility. Teresa submitted the required paperwork to initiate her security background investigation through her security office.

Now, your task is to review Teresa’s file and make an eligibility determination. Please note that other Adjudicative Guidelines may apply. In this case you will focus only on Guideline E: Personal Conduct.

Screen 2

The most important part of an adjudicator’s job is to examine a sufficient period of a person's life to determine whether or not the person is an acceptable security risk.

This task should never be taken lightly as cleared personnel may eventually have access to classified information.

Adjudicators take into consideration all relevant information, both favorable and unfavorable from a person’s past and present to form the “whole-person” concept, when making an eligibility determination.

Screen 3

In evaluating the relevance of an individual’s conduct, the adjudicator should consider the following factors:

- The nature, extent, and seriousness of the conduct;
- The circumstances surrounding the conduct to include knowledgeable participation;
- The frequency and recency of the conduct;
- The individual’s age and maturity at the time of the conduct;
- The extent to which participation is voluntary;

- The presence or absence of rehabilitation and other permanent behavior changes;
- The motivation for the conduct;
- The potential for pressure, coercion, exploitation, or duress; and
- The likelihood of continuation or recurrence.

Screen 4

Guideline E: Personal Conduct, states that conduct involving questionable judgment, lack of candor, dishonesty, or unwillingness to comply with rules and regulations can raise questions about an individual's reliability, trustworthiness and ability to protect classified or sensitive information. Of special interest is any failure to provide truthful and candid answers during national security investigative or adjudicative processes. The following will normally result in an unfavorable national security eligibility determination, security clearance action, or cancellation of further processing for national security eligibility:

The following will normally result in an unfavorable clearance action or administrative termination of further processing for clearance eligibility:

- (a) refusal, or failure without reasonable cause, to undergo or cooperate with security processing, including but not limited to meeting with a security investigator for subject interview, completing security forms or releases, including financial disclosure forms, if required, and cooperation with medical or psychological evaluation or polygraph examination, if authorized and required; and;
- (b) refusal to provide full, frank and truthful answers to lawful questions of investigators, security officials, or other official representatives in connection with a personnel security or trustworthiness determination.

When reviewing Teresa's investigative file, you read that approximately two and a half years ago, she was involved in an adulterous affair.

Click on the folder to review the details in Teresa's file.

Teresa Aldo: Investigative File

- An interview with Teresa's co-workers uncovered a possible extramarital affair. Employment reference interviews revealed that Teresa was possibly involved in an affair with another coworker approximately two and a half years ago. The investigator questioned Teresa about the potential affair during the subject interview. She denied the affair took place and stated that it was untrue and just idle office gossip. A follow-up interview at her employer's office directed the investigator to the person with whom the alleged affair took place. The reference verified that he had an affair with Teresa two and a half years ago, which lasted six months.

- Teresa was re-interviewed by the investigator concerning the affair, and admitted to it only after she was presented with all the facts. She stated that she lied about the affair during the first interview because she was embarrassed and didn't want anyone to know about it.
- She pointed out that this was her only extramarital affair, and she informed her husband shortly after it ended. Teresa also stated that she does not want anyone to find out about the affair, as she prides herself on maintaining an upright social standing and doesn't want that jeopardized. She would do anything to prevent the affair from becoming public knowledge. Teresa and her husband are still married.

Screen 5

Does the information in Teresa's file raise a valid security concern under Guideline E: Personal Conduct?

Click on the file folder to review the file and select the disqualifier(s) that apply to Teresa's case. Then click on the Submit button.

Screen 6

Teresa's concealment of her extramarital affair is a security concern, but each Adjudicative Guideline has specific mitigating conditions that sometimes allow an applicant to be cleared in spite of the concern.

Do any mitigating conditions apply to Teresa's case?

Click on the file folder to review the file and select the mitigator(s) that apply to Teresa's case. Then, click the Submit button.

Screen 7

The information from Teresa's background investigation raised concerns under Guideline E: Personal Conduct. However, this security concern cannot be mitigated. Although Teresa has told her husband, she intentionally provided false and misleading information to the investigator. Additionally, her efforts and desire to conceal this information and keep it from becoming public knowledge creates a potential vulnerability to pressure or coercion.

Even though we cannot mitigate the security concern under Guideline E: Personal Conduct, her case still needs to be adjudicated against all the Adjudicative Guidelines.

For information on the other Adjudicative Guidelines, please see the other Shorts developed by CDSE. To review Guideline E: Personal Conduct conditions of concern and mitigation, click on the Job Aid button.