

of a risk designation system for agency use in an OPM issuance as described in § 731.102(c).

(b) *Public Trust positions.* Positions at the high or moderate risk levels would normally be designated as “Public Trust” positions. Such positions may involve policy making, major program responsibility, public safety and health, law enforcement duties, fiduciary responsibilities or other duties demanding a significant degree of public trust, and positions involving access to or operation or control of financial records, with a significant risk for causing damage or realizing personal gain.

(c) *Investigative requirements.* (1) Persons receiving an appointment made subject to investigation under this part must undergo a background investigation. OPM is authorized to establish minimum investigative requirements correlating to risk levels. Investigations should be initiated before appointment but no later than 14 calendar days after placement in the position.

(2) All positions subject to investigation under this part must also receive a sensitivity designation of Special-Sensitive, Critical-Sensitive, or Non-critical-Sensitive, when appropriate. This designation is complementary to the risk designation, and may have an effect on the position’s investigative requirement. Sections 732.201 and 732.202 of this chapter detail the various sensitivity levels and investigative requirements. Procedures for determining investigative requirements for all positions based upon risk and sensitivity will be published in OPM issuances, as described in §§ 731.102(c) and 732.201(b).

(3) If suitability issues develop prior to the required investigation, OPM or the agency may conduct an investigation sufficient to resolve the issues and support a suitability determination or action, if warranted. If the person is appointed, the minimum level of investigation must be conducted as required by paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(d) *Suitability reinvestigations.* Agencies, relying on authorities such as the Computer Security Act of 1987 and OMB Circular No. A-130 Revised (issued November 20, 2000), may require incum-

bents of certain public trust positions to undergo periodic reinvestigations. The appropriate level of any reinvestigation will be determined by the agency, but may be based on supplemental guidance provided by OPM.

(e) *Risk level changes.* If an employee experiences a change to a higher position risk level due to promotion, demotion, or reassignment, or the risk level of the employee’s position is changed to a higher level, the employee may remain in or encumber the position. Any upgrade in the investigation required for the new risk level should be initiated within 14 calendar days after the promotion, demotion, reassignment or new designation of risk level is final.

(f) *Completed investigations.* Any suitability investigation completed by an agency under provisions of paragraph (d) of this section must result in a determination by the employing agency. The subject’s employment status (i.e., applicant, appointee, or employee as defined in § 731.101) will determine the applicable agency authority and procedures to be followed in any action taken.

[73 FR 20154, Apr. 15, 2008, as amended at 73 FR 66492, Nov. 11, 2008]

Subpart B—Suitability Determinations and Actions

§ 731.201 Standard.

The standard for a suitability action defined in § 731.203 and taken against an applicant, appointee, or employee is that the action will protect the integrity or promote the efficiency of the service.

§ 731.202 Criteria for making suitability determinations.

(a) *General.* OPM, or an agency to which OPM has delegated authority, must base its suitability determination on the presence or absence of one or more of the specific factors (charges) in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Specific factors.* In determining whether a person is suitable for Federal employment, only the following factors will be considered a basis for finding a person unsuitable and taking a suitability action:

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(1) Misconduct or negligence in employment;

(2) Criminal or dishonest conduct;

(3) Material, intentional false statement, or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;

(4) Refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter;

(5) Alcohol abuse, without evidence of substantial rehabilitation, of a nature and duration that suggests that the applicant or appointee would be prevented from performing the duties of the position in question, or would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of the applicant or appointee or others;

(6) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances without evidence of substantial rehabilitation;

(7) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and

(8) Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question.

(c) *Additional considerations.* OPM and agencies must consider any of the following additional considerations to the extent OPM or the relevant agency, in its sole discretion, deems any of them pertinent to the individual case:

(1) The nature of the position for which the person is applying or in which the person is employed;

(2) The nature and seriousness of the conduct;

(3) The circumstances surrounding the conduct;

(4) The recency of the conduct;

(5) The age of the person involved at the time of the conduct;

(6) Contributing societal conditions; and

(7) The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation.

(d) *Reciprocity.* An agency cannot make a new determination under this section for a person who has already been determined suitable or fit based on character or conduct unless a new investigation is required under § 731.104 or § 731.106, or no new investigation is required but the investigative record on file for the person shows conduct

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that is incompatible with the core duties of the relevant covered position.

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§ 731.203 Suitability actions by OPM and other agencies.

(a) For purposes of this part, a suitability action is one or more of the following:

(1) Cancellation of eligibility;

(2) Removal;

(3) Cancellation of reinstatement eligibility; and

(4) Debarment.

(b) A non-selection, or cancellation of eligibility for a specific position based on an objection to an eligible or pass over of a preference eligible under 5 CFR 332.406, is *not* a suitability action even if it is based on reasons set forth in § 731.202.

(c) A suitability action may be taken against an applicant or an appointee when OPM or an agency exercising delegated authority under this part finds that the applicant or appointee is unsuitable for the reasons cited in § 731.202, subject to the agency limitations of § 731.103(g).

(d) OPM may require that an appointee or an employee be removed on the basis of a material, intentional false statement, deception or fraud in examination or appointment; refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter; or a statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the person's lawful employment.

(e) OPM may cancel any reinstatement eligibility obtained as a result of a material, intentional false statement, deception or fraud in examination or appointment.

(f) An action to remove an appointee or employee *for suitability reasons* under this part is not an action under part 315, 359, or 752 of this chapter. Where behavior covered by this part may also form the basis for an action under parts 315, 359, or 752 of this chapter, an agency may take the action under part 315, 359, or 752 of this chapter, as appropriate, instead of under this part. An agency must notify OPM to the extent required in § 731.103(g) if it wants to take, or has taken, action under these authorities.