

18 September 2017

Naval Aviation Small Business Roundtable Security Clearance Survey Results

The Naval Aviation Small Business Roundtable (SBRT) conducted a survey of members to assess the impact of the current state of security clearance processing in our community. All SBRT members were emailed to announce the purpose of the survey and how to participate. The survey was available to members through our website from 28 August through 8 September 2017.

The SBRT worked with NAVAIR to determine the content of the survey. The following four (4) questions were posed to our membership:

1. How long does it take DSS to acknowledge pick-up of clearances submitted in the JPAS system?
2. What is the average timeframe to obtain an interim SECRET clearance?
3. What is the average timeframe to obtain a SECRET clearance?
4. How many individuals, on average, does your company have idling in anticipation of a clearance?

We received a total of twenty-one (21) survey responses from our membership of 136 organizations. Respondents used different units of measure (e.g., hours, days, months, years) for questions 1 through 3, so all response times were converted to days. Most respondents provided a range when answering each question. The survey results from all respondents are provided in Table 1.

	Time for DSS to acknowledge pick-up of clearances submitted in the JPAS system			Average timeframe to obtain an interim SECRET clearance			Average timeframe to obtain a SECRET clearance			Individuals idling in anticipation of a clearance		
	Days			Days			Days			People		
Respondent	Min	Avg.	Max	Min	Avg.	Max	Min	Avg.	Max	Min	Avg.	Max
Averages	29.8	34.9	40.0	88.2	94.9	101.6	269.9	284.9	299.9	5.0	5.3	5.7

Table 1. Survey Questions - All Respondent Inputs as Averages

To further characterize impact within our community we examined survey responses by business size. Table 2 shows the demographics of responding organizations at their time of SBRT registration.

Business Size	Count
200+ employees	6
101-200 employees	3
26-100 employees	9
0-25 employees	2
Undeclared	1
Total Respondents	21

Table 2. Respondent Business Size by Employee Count

For each survey question, the response by business size is provided in Table 3.

Bus. Size	Time for DSS to acknowledge pick-up of clearances submitted in the JPAS system			Average timeframe to obtain an interim SECRET clearance			Average timeframe to obtain a SECRET clearance			Individuals idling in anticipation of a clearance		
	Days			Days			Days			People		
	Min	Avg.	Max	Min	Avg.	Max	Min	Avg.	Max	Min	Avg.	Max
200+	44.0	51.8	59.5	61.7	71.5	81.3	248.3	253.3	258.3	8.3	8.8	9.2
101-200	11.0	11.0	11.0	140.0	142.8	145.7	343.3	354.2	365.0	1.7	1.7	1.7
26-100	23.4	24.6	25.9	98.1	102.2	106.3	245.8	273.9	301.9	4.0	4.5	5.0
0-25	45.5	45.5	45.5	60.0	60.0	60.0	285.0	285.0	285.0	1.5	1.5	1.5

Table 3. Survey Questions - Average by Business Size

Some respondents offered additional insight within their reply to each survey question. The survey question related to individuals idling in anticipation of a clearance generated the most feedback. Below are those responses.

- *“Not big enough to carry idling personnel in anticipation of a clearance.”*
- *“Due to the clearance processing delays, the company couldn’t afford to wait for individuals to clear. All candidates had to already have a clearance for us to start the recruiting process.”*
- *“We typically do not have people idling on the sidelines waiting for their clearance as our Overhead costs cannot cover them. Therefore, we have been losing candidates waiting for the clearance process. Furthermore, this has increased the salary demands of young professionals with 1 and 2 years of experience because they know they can get more once they have the clearance. This then increases the salary demands of more experienced professionals as well. There is nothing filling the Junior levels since clearances are taking so long to obtain. We have seen salaries increase across the board about 5% to 10% from our cleared professionals trying to retain them since backfilling them with younger talent is hard to do when it takes so long to obtain a clearance.”*

Security clearance processing times, in days, reported by the National Industrial Security Program Policy Advisory Committee (NISPPAC) on May 10, 2017 are provided in Table 4.

Investigation Type	APPROVE e-QIP (DSS)	Advanced Products (NBIB)	Interim Review (DSS)	Investigate (NBIB)	Adjudicate (DoD CAF)
Secret (T3)	81	24	24	128	31
Interim Clearance: 129 days				Final Adjudication: 288 days	

Table 4. Industry Personnel Clearance Timelinesⁱ

The results of the SBRT survey indicate many of our respondents obtain interim secret clearances within the 129-day timeline and have similar results for receiving the final adjudication by the 288-day timeline reported by the NISPPAC.

The NISPPAC meeting minutes are provided as an attachment.

ⁱ Clearance Timelines. Attachment 5 of the National Industrial Security Program Policy Advisory Committee (NISPPAC) Meeting Minutes; May 10, 2017.