

[The Employee Polygraph Protection Act \(EPPA\)](#)

The Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988 (EPPA) generally prevents private sector employers from using [lie detector tests](#), either for pre-employment screening or during the course of employment, with certain exceptions. Employers generally may not require or request any employee or job applicant to take a lie detector test, or discharge, discipline, or discriminate against an employee or job applicant for refusing to take a test or for exercising other rights under the Act.

EPPA excludes federal, state and local government agencies from the Act's coverage, with respect to public employees. Lie detector tests may also be administered by the Federal Government to employees of Federal contractors engaged in national security intelligence or counterintelligence functions.

EPPA includes limited exemptions that allow for the administration of polygraph tests (but no other lie detector tests) by private sector employers:

Subject to restrictions, the Act permits polygraph (a type of lie detector) tests to be administered to certain job applicants of security service firms (armored car, alarm, and guard) and of pharmaceutical manufacturers, distributors, and dispensers.

Subject to restrictions, the Act also permits polygraph testing of certain employees of private firms who are reasonably suspected of involvement in a workplace incident (theft, embezzlement, etc.) that resulted in specific economic loss or injury to the employer.

Where polygraph examinations are permitted under the Act, they are subject to strict standards concerning the conduct of the test, including the pre-test, testing, and post-test phases of the examination.

The Employment Standards Administration, [Wage and Hour Division](#) (WHD) enforces the EPPA.