

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Elicitation is a “suspicious contact” reportable by cleared companies to the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) under the National Industrial Security Program (NISIPOM). Examples of reportable activity include:

- 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, you should report any suspicious conversations to your FSO, DCSA Industrial Security Representative, and DCSA Counterintelligence (CI) Special Agent. These individuals can assess your information and determine whether a potential CI concern exists



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

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

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

ELICITATION

BE ALERT! BE AWARE!

Report suspicious activities to your facility security officer



DEFENSE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE
AND SECURITY AGENCY

WHAT IS ELICITATION?

Elicitation is a structured method of communication used to extract predetermined information from people without making them aware that they are a collection target.

Elicitation comes in many forms. Communications can be verbal or written. The elicitor has specific goals for the exchange and the target is unaware that the elicitor is attempting to collect sensitive or classified information from them.

Setting is important in elicitation. Often the elicitor will attempt to conduct their collection activities away from the target's work. This helps the target relax and can make them less security conscious, as well as introduce other factors that can ease the elicitation process, such as alcohol.

Because elicitation can sound like a common conversation, it can be difficult to tell whether it is an innocent, friendly conversation, or intelligence gathering. Foreign intelligence entities look for anything from details about programs you or your colleagues work on to personal information they can use in future targeting efforts.

Elicitation requires patience and persistence. Pieces of information, collected over an extended period, can provide the information the elicitor required. The aggregate of information, even unclassified information collected over an extended period of time, could give the adversary the desired information about technology, programs, and processes.

ELICITATION METHODS OF OPERATION

- **Exploitation of Tendency to Complain:** Statements such as "Boy I am so behind at work" can elicit a cleared employee's response that would divulge 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 a few questions they want answered with other logical questions. Or merely uses a survey to get people to agree to talk to you.
- **Feigning Ignorance:** An elicitor can portray ignorance to have the target "teach" or instruct them about a topic. This tactic is frequently employed in academia. This exploits the habit of teaching or lecturing and can put the academic into a familiar frame of mind to share information.

- **False Statement:** An elicitor can knowingly make a false statement so the target can correct them. This is often a modification of criticism. Another way to use false statement is to cite someone else's research or paper. This can be particularly effective if the target knows about the area of study or research.
- **Flattery:** Cleared contractor employees provide a valuable service to America. They should be proud of the work they do. Flattery can elicit numerous responses such as bragging about work, or a tendency to give others credit for work, but either way the target is having conversations about topics of interest. Flattery can start as simple as "Boy that thing is really cool."
- **Quid Pro Quo or Trading Confidences:** In quid pro quo, the elicitor provides the target with valuable information. Quid pro quo can start with, "I shouldn't tell you this but" or "This is off the record." The purpose is to make the target feel obligated to return the favor and provide valuable information to the elicitor. Espionage may look more like a business transaction and less like gathering information.
- **The Paper Review:** Many cleared employees have ties to academia and research institutions. Cleared employees regularly receive requests to peer review research or academic theses. Many of these requests are harmless and straightforward, but some are attempts to have cleared employees leverage their sensitive or classified research to correct or expand on research in topics similar to their work.
- **Bracketing:** Bracketing occurs when the elicitor asks a target about a sensitive value using a high and low value rather than asking for a specific number. This could be a range within a system, such as the elicitor asking if the range is somewhere between 10 and 15 kilometers. This could garner a response such as "Yes, in the high end" or "Well, a little more than that." Bracketing allows the elicitor to adjust their bracket for their next target.
- **Oblique Reference or Analogies:** In this method, the elicitor discusses a topic similar to the target's work so the target will use their own work to make a point of reference. An example would be the elicitor discussing a foreign or civilian system similar to the target's work. The target is likely knowledgeable of and comfortable discussing



this topic. On the finer points of the discussion the target may slip and use their own sensitive system as a point of reference to the foreign system.

- **Criticism:** Criticism can be accomplished by seemingly inadvertently criticizing the target or knowingly criticizing the target. An example would be 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 vehemently defend the things they feel passionate about.

HUMAN FACTORS THAT ENABLE ELICITATION:

- Desire to seem polite and helpful, even to strangers
- Desire to seem knowledgeable or well informed
- Desire to seem competent
- Desire to feel appreciated and believe we are contributing to something important
- Tendency to gossip
- Tendency to correct others
- Tendency to underestimate the information's value
- Tendency to believe others are honest
- Tendency to complain
- Tendency to show empathy toward others
- Tendency to be indiscrete, especially when emotionally charged

DEFLECTING ELICITATION ATTEMPTS

In the event you are targeted, be prepared to respond. Know what information you cannot share and be suspicious of those who seek such information. Do not share anything the elicitor is not authorized to know, including personal information about yourself, your family, or your co-workers. If you believe someone is attempting to elicit information from you, you can:

- Change the topic
- Refer them to public websites
- Deflect question with one of your own
- Provide a vague answer
- Explain that you don't know, and respond with "Why do you ask?"
- Take control of the conversation
- Casually request to take a photo with them, to remember "your most important prospects"
- Consider: If you have to say "No" let your facility security officer (FSO) know