



# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING MEMBERS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**VERSION 3.1.1**

## Table of Contents

<b>About SWAC.....</b>	<b>3</b>
What is SWAC? .....	3
Why is SWAC required?.....	3
Why is SWAC unique? .....	3
What are the background screening levels for SWAC Secure Worker™? .....	4
What kind of information is included in the background check? .....	4
<b>Enrollment Process.....</b>	<b>5</b>
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 required for identity verification (Step 3 above)?.....	6
How do I know that my personal information is safe? .....	6
What if I don't have the required identification, or don't 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 an applicant doesn't meet the qualification standards?.....	7
What can disqualify membership in SWAC? .....	7
What are disqualifying crimes? .....	7
<b>SWAC Membership .....</b>	<b>8</b>
How much does membership in SWAC cost? .....	8
Secure Worker – 3 Year Membership Term.....	8
How do I replace my SWAC Membership ID Card?.....	8
Will a non-U.S. citizen be able to get a SWAC membership?.....	9
How long is my SWAC membership valid? .....	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. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and other government agencies now specify SWAC as the regional standard for processing of identity verification and employment screening. Participating agencies and other owner/operators strategically partner with regional labor groups and contractors to mitigate risk, develop the SWAC Trusted Community, cooperatively improving workplace safety and security.

### Why is SWAC required?

SWAC provides turnkey services and technologies in a practical, efficient, and 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 – for the protection of our nation's critical infrastructure.

Implementation of SWAC services 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 personnel assurance 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 identity, employment, and certification verification of their work forces. Advanced, proprietary technology used by SWAC enables secure information sharing on a need-to-know basis among disconnected organizations. This SAFETY-Act designated technology empowers SWAC members to establish personnel best-practices, against which individuals can be measured and verified.

Most importantly, information sharing eliminates redundant identity verification and other risk management and screening services. This results in substantial costs savings for all industry stakeholders.

SWAC provides:

- Secure member enrollment and confirmation of consent
- Biographic/biometric acquisition and authentication
- Employment affiliation tracking
- Identity document authentication and archival
- Criminal history background screening
- Daily terrorist watch-list monitoring
- Membership ID card production
- Customer service representatives at full-service personnel processing centers

## **What are the background screening levels for SWAC *Secure Worker*™?**

The criteria for SWAC *Secure Worker* background screening 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 sufficient 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 public record searches and associated disqualifying criminal offenses can be viewed and downloaded at <http://www.secureworker.com/about.asp>. In the **Important Resources for Download** section of the web page, click on the PDF file titled ***Background Screening Criteria*** (*Secure Worker* Only).

## **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/membership.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, maintain a personnel directory, and print associated reports. 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 reconcile payments for services. DACs must also be a current SWAC member to retain access.

### 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/membership.asp>, select the appropriate service, and click the button that says, “**APPLY OR RENEW NOW**”.
2. **Report to a SWAC Processing Center** – All SWAC applicants must immediately report to a SWAC Processing Center after completing the online 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 authorization forms are confirmed with a digital signature. It is highly recommended that you complete this step immediately after submitting your online application.

**NOTE:** 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. **Member Vetting** – 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 (for *Secure Worker* certification) 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 required for identity verification (Step 3 above)?**

Documents presented for identity verification must be original, unexpired government-issued ID 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*.

To access and download a sample application, go to: <http://www.secureworker.com/about.asp>.

In the **Important Resources for Download** section, click on **Sample Membership Application Forms**.

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

To ensure the protection of personal 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 continuously protects data and internet communications. All personally-identifiable information is maintained in a central, protected SAE-16 certified data center.

### **What if I don't have the required identification, or don't consent to background screening?**

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

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

An exemption for the presentation of identity documents is available to individuals who only require access to Confidential Information (e.g. bid documents). Under this exemption, the applicant's membership rights will be 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.

Identity document submission forms with detailed instructions for qualified Bidders are available on our website, at <http://secureworker.com/about.asp>. Select *Bidder ID Document Submission Form* from the Important Resources for Download section.

## 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). A list of SWAC Processing Centers including operating hours, is available on our website, at: <http://www.secureworker.com/about.asp>.

## Are appointments required at SWAC Processing Centers?

No appointments are necessary. Simply walk-in at 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/about.asp>.

## Is help available to complete the application?

Yes. SWAC Agents are available to assist applicants at any SWAC Processing Center during posted operating hours, or by phone at 1-212-608-0855 during normal business hours (Eastern time zone).

## What if an applicant doesn't meet the qualification standards?

All applicants can appeal an initial determination that the required identity or criminal history 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/about.asp> and click on the download titled *Background Screening Criteria (Secure Worker only)*.

## SWAC Membership

### How much does membership in SWAC cost?

#### *Secure Worker* – 3 Year Membership Term

	U.S. Residence Only, no Foreign Residence	Foreign Residence Only, no U.S. Residence	U.S. and Foreign Residency
<b>SWAC Membership</b>	\$ 210.45	\$ 210.45	\$ 210.45
<b>PIV &amp; Criminal Background Check (Includes Watch List Monitoring)</b>	\$ 212.55	\$562.55	\$ 732.55
<b>Application Handling</b>	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00	\$ 16.00
<b>Total 3-Year Membership Costs</b>	<b>\$ 439.00</b>	<b>\$ 789.00</b>	<b>\$ 959.00</b>

#### **IMPORTANT NOTES FOR *SECURE WORKER* BACKGROUND SCREENING:**

- Residency is determined based on residency over the last 10 years prior to application submittal.
- 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.

### How do I replace my SWAC Membership ID Card?

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 deactivated and a new card issued.

Card reprints are subject to a \$60.00 replacement fee. Please visit or contact SWAC to request a card reprint.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- 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.



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

There are non-citizen opportunities for membership including: foreign nationals, lawful non-immigrants with unrestricted work authorization, and certain professionals with restricted work authorization.

All applicants must produce authentic forms of acceptable identity documents, as show at: <http://www.secureworker.com/about.asp>. In the **Important Resources for Download** section, please see ***Identity Document Requirements***.

## How long is my SWAC membership valid?

New or Renewal SWAC Applications are valid for a three-year membership term. 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.

**IMPORTANT NOTE FOR 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.

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

There is no refund for shortened SWAC memberships.