

National Security Clearances: What Does the Data Say and Where Can it be Found?

Pursuant to the Intelligence Authorization Act (IAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, the President is required to annually report to Congress on security clearance determinations. The report must include the number of United States Government employees and contractors who held a security clearance at each level as of 1 October of the preceding year. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC) prepares the report, latest edition of which was the [*Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report on Security Clearance Determinations*](#).

As of fiscal year 2017, there were 4,030,625 individuals found eligible to hold a clearance. This number reflected those eligible “in access” and “not in access.” During the same fiscal year, there were 597,423 security clearance approvals representing a combination of initial clearances and re-investigations of existing clearances. Unfortunately, data is not readily available regarding either the number of clearance denials or existing clearance revocations, or the number of appeals pursuant to those denials or revocations. However, what is available is Carnegie Mellon University’s (CMU) *Data Analysis of Security Clearance Appeal Decisions* report published in 2018 and the [*Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals*](#).


The Department of Defense funded and support CMU’s work forming the basis of the report which aimed to provide insight into the clearance process using case information from industrial security appeal decisions. Security clearances are adjudicated pursuant to thirteen guidelines delineated in the [*Security Executive Agent Directive 4 \(SEAD 4\)*](#). The report summarized findings from 20,514 appeals filed from 1996 to 2016. Overall, individuals were denied a security clearance on appeal in 68% of the cases, while 31% were granted a clearance, and the outcome of the remaining one percent was unknown.

Among the cases submitted for appeal, none involved Adjudicative Guideline A. Allegiance to the U.S. As can be seen below borrowed from CMU’s report, the majority of cases involved security concerns arising from financial considerations followed by personal conduct, criminal conduct, foreign influence, and drug involvement (quantities and percentages are based on total number of cases and cases can involve more than one guideline). Knowing the frequency of guidelines forming the subject of a case can help assess likelihood of an individual’s security clearance being denied or revoked when they have experienced or are beginning to experience circumstances giving rising to specific security concerns identified with the guidelines. This in turn allows for proactive actions to be potentially identified and undertaken to mitigate the security concerns thereby reducing the risk of losing the privilege of a security clearance.

<u>Adjudicative Guideline</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
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B. Foreign Influence	3,526	17.2
C. Foreign Preference	1,632	8.0
D. Sexual Behavior	483	2.4
E. Personal Conduct	7,344	35.8
F. Financial Considerations	10,720	52.3
G. Alcohol Consumption	1,865	9.1
H. Drug Involvement	2,211	10.8
I. Psychological Conditions	71	0.3
J. Criminal Conduct	3,714	18.1
K. Handling Protected Information	59	0.3
L. Outside Activities	58	0.3
M. Use of Information Technology Systems	52	0.3

As always, the devil is in the details and this is where the case repository of the [Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals](#) (DOHA) comes into play. The archive is readily available online and should be explored when evaluating likely outcomes of a security clearance determination. Screen shot of DOHA's main page is included below with sub-link highlighted to where one can search the case records.


