



Security clearance vetting

SUPO

FINNISH SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

Why are security clearance vettings done?

Security clearance vetting seeks to safeguard the security of Finland. Personnel security clearance vetting examines the background of individuals to ensure their reliability. Examples of duties for which an individual requires security clearance vetting include handling confidential information or accessing premises that are important for national security. The procedure is a supplement to other security arrangements.

The aim is to stop information of importance to Finland's security falling into the wrong hands. Foreign powers may take an interest in such areas as Finnish policymaking or state-of-the-art technology.

Security clearance vetting examines such aspects as whether individuals have committed any criminal offence, or are in financial difficulties that could expose them to pressure or other undue influence.

What duties require security clearance vetting?

Security clearance vetting is only done for duties specified in the Security Clearance Act. The investigation is performed for duties that require special reliability. The applicant for security clearance vetting is usually an employer or a party issuing an assignment. About half of all personnel security clearance vetting procedures are done for central government authorities and the remainder are done for businesses.



The scope of security clearance vetting depends on the job

The extent of the required security clearance vetting will depend on the working duties in question. This in turn depends on such aspects as the type of information that the employee will handle. The more extensive the vetting process, the more data sources are used.

Concise security clearance vetting

Examples of a need for concise security clearance vetting include when the duties of an employee involve accessing premises of national security importance or transferring significant assets.

Standard security clearance vetting

Standard security clearance vetting may be required when the duties of individuals enable them to significantly endanger national security. Duties of this kind include administering critical information systems, duties in central government or defence administration, duties in the aviation industry, or various duties related to contingency preparations.

Comprehensive security clearance vetting

A need for comprehensive security clearance vetting arises, for example, when the duties of an employee involve handling classified or top-secret information on a more than occasional basis.



What factors affect security clearance vetting?

The security clearance vetting process involves examining an individual's background and aspects that may expose the individual to various forms of influence. Support specialists always assess the circumstances of each individual from the perspective of national security.

Security clearance vetting is accordingly not a wholly automated inspection of register data. Only information gathering methods specifically permitted by law are used in security clearance vetting. For example, your phone will not be tapped, nor will your data communications be monitored.

Points that are relevant to security clearance vetting

Have you committed or are you suspected of committing a criminal offence?

This assessment considers the age at which any criminal offence was committed and the time that has elapsed since it occurred.

Are you in significant financial difficulties?

Payment default records are reviewed in the individual case. Comprehensive security clearance vetting also involves a broader assessment of the subject's financial position.

Do you have significant foreign interests?

Foreign interests may concern such aspects as citizenship and property or relatives abroad. The aim is to identify aspects that could expose you to coercion.

Have you been involved in unlawful anti-democratic activities?

Political activity or civic activism does not affect security clearance vetting.

