



Office of Professional Responsibility

ICE Security



The Office of Professional Responsibility upholds ICE's professional standards through a multi-disciplinary approach of security, inspections, and investigations to promote organizational health, integrity, and accountability across the agency.

The Personnel Security Division, within ICE Security, promotes the integrity and efficiency of ICE by making risk-based decisions in evaluating whether applicants, employees, and contractors meet suitability, security and National Security Information (NSI) access requirements.

Five Phases of Personnel Security Vetting

Phase 1: Reciprocity Review and Security Forms Initiation

- Determine if recent federal background investigation can be used for new position. If yes, phases 2, 3, and 4 are not applicable.
- If a new background investigation is required:
 - Fingerprinting instructions sent to the applicant; and
 - Security forms are initiated (e-Application)
- Criminal history results and credit report are obtained, and security forms are completed.

Phase 2: Entry on Duty (EOD) Determination

- Security forms are reviewed and initial results are checked for derogatory issues.
- If suitability issues are discovered, correspondence is sent to applicant affording them the opportunity to address the concerns.
- Risk-based preliminary suitability determination is made, which may allow applicant to enter on duty while full background investigation is conducted.

Note: Law Enforcement applicants may be subject to a polygraph. See information on back page

Phase 3: Background Investigation

- Background investigation is scheduled through a contracted vendor.
- Applicant will be contacted to set up a personal interview.
- Full investigation takes on average 45-60 days to complete.

Phase 4: Final Adjudication

- Contents of background investigation and all initial security forms will be reviewed.
- If new issues are discovered during the background investigation process, correspondence will be sent to the applicant, affording them the opportunity to address the concerns.
- Final suitability determination is made.
- Determine if applicant is eligible to obtain a security clearance.

Phase 5: Continuous Vetting and Evaluation

- All employees are subject to an evaluation of their background at any time.
- This includes additional checks, or new checks, of commercial databases, Government databases, and other information lawfully available to security officials to determine whether individuals continue to meet the security requirements.

Helpful Hints

- Ensure security forms are complete and accurate.
- Complete all requirements (fingerprints, security forms, and responses) on time.
- Be honest! People are not perfect. The whole person concept is applied in all determinations.
- Check credit report before completing security forms to ensure any derogatory items can be addressed.
- To validate the identity of a background investigator, email DHS-BI-Credentials@ice.dhs.gov.





Polygraph Examinations

Applicants for law enforcement positions—Criminal Investigator GS-1811 and Deportation Officer GS-1801— may be referred for pre-appointment polygraph testing as disclosed on the job announcements.

Frequently asked questions

What can I expect after being referred for polygraph testing and how do I prepare for the examination?

- You will receive written instructions from your assigned polygraph examiner to set a testing date. The examiner will follow up with comprehensive reporting instructions that you must confirm, as well as other information concerning dress, identification, medications, etc.
- Get plenty of rest the night prior to your examination.
- Do not bring weapons or recording devices of any kind to the examination.
- The polygraph examiner will verify your identity and together you will complete a form indicating you voluntarily consent to undergo polygraph testing.
- The examiner will explain the examination process, and the two of you will discuss all questions you will be asked during testing prior to taking the examination. You will have ample opportunity to ask questions or clarify your answers prior to the examination.
- Physiological data is collected by attaching various components to your body while the previously reviewed questions are asked. The polygraph examiner will explain and demonstrate the components during discussion prior to data collection.
- The most important thing for you to remember is to follow instructions and be forthcoming when asked to provide information.

What if I am nervous?

It is normal for everyone undergoing testing to be nervous to some degree and the examiner expects that. Each applicant is different, and the examiner will adjust for that. Being nervous will not make you fail the examination, so do not feel that you must try and calm yourself in any way.

What types of questions are asked during the polygraph?

You will be administered a standardized polygraph examination that will include pre-employment screening questions regarding your suitability for employment with ICE and national security issues. All questions will be thoroughly reviewed and explained, and you will have an opportunity to discuss concerns or issues you may have with any of the topics.

What if I do not pass the examination?

Following data collection, the examiner will provide you with the result of the test. If you are unsuccessful your examiner will give you the opportunity to discuss your result and why you were not successful. Remember, the polygraph examination is not looking for perfect people who have never made a mistake; rather, they are looking for people with honesty and integrity, who are suitable for a law enforcement position.

Does the polygraph examiner have the final say regarding test results?

No. Every ICE pre-employment screening examination is subject to Quality Control review conducted by a senior polygraph examiner. Although each ICE polygraph examiner is federally certified, a Quality Control process is followed to ensure adherence to strict federal guidelines and standards.

If I have questions before my polygraph, who can I contact?

You should direct questions to your assigned polygraph examiner identified in your reporting instructions.

Will the polygraph examination be recorded?

Yes, every ICE polygraph is audio and video recorded in its entirety.

How long does the polygraph examination take?

On average an ICE polygraph examination takes four to five hours. There will be short breaks provided throughout testing and your examiner will be there to guide you through the entire process from start to finish.

- Clarifying or revealing new information during your polygraph will not make you fail—but being deceptive or withholding information will.
- The polygraph examination is not designed to determine if you are perfect. The purpose is to help determine if you are willing to be forthcoming and demonstrate that you have the integrity required to be a federal law enforcement officer.
- Answer truthfully during the exam and cooperate with your examiner.