

Role of OPSEC

In today's information age, the effective conduct of government activities requires increased efforts to ensure that our adversaries do not obtain data that would allow them to achieve their objectives or undermine ours. In terms of information protection, OPSEC is a non-traditional program. While most traditional programs are concerned with the protection of classified information, OPSEC is concerned with the protection of both classified and sensitive unclassified information that contributes to an adversary's collection objectives. The OPSEC program is designed to counter the inadvertent release of sensitive information, thereby reducing the unwitting, typically piecemeal, exposure of such information.

Controlling indicators and intentions is a perfectly natural action in any competitive situation. A classic example is playing poker. When playing poker, what have you done to ensure the success of your mission - - i.e., to win the hand? Chances are that you held your cards close to the chest and carefully controlled gestures, expressions, and tone of voice. This is an intuitive approach to protecting information - - or indicators of what you have been dealt. Although such an intuitive approach is appropriate for simple cases, it may be inadequate for more complex situations. The complex situations and operations within DOE do not lend themselves to "intuitive" approaches for the protection of information. That is why a more formalized methodology has been established.

So what is the role of OPSEC? - - To protect our critical program information from inadvertent compromise.