DEFENSE OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS

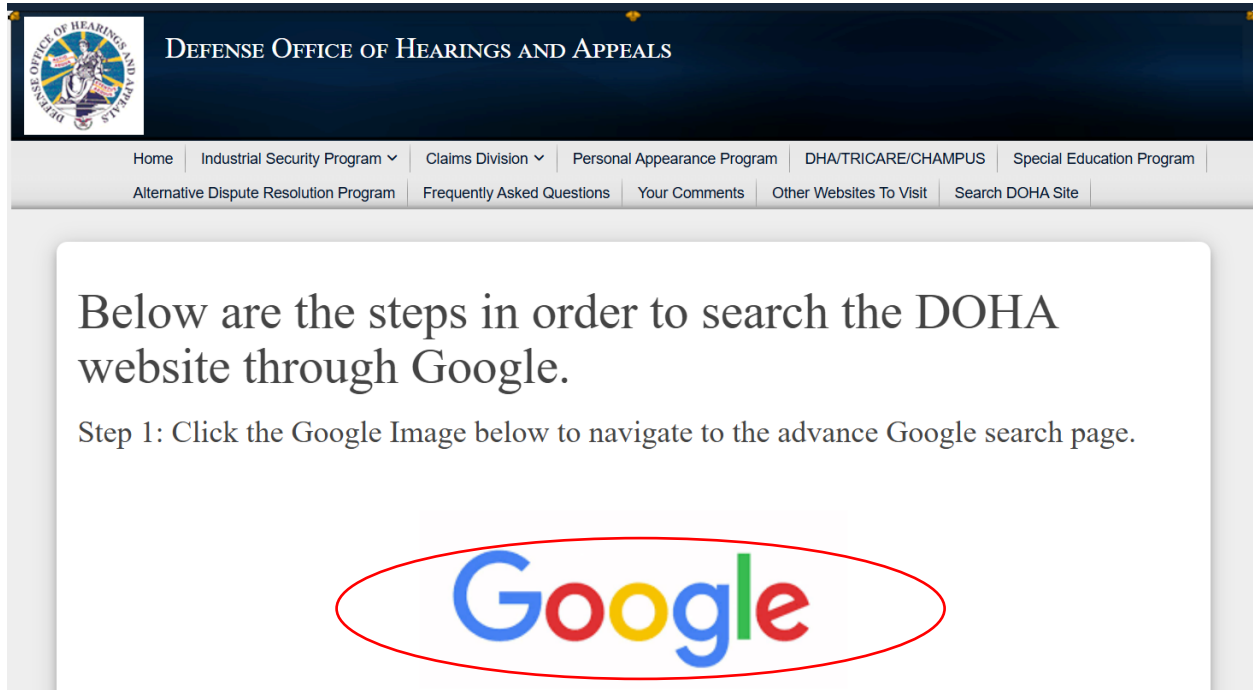
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The Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals (DOHA), the largest component of the Defense Legal Services Agency, provides hearings and issues decisions in personnel security clearance cases for contractor personnel doing classified work for all DoD components and 28 other Federal Agencies and Departments; conducts personal appearance hearings and issues decisions in security clearance cases for DoD civilian employees and military personnel; settles claims for uniformed service pay and allowances, and claims of transportation carriers for amounts deducted from them for loss or damage; conducts hearings and issues decisions in cases filed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) relating to early intervention, special education or related services delivered by the DoD, and addresses claims filed with the Defense Health Agency (DHA) under TRICARE/CHAMPUS rules seeking payment for medical services; and functions as the Center for DoD Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management activities within the DoD and as a source of third party neutrals for such activities.

DOHA Toll Free Office Number: 1-866-231-3153
E-Mail: osd.pentagon.ogc.mbx.doha-status@mail.mil

Frequently Asked Questions	Personal Appearance Program	Special Education Program
Industrial Security Program	DHA/TRICARE/CHAMPUS Program	Other Websites To Visit
Claims Program	Alternative Dispute Resolution Program	New National Security Adjudicative Guidelines
Office Of the General Counsel Home	Search the DOHA Webpage	Your Comments

Upon clicking on the “Search the DOHA Webpage” link, one will be taken to another page with the Google icon front and center. The Google icon is an actual link that directs the visitor to the actual query page.



