

DOE Security Clearance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How do I obtain a DOE clearance (access authorization)?

A: Department of Energy (DOE) contractors post job listings which indicate that a DOE clearance is required. When the duties of a position with a DOE contractor require the person in that job to access DOE classified matter or special nuclear material (SNM), the contractor submits a request for DOE for the access authorization. Access authorizations are not granted to an individual prior to their selection for a position requiring that they have the access. Contractors include in their advertisements a statement that the person selected for the position will be subject to a background investigation and will have to meet eligibility requirements for access to classified matter or SNM if the position requires such access. This means only that the individual must be able to pass the background investigation and qualify for the access in order to retain the job, not that he or she must be cleared before being given consideration as a possible new hire.

Q: I am not a United States citizen. Can I obtain a security clearance?

A: One of the primary requirements for granting a personnel security clearance (in the DOE, an access authorization) is United States citizenship. The policy is set for the U.S. Government through Executive Order 12968, "Access to Classified Information," and is not subject to routine exception. The specific terms of the Executive Order may be found at <http://www.dss.mil/nf/adr/12968/eo12968T.htm>.

There are rare cases where foreign nationals have been granted DOE access authorization, but these are for vital Department missions when no U.S. citizen is available with the necessary skills or knowledge. Those few non-U.S. citizens granted access authorization are generally world-class scientists working with information that has been determined releasable to their country of citizenship under bilateral agreement or treaty.

Q: I am the president of a business. How can I obtain a security clearance for my company and employees?

A: When a company obtains a contract to work on a DOE project that requires a classified level of clearance, such access requires a Facility Clearance for the contractor organization (company) and access authorizations (security clearances) for company personnel working with classified information, special nuclear material (SNM), or requiring unescorted access to security areas. A Facility Clearance is required prior to the award of such a contract. A Government Contracting Activity or a cleared contractor may sponsor an uncleared contractor for a Facility Clearance, but a contractor or prospective contractor cannot apply for its own Facility Clearance. Access authorizations for certain company officials are mandatory prior to the issuance of a Facility Clearance requiring a classified level of clearance. These officials are determined by the U.S. Government and must be cleared in connection with the Facility Clearance. Company employees may be processed for an access authorization when the contractor determines, and justifies to the U.S. Government, that access is essential in the fulfillment of a contract that requires a classified level of clearance. Like the Facility Clearance, these access authorizations cannot be requested until an actual need for access exists.