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American Forces Press Service

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American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12, 2014 – The Defense Department has taken several initiatives to control security clearances following a mass shooting by a contract employee at the Washington Navy Yard last September.

The shooting left 12 people dead. The gunman, a former Navy reservist, was shot dead by police. Stephen Lewis, deputy director for personnel, industrial and physical security policy in the Pentagon's Counterintelligence and security directorate, told the panel about DOD's practices and procedures for granting security clearances to employees.

"We have used multiple initiatives to review and confirm the quality of the investigative products we receive, the quality of our adjudications, and the accuracy and completeness of the documentation of adjudicative rationales in support of oversight and reciprocity," Lewis said.

He added that the department also has a certification process in place for personnel security adjudicators, and that component heads are responsible for oversight roles and responsibilities.

"[They are] responsible for establishing and overseeing implementation of procedures to ensure prompt reporting of significant derogatory information, unfavorable administrative actions, and adverse information, unfavorable administrative actions, and adverse information related to its personnel," he said.

Such information is given to appropriate officials in the component, and to the DOD Consolidated Adjudication Facility, when applicable, Lewis said. "This responsibility applies to military service members, DOD civilians and embedded contractor personnel," he added.

"Under the National Industrial Security Program, cleared contractors are required to report adverse information... regarding their cleared employees," Lewis noted.

The Defense Security Service Companies are responsible for overseeing the businesses cleared to work on classified contracts for DOD and 26 other federal departments and agencies that use DOD industrial security services, Lewis said.

"[DOD] has worked very hard to create improvements that produced greater efficiencies and effectiveness in the face of initiating and adjudicating background investigations," Lewis told the committee.

The Government Accountability Office removed DOD's personnel security clearance program from its high-risk list in 2011, he added.