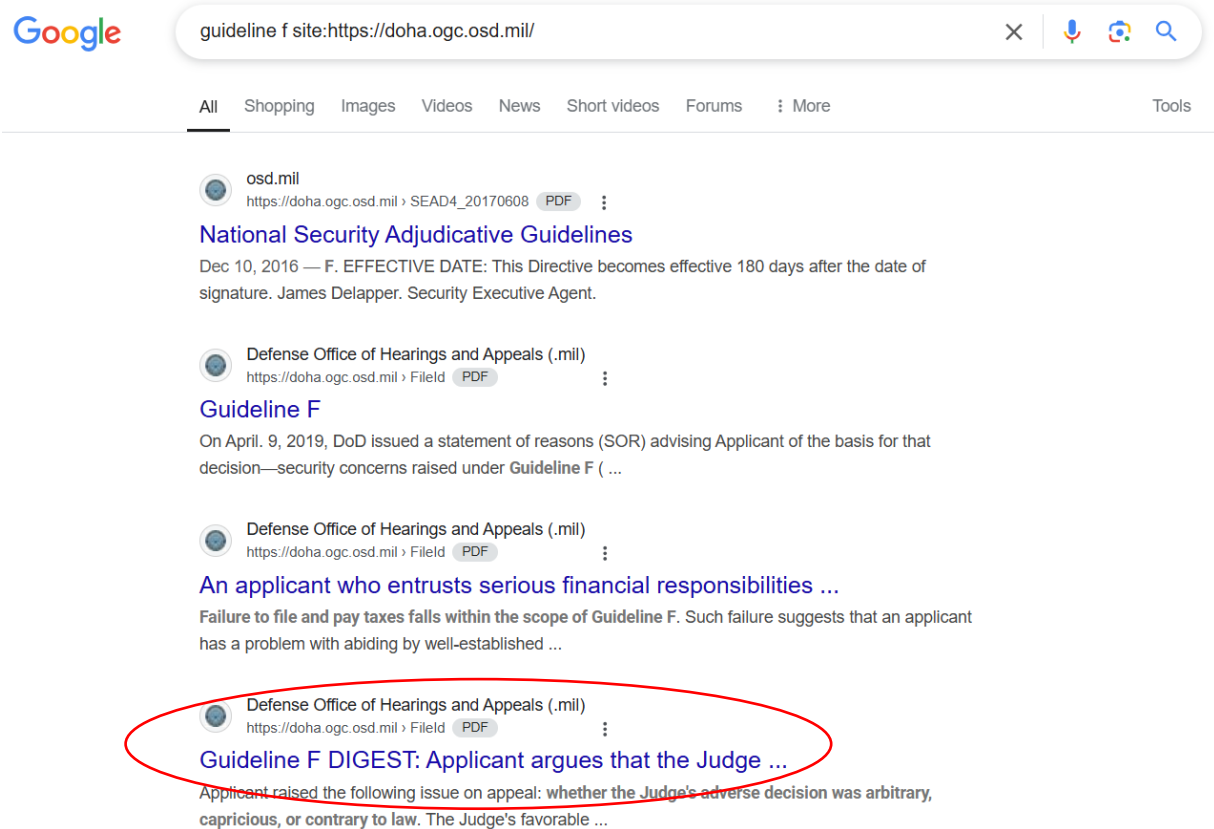
A screen shot of the DOHA query page is included below. It is fairly straightforward and user friendly.

Advanced Search

Find pages with...		To do this in the search box
all these words:	<input type="text"/>	Type the important words: tricolor rat terrier
this exact word or phrase:	<input type="text"/>	Put exact words in quotes: "rat terrier"
any of these words:	<input type="text"/>	Type OR between all the words you want: miniature OR standard
none of these words:	<input type="text"/>	Put a minus sign just before words you don't want: -rodent, -"Jack Russell"
numbers ranging from:	<input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/>	Put 2 periods between the numbers and add a unit of measure: 10..35 lb, \$300..\$500, 2010..2011

Then narrow your results by...	
language:	<input type="text" value="any language"/> Find pages in the language you select.
region:	<input type="text" value="any region"/> Find pages published in a particular region.
last update:	<input type="text" value="anytime"/> Find pages updated within the time you specify.
site or domain:	<input type="text" value="https://doha.ogc.osd.mil/"/> Search one site (like wikipedia.org) or limit your results to a domain like .edu, .org or .gov
terms appearing:	<input type="text" value="anywhere in the page"/> Search for terms in the whole page, page title, or web address, or links to the page you're looking for.
file type:	<input type="text" value="any format"/> Find pages in the format you prefer.

Entering the query "Guideline F" in the "all these words" search box, will generate a page similar to the one captioned below. Clicking on one of the results will then initiate a download of the case decision in a PDF format.



Google search results for the query "guideline f site:https://doha.ogc.osd.mil/". The results list several documents from the Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals (DoD). The first result is "National Security Adjudicative Guidelines". The second result is "Guideline F", which includes a snippet: "On April. 9, 2019, DoD issued a statement of reasons (SOR) advising Applicant of the basis for that decision—security concerns raised under Guideline F (...". The third result is "An applicant who entrusts serious financial responsibilities ...". The fourth result is "Guideline F DIGEST: Applicant argues that the Judge ...", which is circled in red. This result includes a snippet: "Applicant raised the following issue on appeal: whether the Judge's adverse decision was arbitrary, capricious, or contrary to law. The Judge's favorable ...".

