

SPOT Authorized PKI Certificate FAQs

Synchronized Predeployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT) was designated by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) as the system of record, in accordance with DoDI 3020.41, for Contractor Personnel Authorized to Accompany the U.S. Armed Forces. To access the SPOT application, registration with a SPOT authorized PKI certificate must be submitted and approved. The SPOT registration process is conducted online which requires a computer laptop with internet connectivity. SPOT currently supports Internet Explorer versions 6.0 and 7.0 and version 8.0 in Compatibility mode.

QUESTION: Why will a PKI certificate be required for SPOT-ES access?

ANSWER: Directive Joint Task Force – Global Network Operations Communications Tasking Order (JTF-GNO CTO) 07-015 (07APR08) mandates users employ a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificate to access private DoD applications.

QUESTION: What are PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) and PKI certificates?

ANSWER: PKI is a suite of products and services which provide and manage certificates for public key cryptography. PKI certificates identify the individual named in the certificate, bind that person to a particular public/private key pair, and ensure secure access to information is not available for public distribution. PKI provides the data integrity, user identification and authentication, user non-repudiation, data confidentiality, encryption and digital signature services for programs and application, which use the DoD networks. A PKI certificate comes in two different formats, software (installed on computers) and hardware (token, Common Access Card (CAC) or Personal Identity Verification (PIV)).

For more information, please visit <http://iase.disa.mil>.

QUESTION: What is CAC (Common Access Card)?

ANSWER: A CAC is a smart card used as the standard identification and is issued by DoD for military, government, and eligible DoD contractor personnel. A CAC is used to enable logical and physical access to DoD computers, networks, and certain DoD facilities. It is also used to encrypt and electronically "sign" emails and documents or securely login agency networks, systems, and Web sites.

For more information on CAC, including how to get a CAC, please visit <http://www.cac.mil/>.

QUESTION: What is ECA (External Certificate Authority)?

ANSWER: ECA is a private program supported by the DoD to allow private industry partners to be issued PKI certificates that are DoD trusted. DoD has approved several ECA vendors to issue digital certificates for:

- Encryption to secure email and digital files
- Server Authentication for identification of web sites and other devices
- Domain Controllers for securing your Windows domain and Signing of Code
- Identification/Digital Signature for people and devices

The ECA certificate provides medium assurance, medium token and medium-hardware assurance levels, as defined in the U.S. Government ECA Certificate Policy. ECA offers 1 and 3-year validity periods on all certificate types. ECA subscribers include government contractors and vendors, allied partners, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, foreign nationals, members of other Government agencies and their trading partners. The use of ECA certificates is not restricted to the conducting of business with the DoD. ECA certificates may be subject to a cost determined by the ECA vendor.

For SPOT-ES access, it is recommended that contractor companies, at a minimum, should obtain medium assurance level certificates. For more information, please visit <http://iase.disa.mil/pki/eca/>.

QUESTION: What is the DoD approved list of ECA vendors?

ANSWER: Please visit <http://iase.disa.mil/pki/eca/> for an up-to-date list. As of March 1, 2012, they are:

- [Operational Research Consultants, Inc. \(ORC\)](#)
- [VeriSign, Inc.](#)
- [IdenTrust, Inc.](#)

For SPOT-ES access, it is recommended that contractor companies, at a minimum, should obtain medium assurance level certificates. For more information, please visit <http://iase.disa.mil/pki/eca/>.

QUESTION: What is a “SPOT authorized PKI certificate”?

ANSWER: SPOT-ES supports many government agencies and therefore, the SPOT-ES program has authorized several CACs, PIVs and DoD approved ECA PKI certificates. Below is a list of common PKI certificates authorized to access SPOT-ES:

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- A CAC
- PIVs from: Department of State (DoS)/United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Justice (DoJ) and General Services Administration (GSA)
- An ECA certificate: SPOT-ES is recommending, at a minimum, contractor companies obtain a medium assurance certificate. ECA certificates must be issued by one of the DoD approved ECA vendors.

If your certificate was issued by one of the above agencies or ECA vendor and are still unable to obtain access, please contact the SPOT-ES Help Desk (Email: SPOT.helpdesk@us.army.mil or Phone: (717) 458-0747) for guidance.

QUESTION: When will a PKI certificate be required for SPOT-ES access on NIPRNet?

