

Student Guide

Guideline M: Use of Information Technology

Objective	To help the learner identify Use of Information Technology concerns as outlined in the Security Executive Agent Directive 4 National Security Guidelines effective June 08, 2017.
Estimated Completion Time	20 Minutes

Screen 1

Meet Juan Ramirez. He is a 43-year old software engineer recently hired for a government civilian position. The position requires Top Secret eligibility and access.

Juan submitted the required paperwork to initiate his security background investigation through his security office.

Now, your task is to review Juan's completed background investigation files and make an eligibility determination. Please note that other adjudicative guidelines may apply. In this case you will focus only on Guideline M: Use of Information Technology.

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 M: Use of Information Technology, states that failure to comply with rules, procedures, guidelines or regulations pertaining to information technology systems may raise security concerns about an individual's reliability and trustworthiness, calling into question the willingness or ability to properly protect sensitive systems, networks, and information.

Information Technology includes any computer-based, mobile, or wireless device used to create, store, access, process, manipulate, protect, or move information. This includes any component, whether integrated into a larger system or not, such as hardware, software, or firmware, used to enable or facilitate these operations.

While reviewing Juan's investigative file, you read that he received three formal reprimands for misuse of information technology systems within the past three years.

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

(File folder information.)

Juan Ramirez: Investigative File

- Juan admitted he had connected his personal computer to the unclassified company network without permission, but it was an isolated incident that has not been repeated.
- Juan also acknowledged that over the past three years he has occasionally downloaded drivers, evaluation software, and programming tools, not approved by his company, but only on an unclassified system.
- He explained that he had done this approximately 20 to 30 times when the software he needed to do his job was unavailable on the company network.
- Juan stated that he knew what he was doing was against company policy. He admitted that as a result of the reprimands, he received additional training concerning the policy.
- He also explained that since other employees downloaded software on occasion, he didn't think it was a problem.
- Juan's personnel file revealed he received three formal written reprimands for downloading unapproved software to company systems; the last reprimand occurred six months ago. The final written reprimand indicated that Juan resigned from the position under unfavorable conditions.

Juan explained he did not include this information on his SF-86 because he was never fired from a job, so he did not think it was a big deal.

Screen 5

Does the information in Juan's file raise a valid security concern under Guideline M: Use of Information Technology?

Click on the file folder to review the file and select the disqualifier(s) that apply to John's case.

Then click on the Submit button.

Screen 6

Juan's continued downloading of software against company policy 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 Juan's case?

Click on the file folder to review the file and select the mitigator(s) that apply to Juan's case.

Then click on the Submit button.

Screen 7

The information from Juan's background investigation raised a concern under Guideline M: Use of Information Technology.

However, this security concern cannot be mitigated. Juan continued to download drivers, evaluation software, and programming tools despite receiving a reprimand. He was aware that doing so was against company policy which raises questions about his ability or willingness to comply with laws, rules, and regulations.

Even though we cannot mitigate the security concern under Guideline M: Use of Information Technology, this case still needs to be adjudicated against all the Adjudicative Guidelines.

For more information on the other Adjudicative Guidelines, please see the other Shorts developed by CDSE.

To review Guideline M: Use of Information Technology, click the Job Aid button.