



# **Frequently Asked Questions for Participating Members and Organizations**

Version 3.0.6

**Table of Contents**

**ABOUT SWAC** .....

What is SWAC? ..... 3

What public needs does SWAC fulfill? ..... 3

Why is SWAC unique? ..... 3

What are the levels of security screened for by SWAC? ..... 4

What kind of information is included in the background check? ..... 4

**ENROLLMENT PROCESS** .....

Does my company need to sign up? ..... 5

What is a DSR? ..... 5

What is a DAC? ..... 5

How long should the entire individual enrollment process take? ..... 5

What documents are accepted for Positive Identification (Step 3 above)? ..... 6

How do I know that my personal information is safe? ..... 6

What if I do not have the required forms of identification, or do not wish to consent to background screening? ..... 6

What if I am a Bidder? ..... 6

Where do I go to present my identity documents? ..... 7

Are appointments required at SWAC Processing Centers? ..... 7

Is help available to complete the application? ..... 7

What if someone doesn't meet the qualification standards? ..... 7

What can disqualify membership in SWAC? ..... 7

What are disqualifying crimes? ..... 7

**SWAC MEMBERSHIP** .....

What if a SWAC Membership ID Card needs to be replaced? ..... 8

How much does membership in SWAC cost? ..... 8

Will a non-U.S. citizen be able to get a SWAC membership? ..... 9

How long is my SWAC membership valid? ..... 9

Can I upgrade my current one-year membership to a three-year membership term after 2/6/2012? ..... 9

Is there a refund if I don't use the SWAC membership for the three-year term? ..... 9

## ABOUT SWAC

### What is SWAC?

SWAC is an acronym for Secure Worker Access Consortium. SWAC is a highly-secure, information-sharing program that provides services and technologies to verify that individuals who access sensitive facilities are known and have demonstrated a safe and threat-free history. NJT and MTA have joined the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to now specify SWAC as the regional standard for processing of Personal Identity Verification and Criminal Background Investigations. These agencies and others are strategically partnering with regional labor groups and contractors to mitigate risk, develop a SWAC Trusted Community, and cooperatively improve regional and national security.

### What public needs does SWAC fulfill?

SWAC provides turnkey services and technologies in a practical, cost-effective package. It delivers a shared solution based on the directives and guidelines put forth by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) list of Disqualifying Criminal Offenses as detailed in 49 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 1542.209 and 1572.103.

Enrollment in SWAC enables public agencies and private corporations to cooperatively assure that individuals requiring access to secure areas of their regulated facilities, infrastructures, and ports have been pre-screened and meet personal identity verification and criminal background investigation requirements.

### Why is SWAC unique?

SWAC is the only program that enables facility owners and labor partners to strengthen regional security by providing real-time, positive identity and credential verification of their work forces. Advanced, patent-pending technology used by SWAC enables secure information sharing on a need-to-know basis among disconnected companies and industries. This technology empowers SWAC members to establish personnel assurance standards against which individuals can be measured and verified.

Most importantly, information sharing eliminates redundant identity and background checks. This results in costs savings, industry-wide.

SWAC provides:

- Personnel data collection and program administration
- Identity document verification, photo capture and authorization-form management
- Supervision of independent, third-party personal identity verification and criminal history background screening vendors
- Production and delivery of SWAC Membership ID cards
- Secure, web-based information management system
- Daily search of OFAC-SDN watch list

### **What are the levels of security screened for by SWAC?**

SWAC background screening criteria is based on, but not necessarily identical to, criteria provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) list of Disqualifying Criminal Offenses as detailed in 49 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 1542.209(d) (SIDA) and 49 CFR 1572.103 and shall be updated as required. This federal standard creates a three-tiered security profile that assures a sufficient number of qualified contract workers:

- High – for work in high-risk areas and/or access to sensitive information
- Medium – for work in medium-risk areas
- Standard – for work in all other areas

A complete list of investigations performed as well as disqualifying criminal offenses can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.secureworker.com/apply-online.asp>. In the Form Downloads section of the web page, click on the PDF file titled *Background Screening Criteria*.

### **What kind of information is included in the background check?**

Protecting workers' privacy is a SWAC priority. Federal standards and guidelines for evaluating criminal background are strictly adhered to by independent, third-party background screening companies that provide these services to SWAC. The SWAC program does not review or collect consumer credit ratings or reports. Membership is based solely on personal identity verification and criminal history.

## ENROLLMENT PROCESS

### Does my company need to sign up?

SWAC enables each applicant to sponsor their own *Individual Membership Application*; however it is most common for members to affiliate with corporate sponsors. To enroll your company, simply fill out a *Corporate Membership Application* online at <http://www.secureworker.com/apply-online.asp>. Upon completion of this short and free application, you will receive a Sponsor Account Number via email. Your company's Sponsor Account Number is very important as it is used to associate Individual Membership Applications with your company.