ANSWER:

- Effective April 1, 2012, a PKI certificate will be required for SPOT-ES access on NIPRNet.
- From April 1, 2012 to May 31, 2012, existing AKO or User Name/Password account users will be required to obtain and add a PKI certificate to their account in order to login the SPOT-ES applications.
- Beginning June 1, 2012, SPOT-ES will no longer provide the option for users to add a PKI certificate to an AKO or Username/Password account. The only option available will be to login with a PKI certificate.

QUESTION: Who will need a PKI certificate to access SPOT-ES on NIPRNet?

ANSWER: All new SPOT-ES users must register for an account with their PKI certificate. Existing users who access SPOT-ES applications using an AKO or Username/Password account should add a PKI certificate to their account in order to login the SPOT-ES applications.

Effective April 1, 2012, all users will need a PKI certificate to access SPOT-ES on NIPRNet.

QUESTION: Who should I contact to get a SPOT authorized PKI certificate?

ANSWER: Contact your supervisor or administrator for guidance. They will know whether a CAC or a minimum assurance ECA certificate should be issued.

QUESTION: How do I apply for a CAC or other non-DoD PIV?

ANSWER: Each government agency has their own process to authorize and process CACs for their employees. Please contact your supervisor or administrator for guidance.

For more information on how to obtain a CAC, please visit <http://www.cac.mil/>

QUESTION: Who will pay for a SPOT authorized PKI certificate?

ANSWER: Please contact your supervisor or administrator for information.

QUESTION: How long does it take to obtain a SPOT authorized PKI certificate?

ANSWER: The time varies depending on several factors. In some cases, it can take up to 8 weeks to complete the process.

QUESTION: Can a foreign national (not U.S. citizen) get a SPOT authorized PKI certificate?

ANSWER: A foreign national may obtain a SPOT authorized PKI certificate, typically from a DoD approved ECA vendor. There is an identity proofing process for certificate issuance to foreign nationals.

Please contact the individual vendors (links listed above) for further details, cost and timeline information.

QUESTION: I am an existing SPOT-ES user with an AKO or Username/Password account, how do I add my PKI certificate to my existing account?

ANSWER:

Before April 1, 2012

To add a PKI certificate to your current AKO or User Name/Password account, please access the "Add a SPOT Authorized PKI Certificate Credential" quick guide on the SPOT NIPRNet Library tab in the SPOT-ES Resource Center (<http://www.resource.spot-es.net>). It is strongly recommended that you complete this process before April 1, 2012.

From April 1 to May 31, 2012

Select **Add Certificate using my AKO** or **Add Certificate using my User Name and Password** link from the SPOT Login page. Follow the instructions and your certificate will be added. Once you have added a certificate to your existing account, you will only be able to login to SPOT-ES using the certificate account.

After June 1, 2012

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If you have not added a PKI certificate to your existing AKO or Username/Password account, you will not be able to login to SPOT-ES. Therefore, you need to add a PKI certificate to your existing account before June 1, 2012.

Note: During the process of adding a certificate to your AKO or Username/Password account, a pop-up window will display, prompting you to select your certificate. If the pop-up window does not display, it is likely that your certificate is not recognized by SPOT-ES. Please contact the SPOT-ES Help Desk at email: SPOT.helpdesk@us.army.mil or phone: (717) 458-0747 for guidance.

QUESTION: I am new to SPOT-ES and have a PKI certificate, how and where should I start?

ANSWER: Select the **Register** link from the SPOT Login page and follow the instructions to register for an account with your SPOT authorized PKI certificate. You must have your SPOT sponsor point of contact information to submit the registration request.

QUESTION: I have a PKI certificate and tried to add it to my current username/password or AKO account. Why does it fail to work?

ANSWER: Please contact the SPOT-ES Help Desk at email: SPOT.helpdesk@us.army.mil or phone: (717) 458-0747 for guidance.

QUESTION: I have both AKO and PKI certificate accounts but have used AKO to login. Should I stop using AKO now and start using PKI certificate to log in?

ANSWER: Yes. It is strongly recommended that you start using your PKI certificate to login so that you can verify the PKI certificate is valid. If your PKI certificate is expired or becomes invalid, please contact your supervisor or administrator for guidance.

QUESTION: What will happen to my Username/Password or AKO account after I add a PKI certificate to it?

ANSWER: Once you add a PKI certificate to your Username/Password or AKO account, you should only login SPOT-ES using your PKI certificate. After April 1, 2012, you will only be able to login using your PKI certificate.

QUESTION: I'm a new user and just registered my PKI certificate with SPOT. If I need to access TOPSS, do I need a new certificate?

ANSWER: No. The same PKI certificate can be used when you register for a TOPSS account.