

Feds shut down background check database over flaw

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In this June 25, 2015 file photo, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Katherine Archuleta testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington. The federal personnel agency whose records were plundered by hackers linked to China says it has temporarily shut down a massive database used to update and store background investigation records. The agency says a newly discovered flaw left the system vulnerable to hackers. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

The federal personnel agency whose records were plundered by hackers

linked to China announced on Monday the temporary shutdown of a massive database used to update and store background investigation records after newly discovering a flaw that left the system vulnerable to additional breaches.

There is no evidence the vulnerability has been exploited by [hackers](#), agency spokesman Samuel Schumach said in a statement, adding that the Office of Personnel Management took the step protectively. He said the system could be shut down for four to six weeks.

Hackers suspected of working for the Chinese government are believed to have stolen records for as many as 18 million current and former federal employees and contractors last year. Detailed background investigations for security clearances of military and intelligence agency employees were among the documents taken.

The shutdown announced Monday is expected to hamper agencies' ability to initiate investigations for new employees and contractors, as well as renewal investigations for security clearances, Schumach said.

But, he added, the [federal government](#) will still be able to hire, and in some cases grant clearances on an interim basis.

The database is known as e-QIP, short for Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing.

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