### What is a DSR?

A DSR is your Designated Security Representative and will be responsible for handling all SWAC activity for your business. The DSR will be assigned a login and password for permission-based access to the SWAC database. This enables your DSR to fund your SWAC account, enter individual membership applications, and print reports etc. The DSR will also receive a copy of all email correspondence from SWAC. Please note that the person you designate as your DSR must be a current SWAC member, so once your proposed DSR enters a corporate membership application, he/she should proceed to the individual membership application to complete the SWAC application process.

### What is a DAC?

A DAC is the Designated Account Contact for your business. This person can also be the DSR as outlined above. Appointing a DAC for your business is optional and not a requirement. Most DACs need to have access to the SWAC database for accounting purposes. They handle the funding of the SWAC account and they can also print reports to balance back membership to charges, etc. If you appoint a DAC, they must also be a current member in SWAC.

### How long should the entire individual enrollment process take?

There are four steps in the individual enrollment process. The entire process is often completed in as little as 1 or 2 days, and should take no more than 4 to 5 days.

**1. Online application** – Completing an application is simple and can be easily completed online in less than 10 minutes. To start, go to: <http://www.secureworker.com/apply-online.asp> and select the link that says, “**Click Here to Enroll in SWAC**”.

**2. Report to a SWAC Processing Center** – Each applicant must immediately report to a SWAC Processing Center after completing the online SWAC membership application. You must present original, unexpired government-issued documents to the SWAC Agents to verify your identity. During this visit to the Processing Center, a digital photo is captured for use on your SWAC Membership ID card, and the background screening authorization forms are confirmed with a digital signature. It is highly recommended that you complete this step immediately after submitting your online application.

**Failure to visit a SWAC Processing Center to present your appropriate, unexpired identity documents will delay your SWAC membership process. The screening investigation will not begin until you have reported to a SWAC Processing Center with the proper ID documentation.**

**3. Background Screening** – As soon as you have reported to the SWAC Processing Center and successfully completed Step 2 above, submission of your application to an independent, third-party background screening company is initiated. Results for identification verification and criminal background checks can be expected within 1-3 days. In fact, more than one third receive clearance within 24 hours and more than two thirds within 48 hours. Certain U.S. States (e.g. Pennsylvania and several New England States) and foreign address histories may require additional screening time.

**4. Membership ID Card Issuance** – Upon successful completion of Steps 1 through 3, SWAC Membership ID cards are automatically processed for issuance and are delivered to the appropriate SWAC Processing Center for pickup by authorized representatives.

### **What documents are accepted for Positive Identification (Step 3 above)?**

Identity documents presented for Positive Identification must be original, unexpired government-issued documents that are in acceptable condition so as not to hinder inspection and authentication.

A complete list of acceptable identity documents is included within the *Individual Membership Application, Step 12*. To access and download a sample application, go to:

<http://www.secureworker.com/apply-online.asp>. In the **Additional Resources for Download** section, click on the PDF file titled *Sample Documents and Application Forms*.

### **How do I know that my personal information is safe?**

To ensure the protection of personal and credential information from unauthorized access or use, technology systems used by SWAC feature redundant and varied security protocols. This layered approach to data encryption and security-protects data and internet communications at all times. All personal information is maintained in a central, protected SAS-70 Level II certified data center.

### **What if I do not have the required forms of identification, or do not wish to consent to background screening?**

All SWAC applicants are required to present the appropriate, unexpired identification forms, as outlined above, for authentication by a SWAC Agent. If you do not have the required identification information, or if you do not sign the authorization forms, we will be unable to complete your enrollment.

### **What if I am a Bidder?**

An exemption to the identity document requirement is provided for individuals who only require access to Confidential Information (e.g. bid documents). Under this exemption, the applicant's membership rights will be severely limited, a SWAC Membership ID Card will not be issued, and the applicant will not be granted access to sensitive facilities that require program participation.

Bidder submittal forms with detailed instructions are available on our website, at

[http://secureworker.com/assets/downloads/Bidder\\_ID\\_Documentation\\_Submittal\\_Forms.pdf](http://secureworker.com/assets/downloads/Bidder_ID_Documentation_Submittal_Forms.pdf)

### **Where do I go to present my identity documents?**

SWAC operates Processing Centers at major transportation centers and support offices throughout metropolitan New York and New Jersey to assure workers have fast, convenient access to enrollment services. In addition, fully operational mobile units are often dispatched to accommodate on-site processing of large groups (additional charges apply). Current information about our expanding network of SWAC Processing Centers, including locations and operating hours, is available on our website, at: <http://www.secureworker.com/info-center.asp>.

### **Are appointments required at SWAC Processing Centers?**

No appointments are necessary. Simply walk into the most convenient location. Since SWAC Processing Centers are open on specific days of the week, we do encourage you to check the hours at your local Processing Center so you can plan accordingly. Processing Center locations and operating hours are maintained on our website, at <http://www.secureworker.com/info-center.asp>.