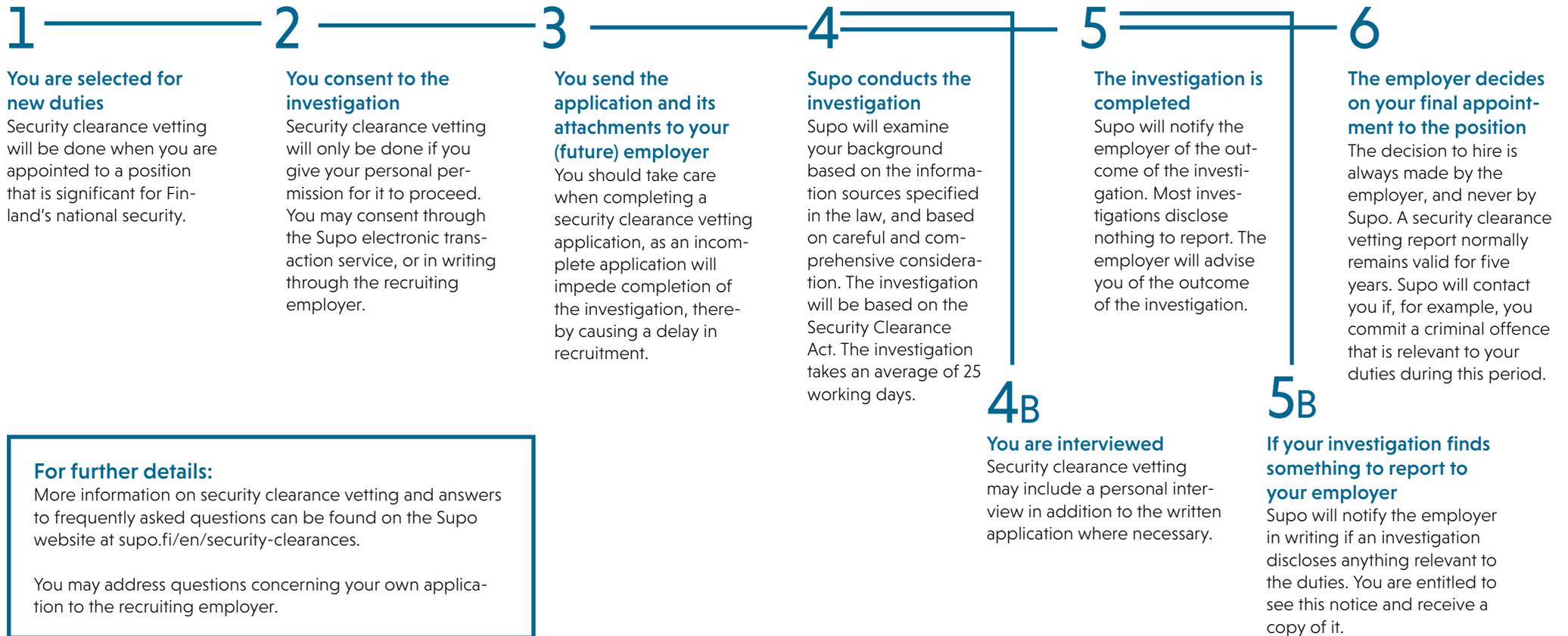
Do you have connections to extremism?

The activities of extremist movements may include violent rioting or criminal mischief.

Do you have difficulty managing your life?

Substance abuse or gambling addiction are examples of factors that may affect security clearance vetting.

The stages of security clearance vetting



What kind of things affect completion of security clearance vetting?

Jukka has applied for an interesting position at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The job involves handling information that is important for Finland's national security. Security clearance vetting will accordingly be part of this appointment. Jukka was caught shoplifting at the age of 14. Now he is concerned about how this will affect the investigation.

The incident will not affect security clearance vetting, which disregards offences committed under the age of 15 years.

23 year-old Elli has secured a summer job at the airport. She will be subject to a standard security clearance vetting. She was caught in possession of cannabis at the age of 21 years. Will this affect security clearance vetting?

This incident could affect the process. A narcotics possession offence remains on record for three years. It will no longer come to light in security clearance vetting after this time has expired. Supo considers whether any register entry disclosed in the investigation is relevant to security clearance in the individual case.

Liisa is a candidate for a financial administration position in an export business that is important for Finland. She has had financial difficulties in the past that led to a loss of credit worthiness. Will this affect security clearance vetting?

These problems could be relevant to security clearance vetting. Supo may notify the employer of past payment defaults if they are relevant to the position that the candidate is seeking. Records of debt recovery proceedings more than four years old are generally disregarded. Credit records and debt recovery details are reviewed in standard and comprehensive, but not in concise security clearance vetting.

Jenni has applied for a senior public service position and will be subject to comprehensive security clearance vetting, which will also examine foreign interests. Jenni lived in India for a couple of years as part of a working assignment. She lived for a year in France as an exchange student, where she met her husband. Do these interests affect security clearance vetting?

These factors are unlikely to have any effect. Foreign interests are an increasingly common element in the lives of many people in Finland, and their presence does not impede security clearance vetting. The purpose of the investigation is to highlight points of potential exposure to coercion by a foreign power.

The details provided by Ilkka on security clearance vetting forms do not match the information found in Supo registry checks. Will this affect the investigation?

This will probably have some impact on the process. The employer will usually be notified in writing if a subject supplies false information in the security clearance vetting process.

As a central government official, Mikko has been subject to security clearance vetting. Mikko is convicted of assault. Will the conviction matter if security clearance vetting has already been done?

Security clearance vetting involves five years of reliability monitoring. In the event of any criminal offence, Supo will wait for the case to advance to the preliminary investigation stage. Individuals always have an opportunity to state their views to Supo before Supo notifies the employer.

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