



ISOO Notice 2012-02: Classification Marking Instructions on the Use of “50X1-HUM” vs “25X1-human” as a Declassification Instruction

The purpose of this Notice is to provide clarification and further guidance on the use of “50X1-HUM” and the discontinuation of use of “25X1-human” as a declassification instruction when reusing or creating new classified documents. This guidance applies to both original and derivative classification actions.

Under Executive Order (E.O.) 12958, as amended, the “25X1-human” marking applied to information that would reveal the identity of confidential human sources or human intelligence sources, but not to all intelligence sources and methods. The intent was to protect information that identified an actual source, but in practice, agencies applied this marking more broadly. As specifically stated in E.O. 13526, information that should clearly and demonstrably be expected to reveal the identity of a confidential human source or a human intelligence source shall be exempted from automatic declassification at 50 years. Section 1.6(4)(d) of E.O. 13526 and 32 C.F.R. 2001.12(a)(2)(i) specify what information may be marked “50X1-HUM.”

With the implementation of E.O. 13526, and for the purposes of reusing or creating new classified documents, “50X1-HUM” replaces “25X1-human” which is no longer an authorized declassification instruction. “25X1-human” must be removed from all automated marking systems. As stated in section 1.5(d) of E.O. 13526, no information may remain classified indefinitely; therefore, information marked as “25X1-human” will be subject to automatic declassification. Since the “25X1-human” marking will continue to be found on originally and derivatively classified documents for many years, it will be treated as having the same classification duration as “50X1-HUM,” and that information is not subject to automatic declassification for up to 75 years.*

The wholesale re-marking of legacy documents that have the “25X1-human” marking is not required. When derivative classifiers use sources containing the obsolete “25X1-human” marking in the “declassify on” line, they should not carry forward the “25X1-human” marking onto the derivative document; but instead, derivative classifiers should use the new “50X1-HUM” marking.

Agencies are reminded that during the time in which exempted information is not subject to automatic declassification, it is still subject to systematic and mandatory declassification review.

Agencies have the authority to use “50X1-HUM” without requesting specific authorization from the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel; however, agencies are required to cite their intention to use this marking in their declassification guides.

*Section 3.3(h)(3) of E.O. 13526 enables agencies to request exemption of specific information beyond 75 years if further classification is necessary.

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