### **Is help available to complete the application?**

Yes, SWAC Agents are available to assist applicants at 1- 212-608-0855 and at any SWAC Processing Center.

### **What if someone doesn't meet the qualification standards?**

All applicants have the opportunity to appeal an initial determination that the required screening standards were not met. To protect workers' privacy, this appeal process is conducted in confidence with the appropriate independent, third-party screening company.

### **What can disqualify membership in SWAC?**

An individual will be ineligible for SWAC membership if he/she:

- Lacks lawful presence and certain immigration status in the US
- Fails to provide proper legal paperwork for residence in this country
- Has a connection to terrorist activities as indicated by federal terrorist watch lists
- Fails to meet the minimum program standards for personal identity verification and criminal background as based upon, but not necessarily identical to criteria provided by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) list of Disqualifying Criminal Offenses and detailed in 49 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 1542.209 and 1572.103

### **What are disqualifying crimes?**

SWAC screening criteria is based upon, but not necessarily identical to directives and guidelines put forth by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) list of Disqualifying Criminal Offenses as detailed in 49 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 1542.209 and 1572.103.

For additional information on crimes that would disqualify an applicant for membership in SWAC, please visit our website at: <http://www.secureworker.com/apply-online.asp> and click on the download titled *Background Screening Criteria*.

## SWAC MEMBERSHIP

### What if a SWAC Membership ID Card needs to be replaced?

If a SWAC Membership ID Card is misplaced, damaged or stolen, the Designated Administrative Contact (DAC) or Designated Security Representative (DSR) from your organization must be informed so that the card can be inactivated and a new card issued.

SWAC is NOT liable for any SWAC cards not picked up after 30-days from print date.

SWAC is NOT responsible for SWAC cards once the property receipt is signed or for property receipts not returned within five (5) working days from when you receive them.

LOST SWAC Membership ID Cards: There is a reprint charge of \$60.00 to replace a lost SWAC Membership ID Card. Please contact: 1-609-372-4401 regarding lost SWAC cards.

### How much does membership in SWAC cost?

The chart below represents the most common SWAC memberships:

	<b>U.S. Resident</b>	<b>Foreign National*</b>
	<b>No Foreign Residency</b>	<b>No U.S. Residency</b>
	<b>(past 10 years)</b>	<b>(past 10 years)</b>
<b>SWAC Membership Application Fee</b>	\$ 256.88	\$ 256.88
<b>PIV &amp; Criminal Background Check</b>	\$ 236.33	\$ 554.86
<b>Application Handling</b>	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
<b>Total 3-Year Membership Costs</b>	\$ 508.21	\$ 826.74

U.S. Residents with no foreign residence history in the past 10 years represents 95% of all SWAC memberships.

\* While the above chart represents the most common SWAC memberships for both U.S. Residents and Foreign Nationals, there are certain Foreign Nationals who travel to the United States under ESTA or with a valid visa. Varied costs apply to these members dependent upon the circumstances; therefore, the total cost for SWAC membership will be estimated during application entry

U.S. residents with a foreign residence history within the past ten (10) years will be subject to both a U.S. and a Foreign National background screening. Additional screening charges will apply.

Foreign Nationals with a U.S. residence history within the past ten (10) years will be subject to both a Foreign National and a U.S. background screening. Additional screening charges will apply.



**Will a non-U.S. citizen be able to get a SWAC membership?**

Yes. There are a number of immigration categories that are eligible to apply including: nationals, refugees, lawful non-immigrants with unrestricted work authorization, and certain professionals with restricted work authorization. Membership eligibility is based on the applicant's ability to produce authentic forms of acceptable identity documents, as show at: <http://www.secureworker.com/apply-online.asp>. In the **Additional Resources for Download** section, click on the PDF file titled *Sample Documents and Application Forms*, and refer to pages 25-27.

**How long is my SWAC membership valid?**

New or Renewal SWAC Applications entered after **February 6, 2012**, will be valid for a three-year membership term. Those SWAC members with a current membership prior to February 6, 2012, will fulfill their current one-year term membership and then renew for three years. The expiration date is displayed on the front of your SWAC Membership ID card.

To help ensure that your membership does not expire unintentionally, if you provided an email address with your application, you will receive 90-day, 60-day and 30-day notifications prior to your membership expiration.

**Foreign Nationals:** If you are traveling to the U.S. with a current visa or under ESTA, a shorter SWAC membership term may apply dependent upon duration of stay and expiration dates.

**Can I upgrade my current one-year membership to a three-year membership term after 2/6/2012?**

There are no upgrades of SWAC membership. Upon successful renewal of your SWAC membership after February 6, 2012, your membership will then be valid for the three year term.

**Is there a refund if I don't use the SWAC membership for the three-year term?**

There is no refund for SWAC membership.