

ISOO Notice 2026-09: Guidance for Use of Classification Authority Block on Standard Form 700

September 28, 2026

Purpose

1. This Notice clarifies guidance on the use of a classification authority block on the Standard Form 700, “Security Container Information,” (SF 700) consistent with the requirements detailed in Executive Order (E.O.) 13526, “Classified National Security Information,” and 32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2001.

Background

2. Subpart C of 32 CFR 2001 (sections 2001.20-2001.26), provides guidance on the proper identification and marking of classified national security information, including the usage of a classification authority block for both originally classified information and derivatively classified information.
3. 32 CFR 2001.80(d)(3) governs the use of the SF 700 at the national policy level. The purpose of this form is to provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of employees who are to be contacted if the security container containing classified information to which the form pertains is found open and unattended. The SF 700 also includes the current combination for the security container and provides an envelope to be used to forward this information to the appropriate agency official or activity. If an agency determines as part of its risk management strategy that a security container form is required, they must use the SF 700, ensuring uniformity and consistency across federal agencies. Parts 2 and 2A of each completed form must be classified at the highest level of classification of the information authorized for storage in the security container, and a new form must be completed each time the combination of the security container is changed.

Guidance

4. Agencies have the discretion to determine whether to require a classification authority block, in the format they are prescribed under 32 CFR 2001.20-26, on the SF 700 itself. As in all instances of its use, the purpose of a classification authority block is to ensure the following elements are captured when identifying and marking classified information:
 - (a) For originally classified information: the classifying authority or identity of persons applying classification markings (i.e., the name or position of the original classifier); the agency or office of origin (if not otherwise evident); the reason for classification; and declassification instructions.

(b) For derivatively classified information: the identity of persons who applied the derivative classification markings; the source of the derivatively classified information; and declassification instructions.

5. When an SF 700 is properly completed, the form itself reflects each of the elements in section 4 of this Notice and an additional classification authority block is not required. Agencies may utilize their own risk management strategies to determine whether to require the additional application of a classification authority block on the SF 700. See below for an illustration of this in practice, noting this is only an example for training purposes and does not contain classified national security information.

The image shows a sample of Standard Form 700 (Rev. 4-01), titled "SECURITY CONTAINER INFORMATION INSTRUCTIONS". The form is divided into several sections, with red callouts highlighting specific areas:

- Classification Level:** Points to the "CLASSIFICATION LEVEL" section at the top, which includes fields for "1. AREA OR POST (if required)", "2. BUILDING (if required)", "3. ROOM NO.", "4. ACTIVITY (Division, Branch, Section or Office)", "5. MFG. & CLASS OF CONTAINER", "6. MFG. & LOCK ROOM", "7. MFG. & LOCK ROOM", "8. SERIAL NO. OF CONTAINER", and "9. DATE COMBINATION CHANGED".
- Classifier/Contact Info:** Points to the "10. PRINT NAME/ORGANIZATION SYMBOL WITH SIGNATURE OF PERSON MAKING CHANGE" field.
- Declassification Instructions:** Points to the "11. Immediately notify one of the following persons. If this container is found open and unattended" section, which includes fields for "EMPLOYEE NAME", "HOME ADDRESS", and "HOME PHONE".
- Derived From:** Points to the "2A. INSERT IN ENVELOPE" section, which includes the text "SF 700 (REV. 4-01) Prescribed by NARMISCO 32 CFR 2003".

The form also includes a "WARNING" section at the bottom right, which states: "THIS COPY CONTAINS CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WHEN COMBINATION IS ENTERED. UNCLASSIFIED UPON CHANGE OF COMBINATION." The word "SAMPLE" is printed in large letters across the center of the form.

6. ISOO is in the process of making an administrative revision to the SF 700 to account for its prescribing authority changing from 32 CFR 2003 to 32 CFR 2001. Agencies may continue to utilize the April 2001 version of the SF 700 as a valid form while existing inventories of the form remain.

Authorities

E.O. 13526, Classified National Security Information

32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2001

This guidance pertains to Federal agencies and is binding on agency actions as authorized under law and similar authority. This guidance does not apply to, and is not meant to

bind, the public, except as authorized by law or regulation or as incorporated into a contract.

Please direct any questions regarding this ISOO Notice to: isoo@nara.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Thomas", with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

MICHAEL D. THOMAS
Director