

What is CUI?

Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions



CONTROLLED
UNCLASSIFIED
INFORMATION

WHAT is the CUI program?

Executive Order 13556 “Controlled Unclassified Information,” (the Order), issued on November 4, 2010, established the CUI program, which is a system that standardizes and simplifies the way the Executive branch handles unclassified information that requires safeguarding or dissemination controls, pursuant to and consistent with applicable law, regulations, and government-wide policies. The program emphasizes the openness and uniformity of government-wide practices. Its purpose is to address the current inefficient and confusing patchwork that leads to inconsistent marking and safeguarding as well as restrictive dissemination policies, which are often hidden from public view.

The President has designated the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as the CUI Executive Agent (EA). In this role, NARA has the authority and responsibility to oversee and manage the implementation of the CUI program and will issue policy directives and publish reports on the status of agency implementation.

WHO is required to implement the CUI program?

The head of each Executive branch department and agency will be required to ensure implementation of the CUI program within their respective department or agency.

WHAT information will become CUI?

Only information that requires safeguarding or dissemination controls pursuant to and consistent with law, regulations, and government-wide policies may be CUI. This excludes all information that is classified under Executive Order 13526 of December 29, 2009, or the Atomic Energy Act, as amended.

WHEN do employees start to use CUI?

Executive branch employees and contractors supporting government agencies should follow their existing “Sensitive But Unclassified” (SBU) schema until otherwise directed through guidance by the EA and implementation plans developed by their agencies.

WHEN should departments and agencies start to implement?

Departments and agencies will begin their implementation of the Order by reviewing all categories, subcategories, and markings used to designate unclassified information for safeguarding and dissemination controls. Categories, subcategories, and markings will be submitted to the EA 180 days after the Order.

Before departments and agencies can apply CUI markings, the EA, with the advice of agencies, must issue initial implementing guidance. In addition, the CUI registry must be operational and CUI training developed to further the system's implementation.

Within one year of the date of the Order, the EA will establish the CUI registry. The CUI registry will be accessible by the public, and reflect approved categories, subcategories, and associated markings, as well as applicable safeguarding, dissemination, and decontrol procedures.

Departments and agencies will have 180 days after the EA's issuance of the initial implementing guidance to provide the EA with a proposed plan for CUI implementation in that agency, along with interim target dates.

WHY is this all necessary?

There are currently over 100 different ways of characterizing SBU information. Additionally, there is no common definition, and no common protocols describing under what circumstances a document should be marked, under what circumstances a document should no longer be considered SBU, and what procedures should be followed for properly safeguarding or disseminating SBU information. As a result of this lack of clarity concerning SBU, information is inconsistently marked. This puts some information at risk through inadequate safeguarding and needlessly restricts other information by creating impediments. CUI reform is designed to address these deficiencies, in that it will provide a common definition and standardize processes and procedures.

WHERE is there more information on the CUI program?

Please visit the EA's website at www.archives.gov/cui for the latest information on the CUI program.



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