HSO SPOTLIGHT No. 03-2011:	**Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12) badges and their "Certificates"**
What is the issue?	**Ensure that the certificates built in to HSPD-12 badges do not expire**
Why do we need this?	**Keep HSPD-12 badges operating properly**
Who is impacted?	**HSOs and anyone with an HSPD-12 badge**
What does the HSO need to do?	**Advise their personnel on how to check the expiration date on their certificates and renew them when required**

NOTICE: The information in all *HSO Spotlights* applies only at DOE Headquarters facilities in the Washington, DC area. They are not intended to apply at DOE field sites, which may have entirely different local procedures.

Since October 2007, HQ has been issuing HSPD-12 badges to most HQ employees to serve as their security badge and operate the access control systems at HQ facilities. More recently, the HSPD-12 badge has been used to grant access to HQ computers.

All HSPD-12 badges contain an expiration date in the upper right hand corner of the badge. The expiration date is normally 5 years from the date the badge was last enrolled in the USAccess system. The expiration date is clearly visible to the badge holder. What most employees do not know, however, is that HSPD-12 badges also contain electronic "certificates" built in to the badge. These certificates are currently used to grant the badge holder access to HQ computers and computer applications. When a user inserts his/her HSPD-12 badge into the "Smart" card reader attached to a computer, the reader automatically searches for the certificates, verifies they are current, and then grants access to the computer and its applications. In the future (most likely in early 2012),

these certificates will also be an important factor in allowing the HSPD-12 badge to operate HQ access control systems such as the turnstiles at some building entrances and the doors to Limited and Exclusion Areas.

It is important that the certificates not be allowed to expire. If they do, the HSPD-12 badge holder will almost certainly be unable to access their office computer or operate HQ access control devices. The HSPD-12 badge will then need to be replaced and the holder will need to re-enroll in the HSPD-12 badge process (be fingerprinted, show two forms of identification, etc.) The result will be increased expense to DOE and increased processing actions by the badge holder.

The central problem is that certificates expire 3 years from the last date the HSPD-12 badge was issued. Since the certificate expiration date does not appear anywhere on the face of the HSPD-12 badge, HQ employees who were issued HSPD-12 badges in late 2007 were not aware of the need to update their certificates. Their certificates are now beginning to expire and, as a result, their HSPD-12 badges are failing to work properly. **It is important that all HQ employees understand that they need to renew the certificates in their HSPD-12 badges.**

Automatic Renewal Notices:

To avoid potential problems with HSPD-12 badges failing, holders will be automatically notified to renew their certificates before they are due to expire. The notification will be in the form of an email from HSPD12Admin@identitymsp.com. The notification will contain instructions for scheduling an appointment for a Card Update. Please do not mistake these email notifications for spam.

If a badge holder uses his/her HSPD-12 badge to access their computer, the holder may get "pop up" messages on the computer screen reminding him/her to renew the certificates.

Do not ignore these messages. If a badge holder's certificates expire, the current badge becomes invalid and will have to be replaced, at no small cost to the Government.

Do not wait until the last day to update your certificates. They expire before the workday begins and must be renewed at least 1 day in advance and no more than 180 days in advance of the expiration date.

How to Check the Expiration Dates of Your Certificates:

If an employee wants to know when his/her certificates will expire or prefer not to rely upon the automated notifications, it is easy to determine exactly when an employee's certificates will expire:

1. Place the HSPD-12 badge in the Smart card reader attached to any HQ computer.
2. Look for the small icon representing the Smart card reader in the bar at the lower right hand corner of the computer screen.

3. Pass the mouse over the icon and it will reflect the words “ActivClient Agent – Smart card inserted.”
4. Left click on the icon and then click on the “Open” menu item.
5. Left click on the “My certificates” file folder.
6. Left click on any of the files shown in the folder.
7. In the “Properties” tab, look for the “Valid from” dates, specifically the “to:” date. The date shown is the exact date the certificates will expire.

If an employee does not have access to a Smart card equipped-computer, the employee can make an educated guess as to when his/her certificates will expire by subtracting 2 years from the date shown in the upper right hand corner of the HSPD-12 badge.

What to Do Once the Certificate Expiration Date Has Been Determined:

Employees should go into their Microsoft Outlook Calendar and establish a reminder for themselves to renew their HSPD-12 badge certificates. An example of such a reminder would be: “Renew my badge certificates at the badge office.” The employee should set one reminder approximately 1 month before the certificate is due to expire and a second reminder approximately 2 weeks before the certificate is due to expire.

How to Renew a Certificate:

Certificates can be renewed at any USAccess Activation Station, including the Forrestal and Germantown badge offices. The badge offices are located in Room 1E-090 at the Forrestal and Room B-106 at Germantown. Their operating hours are from 8 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. It takes 3 to 5 minutes to renew a certificate.

The badge holder can make an appointment at the badge office as explained in the e-mail notification they receive or the badge holder can “walk in” to the badge offices; however, “walk ins” may have to wait in line for service until those with appointments have completed their transactions.

Additional Information:

More information about HSPD-12 badge certificates is available at (https://powerpedia.energy.gov/wiki/HSPD-12_Certificates_FAQs). If you have questions that have not already been answered on PowerPedia, contact Tim Gaines at (301) 903-4893 or Ceil Rogers at (301) 903-8873.