

Classification Process

Quick Reference Guide (QRG)



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13 Rules of Classification per Executive Order (EO) 12958, as Amended

1. The information **must** be owned by, produced by or for, or is under the control of the U.S. Government
2. The information **must** pertain to one or more of the eight reasons from Section 1.4 in EO 12958, as amended:
 - (a) Military plans, weapons systems, or operations
 - (b) Foreign government information
 - (c) Intelligence activities (including special activities), intelligence sources or methods, or cryptology
 - (d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - (e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to the national security, which includes defense against transnational terrorism
 - (f) US Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - (g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems installations, projects, or plans relating to the national security
 - (h) Weapons of mass destruction
3. A determination has been made that unauthorized disclosure of the information reasonably could be expected to result in damage to national security.
 - Derivative classifiers shall observe and respect Original Classification Authority (OCA) decisions by using authorized classification guide(s) (e.g., the CIA National Security Classification Guide) or source documents to classify National Security Information
 - OCA classifiers shall select the appropriate reason(s) from EO 12958, as amended (Section 1.4) and must describe damage to national security

Classification Levels

Confidential: Shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

Secret: Shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause serious damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

Top Secret: Shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

Dissemination Controls for Unclassified Information

FOUO (For Official Use Only): This marking is used for UNCLASSIFIED official government information that may not be publicly released under the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act), 5 USC Section 552(B) exemptions.

AIUO (Administrative Internal Use Only): This CIA-specific dissemination control marking is applied to unclassified information that is typically administrative in nature. AIUO is a subset of FOUO and thus, may not be publicly released under the FOIA exemptions. AIUO information should not be disseminated outside CIA.

PROPIN (Proprietary Information): This marking is used to identify information provided by a commercial firm or private source under an express or implied understanding that the information will be protected as a proprietary trade secret or proprietary data that is believed to have actual or potential value.

Dissemination Controls for Classified Information

ORCON (Originator Controlled): Used on classified intelligence that clearly identifies or would reasonably permit ready identification of intelligence sources or methods that are particularly susceptible to countermeasures which would nullify or measurably reduce their effectiveness.

SAMI (Sources and Methods Information): Identifies classified intelligence requiring supervisor-validated need-to-know prior to granting reader access; and which may not be released in any form to foreign governments, foreign nationals, foreign organizations, or non-US citizens without appropriate sanitization and release in accordance with provisions of Director of Central Intelligence Directive (DCID) 6/7 and National Disclosure Policy (NDP) -1.

NOFORN (Not Releasable To Foreign Nationals): Identifies classified intelligence that may not be released in any form to foreign governments, foreign nationals, foreign organizations, or non-US citizens without permission of the originator and in accordance with provisions of DCID 5/6 and NDP-1. This marking is also used by the State Department as SBU/NOFORN.

REL TO (Authorized for Release To): Identifies classified information that an originator has predetermined to be releasable, or has been released through established foreign disclosure procedures and channels to the foreign country(ies)/international organization(s) indicated.

RELIDO (Releasable By Information Disclosure Official): Used to indicate that the originator has authorized Designated Intelligence Disclosure Officials (DIDO) to make further sharing decisions in accordance with the existing procedures for uncaveated intelligence materials (i.e., intelligence with no restrictive dissemination controls).

CIA INTERNAL USE ONLY: May not be released or shown to anyone outside the Agency without the permission of the originating office; unique Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) marking.

Resources:

1. Executive Order (EO) 12958, as amended
2. www.classification.cia
3. CIA National Security Classification Guide

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Excess cut off - 0.7" - 3-hole punch on opposite end