

WHAT TO REPORT

Elicitation is a suspicious contact reportable by cleared companies to the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) under the National Industrial Security Program (NISPO).

EXAMPLES OF REPORTABLE ACTIVITY

- Any individual's efforts, regardless of nationality, to obtain illegal or unauthorized access to classified information or to compromise a cleared employee
- All contacts with known or suspected intelligence officers from any country
- Any contact that suggests an employee may be targeted for exploitation attempts by another country's intelligence services

Because elicitation is subtle and difficult to recognize, report suspicious conversations to your FSO, DCSA Industrial Security Representative, and DCSA Counterintelligence (CI) Special Agent. These individuals can assess the information and determine if a potential CI concern exists

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 32 Part 117, requires reporting suspicious contacts, behaviors, and activities.

If you suspect you or your company have been targeted, report it immediately. Recognizing and reporting indicators is critical to disrupting threats and mitigating risks.

BE ALERT! BE AWARE!

Report suspicious activities to
your facility security officer



DCSA
<https://www.dcsa.mil>

DCSA, Counterintelligence and Insider Threat
Directorate
<https://www.dcsa.mil/mc/ci>

Center for Development of Security
Excellence
<https://www.cdse.edu>

ELICITATION



WHAT IS ELICITATION?

Elicitation is a structured method of communication to extract predetermined information; the subject is unaware they are a target.

The elicitor will attempt to conduct collection activities away from the target's work to be less security conscious to ease the elicitation process.

Because elicitation can sound like a common conversation, it is difficult to tell if it is a friendly conversation or intelligence gathering. Foreign intelligence entities look for professional and personal information to use in future targeting efforts.

Elicitation requires patience and persistence. Pieces of information, collected over an extended period, gives the adversary desired information about technology, programs, and processes.

HOW ARE YOU BEING TARGETED?

- **Exploitation of Tendency to Complain:** Statements such as "I am so behind at work" can elicit a cleared employee's response, divulging schedule setbacks, staffing shortfalls, resource shortages, and other valuable information to a foreign government or competitor
- **Questionnaires and Surveys:** An elicitor states a benign purpose for the survey and surrounds questions they want answered with logical questions
- **Feigning Ignorance:** An elicitor portrays ignorance to have the target instruct them about a topic. This tactic is frequently employed in academia; it exploits the habit of teaching and puts the target in a familiar mindset to share information
- **False Statement:** An elicitor knowingly makes a false statement so the target can correct them. Another example is citing someone else's research or paper; this is particularly effective if the target is knowledgeable about the study/research area
- **Flattery:** Statements such as "That thing is really cool" can elicit numerous responses by leading the target to converse about topics of interest
- **Quid Pro Quo or Trading Confidences:** The elicitor provides the target with valuable information. Conversations begin, "I shouldn't tell you this but" or "This is off the record." This induces the target to return the favor and provide valuable information. Espionage may look more like a business transaction and less like gathering information

- **Paper Review:** Many cleared employees have ties to academia and research institutions. Cleared employees regularly receive requests to peer review research or theses. Many requests are straightforward, but some are attempts to leverage sensitive or classified research
- **Bracketing:** An elicitor asks a target about a sensitive value using high and low values, rather than asking for a specific number. The elicitor asking if the range is somewhere between 10 and 15 kilometers garners a response such as "Yes, in the high end." Bracketing allows the elicitor to adjust the bracket for the next target
- **Oblique Reference or Analogies:** An elicitor discusses a topic similar to the target's work so the target will use their work to make a point of reference. An example is the elicitor discussing a foreign or civilian system similar to the target's work. The target is likely knowledgeable and comfortable discussing this topic. The target may slip and use their own sensitive system as a point of reference to the foreign system
- **Criticism:** Criticism is accomplished by criticizing the target. An example is statements such as, "I saw on the news" or "I heard," followed by a statement that criticizes the cleared employee's work, company, or project. Many people will defend things they feel passionate about

WHY IS ELICITATION EFFECTIVE?

Elicitors will try to exploit natural human tendencies:

- Desire to seem polite and helpful
- Desire to seem knowledgeable or well-informed
- Desire to seem competent
- Desire to feel appreciated and contribute to something important
- Gossiping
- Correcting others
- Underestimating information's value
- Believing others are honest
- Complaining
- Showing empathy
- Being indiscrete, especially when emotionally charged

COUNTERMEASURES

In the event you are targeted, be prepared to respond. Know what information you cannot share and be suspicious of those seeking information. Do not share anything the elicitor is not authorized to know, including personal information. If you believe someone is attempting to elicit information from you:

- Change the topic
- Refer them to public websites
- Deflect the question with one of your own
- Provide a vague answer
- Explain that you don't know, and respond with "Why do you ask?"

Consider: If you have to say "No" let your facility security officer know.