

There are three levels of security clearance. They parallel the three levels of classification:

- Level 1 – access to CONFIDENTIAL
- Level 2 – access to SECRET
- Level 3 – access to TOP SECRET

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service carries out security screening investigations at the request of the Personnel Security Section (ISSV). The latter have delegated authority from the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to grant clearances. Personal information cannot be used for a security clearance without the signed consent of the person to be screened, and the individual must be advised of the findings. The information provided is protected under the *Privacy Act*.

It is departmental policy that departmental employees in Canada be cleared to levels 2 or 3 (SECRET or TOP SECRET), unless otherwise authorized by the Departmental Security Officer (ISS). Members of the rotational foreign service posted abroad require a level 3 (TOP SECRET) security clearance. Security clearances are valid for a period of up to ten years. ISSV will notify employees when existing security clearances are due to expire.

Breaches and violations of security

Definitions

A **security breach** is the unauthorized disclosure of Classified or Designated information to those who have no right to it, or the loss, theft or deliberate damage of Designated or Classified equipment or material. Security breaches must be reported immediately on detection to the Departmental Security Officer, ISS.

Security violations are events that could have led to a security breach, but did not. A security violation occurs, for instance, when a person:

- fails to classify or designate information according to the departmental Security of Information Policy
- classifies or designates information in contravention of the departmental Security of Information Policy