

DHS receives a large number of foreign visitors each year. Building relationships and sharing information with our foreign allies and associates is critical to our efforts to protect the United States. Nevertheless, these visits can present opportunities for foreign visitors to collect information that exceeds the specific purpose of their visit to the Department.

While most of these visitors are here as our guests, the sheer volume of visitors makes it hard to detect those who do come with ulterior motives. We must take appropriate security precautions to prevent the loss of classified, proprietary, and other sensitive information during foreign visits.

Visiting DHS facilities is a privilege and not a right. Individuals responsible for coordinating foreign visits must comply with established policies and procedures prior to and during the visit.



Note: Sharing Classified National Security Information (CNSI) with representatives of a foreign government requires approval from the DHS Foreign Disclosure Office (FDO).

Please contact the FDO to determine if DHS recognizes the security clearance issued by the foreign government and authorizes the CNSI to be shared with representatives of that government.



DHS Foreign Visitor Program



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Homeland
Security

To meet the Department's needs while managing risks posed by foreign visitors, the DHS Office of Security has established a foreign visitor vetting process.

Vetting Process

The DHS Office of Security will conduct appropriate checks to identify any available adverse information on prospective foreign visitors. This information is then relayed to the requestor of the foreign visit to make a risk-based assessment on whether to host the visit. The DHS Office of Security does not make this determination.

To streamline this process, the Office of Security developed the DHS Foreign Access Management System (DFAMS). This secure but unclassified system is used to manage and track the number of visits a foreign individual makes to any DHS facility or component.

Hosting/Escorting Foreign Visitors

If you are hosting an unclassified visit of a foreign visitor or group of foreign visitors to your facility, there are certain things you need to know:

Prior to the Visit

- Notify the foreign visits coordinator for your component.
- Enter request for the foreign visit in DFAMS at least 20 days in advance of the visit.
- Ensure that the benefits gained from the visit outweigh the potential risks from the visit.
- Determine the areas of work that may be sensitive, but not classified, and avoid discussing such information with foreign nationals.
- Assess whether discussion of selected unclassified information with foreign visitors



could divulge proprietary details related to cooperative research or other collaborative work.

- All employees likely to meet the foreign visitors should be briefed on the threat.
- Ensure that all appropriate personnel, both escorts and those meeting with visitors, are briefed on the scope of the visit and how to handle contingencies that may arise.
- Make sure the number of escorts is adequate to properly control movement and conduct of visitors.
- A Counterintelligence Awareness Briefing can be conducted for your Component prior to the visit upon request.

During and After the Visit

- Be alert to indications that any of your foreign guests might be collecting information for intelligence purposes, or that your visitor is an intelligence officer.
- Deflect inquiries that seek information that should not be shared about you, your colleagues, DHS, or other U.S. Government agencies, programs, and policies.
- Watch for hidden agendas: foreign visitors may come to discuss Program X, but do everything possible to discuss, observe, or meet with

personnel who work with Program Y. They will exploit our natural habit of being courteous to visitors.

- Monitor computer access. Often, intelligence collectors look for sensitive projects or proprietary business information on unclassified networks.
- Watch for those visitors who separate themselves from the escorted party and “stray accidentally” into other areas of the facility. Sometimes visitors claim not to speak English and they will wander off into clearly marked restricted areas to take pictures.
- If visitors become offended when confronted during a security incident, recognize that it could be a deliberate ploy and escort the visitor from the facility if he or she cannot abide by the rules.
- Ensure that the visitor's access is restricted to information and locations approved for the visit.
- After the visit, report any unusual occurrences or situations to the DHS Office of Security, Internal Security and Investigations Division.

Security compromises from foreign visitors can be prevented if personnel are properly briefed in advance of the visit. Know your responsibilities. Protect DHS information.

