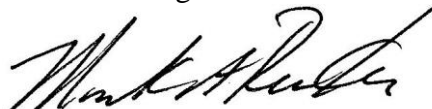


**For:** FSA and RMA Employees

**Personnel Security Procedures**

**Approved by:** Deputy Administrator for Management



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

The Emergency Preparedness Division (EPD) performs a major role in employment suitability decisions for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) in regards to their Personnel Security Program. Employment suitability primarily applies to Federal competitive service appointments, but the standards are also applicable to positions held by county employees, contractors, and volunteers. The positions occupied by these identified individuals must be designated as having either a high, moderate, or low risk. The designation of the risk level is determined by the potential for the position to have an adverse impact to the efficiency and integrity of the Agency. When a position is designated at either a high or moderate risk level, it is designated as a public trust position. The high or moderate risk level positions may include the following:

- policy making,
- major program responsibility,
- fiduciary responsibilities,
- other duties demanding a significant degree of public trust, and
- access to or control of financial records that has a significant risk for causing damage or realizing personal gain.

Most individuals are familiar with the term “security clearance”, which is a generic term that refers to any Government determination about an individual’s eligibility for access to protected information, facilities, computer systems, and federal employment suitability or fitness. Executive Order 10450 and 5 CFR Part 731 governs employment suitability for federal agencies. The purpose of employment suitability is to ensure the selection and retention of federal employees is consistent with the interests of national security and maintaining the integrity and efficiency of federal service.

**Disposal Date**

January 1, 2015

**Distribution**

FSA and RMA employees; State Offices relay to  
County Offices



## 1 Overview (Continued)

### B Purpose

This notice provides the following:

- establishment of an EPD customer service help line and mailbox,
- guidelines for processing new federal and county employees,
- guidelines for current agency employees who have been selected for a new position within FSA or RMA, and
- pilot program for state and county office employees to submit FD-258's, "Fingerprint Chart" or SF-87, "Fingerprint Chart", electronically.

### C Contact

For questions regarding this notice, contact Robert Haughton at either of the following:

- e-mail at **robert.haughton@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-720-0135.

## 2 Action

### A Current and Prospective Employees

FSA and RMA employees are subject to one of the following investigations:

- National Agency Check With Inquiries (NACI) for low risk positions,
- Access National Agency Check With Written Inquiries for low risk with access to confidential or secret positions,
- Minimum Background Investigation (MBI) for moderate risk positions,
- Background Investigation (BI) for high risk positions, and
- Single Scope Background Investigation for National Security with access to secret, top secret, or sensitive compartmented information positions.



**2 Action (Continued)**

**A Current and Prospective Employees (Continued)**

An audit of employees' personnel security records was recently conducted and it was determined the personnel security investigation that was completed on a large number of employees was not appropriate. To obtain and possess a LincPass, an adjudicated NACI investigation was to be accomplished. Through the audit it was determined not all employees who currently possess a LincPass had a favorable adjudicated investigation. FSA initially approved an employee's Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 credentials based on a review of a fingerprint check and, in some instances, the employee's NACI investigation were not completed. All FSA and RMA employees who have not received the appropriate level of background investigation will be selected to undergo new background investigations appropriate for the position they currently hold.

Based on the findings of the recent audit, EPD has begun addressing the investigation shortfalls that were identified. EPD will contact the Administrative Officer of each state with a list of employees who have been identified as requiring an appropriate level of background investigation. If an employee is requested to complete a personal security investigation, the employee will be given two weeks to submit the required security investigation documents. Employees are requested to submit the required security investigation documentation to the point-of-contact in the state office, who will then submit it to EPD. On a case-by-case basis, additional time for completing the investigation may be granted.

**IMPORTANT:** If an employee fails to submit the appropriate background security investigation documents, it could result in an adverse action.

If an employee's position requires an MBI or higher investigation, a personal interview conducted by an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) investigator will be completed. For an MBI or BI, the OPM investigator will contact an employee's references, which includes family members, neighbors, and colleagues, and a credit check will be completed. Employees requiring a BI and higher level investigation will be required to sign a medical release. In some cases, employees undergoing an MBI or lower investigation may be required to sign a medical release form that authorizes the Government to access the employee's medical records and/or discuss the employee's medical records with the physician.

**B Establishing the EPD Customer Service Help Line and Mailbox**

To improve customer service, EPD has established a customer service help line and mailbox. Contact EPD at either of the following:

- e-mail at **RA.DCWashing2.FSA.EPD.PerSecDC@wdc.usda.gov**
- telephone at 202-720-7696.



**2 Action (Continued)**

**B Establishing the EPD Customer Service Help Line and Mailbox (Continued)**

Customers may contact EPD for questions or concerns regarding any of the following:

- accessing the online eQIP application,
- resetting passwords in eQIP,
- BI questions,
- fingerprint inquiries,
- on-boarding process, or
- personnel security program.

**C Guidelines for Processing New Federal and County Employees**

For prospective federal or county employees, the state office or the Human Resources Division (HRD) shall submit the following documents:

- FSA-790, “Central Verification System (CVS) Check Request”,
- resume or FSA-675, “Application for FSA County Employment”, for County Office employment, and
- OF 306, “Declaration for Federal Employment”.

For prospective employees requiring a BI, EPD will initiate a BI in eQIP and request the applicant to submit the following:

- eQIP questionnaire signature sheets,
- credit release form, if required, and
- two distinctly different FD-258’s, “Fingerprint Chart”, or SF-87’s, “Fingerprint Chart”.

Prospective employees in Washington, DC, or Kansas City may schedule a fingerprint appointment by contacting 202-720-7696. All other prospective employees shall make arrangement with a local office to complete their fingerprint requirements. Any cost associated with the fingerprints should be borne by the prospective employee. On request, EPD will mail fingerprint charts to the applicants.

After all the required documents are received and a favorable result for the adjudicated fingerprints is received, EPD will provide the state office and/or HRD with a preliminary approval for the prospective employee to begin working.



2 Action (Continued)

**D Guidelines for Processing Current Agency Employees Who Have Been Selected for a New Position Within FSA and RMA**

If a current FSA or RMA employee has been selected for a new position within the agency, the state office or HRD is authorized to establish an expected entry-of-duty date without prior approval from EPD. The state office or HRD shall forward FSA-790, "Central Verification System (CVS) Check Request", to EPD for any current employee selected for a new position. EPD will coordinate with ITSD to address information security requirements.

**E Pilot Program for State and County Offices to Submit FD-258's, "Fingerprint Chart", or SF-87's, "Fingerprint Chart", Electronically**

EPD is initiating a pilot program for the state and county offices to submit FD-258's or SF-87's electronically in an effort to reduce the processing time and cost of postage. For this pilot process, the security documents, including FD-258's or SF-87's, need to be saved as PDF's after being scanned, and e-mailed to the EPD mailbox at **RA.DCWashing2.FSA.EPD.PerSecDC@wdc.usda.gov**. The security documents shall be encrypted with a password for security reasons.

**Note:** Each state office will receive a password for the security documents under a separate correspondence from EPD.

Required BI security documents can also be mailed to:

FSA, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DIVISION  
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVE SW ROOM 0092-S  
MAIL STOP 0543  
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-0543.

**Note:** Telephone number is 202-720-7969.