



DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION (U/UNCLASSIFIED)

SUBJECT: Existing Material Classification Framework

REFERENCES: Executive Order 13526

(U) President Roberts has directed the Director of National Intelligence to compile critical information for distribution to the intelligence agencies surrounding the classification of sensitive materials and protecting our national security. This memorandum utilizes existing executive orders and reinforces governing federal statutes relating to national security.

Overview.

(U) Executive Order 13526 has established a uniform classification system to be utilized by departments and agencies, presidential designees, and personnel for effective management and dissemination of sensitive materials to authorized persons based on classification level. E.O. 13526 has designated three types of classification levels: [1] top secret, [2] secret, [3] confidential. As promulgated in Exec. Ord. No. 13526, sec. 1.3, the original classification authority is granted to the President; Vice President; agency-heads; designees by the President; federal government officials; and authorized officials for classification at low levels.

Information Classification.

(U) In accordance with sec. 1.4., certain “information shall not be considered for classification...” unless such information if released could “reasonably be expected to cause identifiable or describable damage to the national security...” and furthermore recognizes the following information to be deemed classifiable: “(a) military plans, weapons systems, or operations; (b) foreign government information;

[1] “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.

[2] “Secret” shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause serious damage to national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

[3] “Confidential” shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

(c) intelligence activities (including covert action) intelligence sources or methods, or cryptology; (d) foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States, including confidential sources; (e) scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to the national security; (f) United States Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities; (g) vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to the national security; or (h) the development, production, or use of weapons of mass destruction.”

Classified Material Durations and Reclassification.

(U) Persons designated with ‘original classification authority’ must specify a date for declassification. Classified information may remain classified for a period of ten-years from its original classification. However, there are exceptions the ten-year classification period. We must approach declassification with thorough evaluation. In our evaluations, we must consider the risks, sensitivity, and dangers of materials—such that if released, would cause irreparable harm to our national security.

Other information mandatory (summarized):

- Classified information may be released for a specific date and original classification authorities are authorized to extend periods for up to twenty-five years.
- Information may not be classified indefinitely.
- Original classification authorities are required to specify a date or event for declassification.

(U) Until a system has been implemented to automatically declassify materials that have surpassed its classification periods, original classification authorities are instructed to upload information into the public archive operated by the Office of the Director of National Security.

(U) Certain information that involves “confidential human source or human intelligence source or key design concepts of weapons of mass destruction...” shall not be subjected to automatic declassification with the ten-year limitation. Original classification authorities are granted the ability to extend the classification period within a twenty-five-year classification period. *See* Exec. Ord. No. 13526, Sec. 1.5.

Indica, Prohibitions, Declassification.

(U) At original classification, one of the three levels of classification must be applied to information. Information must contain key details for authentication, which include “the identity, by name and position, or by personal identifier, of the original classification authority [...]” furthermore, instructions for declassification must also be present with a specified event or date for declassification. As a reminder, there is no automatic declassification, therefor, original

classification authorities are required to disclose information, unless there has been an extension on classified information.

Other requirements:

- Information must specify the reasoning behind its classification.
- Portions of information or materials must contain a classification and specify portions unclassified.

(U) Sec. 1.7. of Exec. Ord. 13526 promulgates that not all information may be classified.

Information may not be classified if it to:

“(1) conceal violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error;

“(2) prevent embarrassment to a person, organization, or agency;

“(3) restrain competition; or

“(4) prevent or delay the release of information that does not require protection in the interest of national security.”

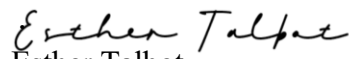
Additionally, in such cases where reclassification is necessary, it must be reported directly to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

(U) As abovementioned and reiterated here, materials that have surpassed their classification period shall be immediately declassified unless there has been an extension—and shall be done by the original classification authority. If the original classification authorities no longer have access to sensitive information or the ability to declassify such information, it is the responsibility of “a supervisory official of either the originator or his or her successor in function, if the original supervisory official has original classification authority;” or “officials delegated declassification authority in writing by the agency head or the senior agency officials of the originating agency.”

(U) In consultation with the Intelligence Community, the Director of National Intelligence, or if designated by the Director of National Intelligence, the Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, may effectuate changes to classification which include declassification, downgrading, or direct declassification or downgrading.

Entered into the effect on July 2, 2025

Signed,



Esther Talbot

Director of National Intelligence