



ISOO Notice 2017-04: Security Classification Guides

September 14, 2017

1. The purpose of this notice is to reiterate the current requirements for security classification guides and to recommend a standard format for the guides to promote standardization and consistency for security classification guidance throughout the executive branch.
2. Executive Order (E.O.) 13526, Sec. 2.2, states that agencies with original classification authority shall prepare classification guides to facilitate the proper and uniform derivative classification of information. In accordance with 32 CFR 2001.15, classification guides shall, at a minimum:
 - (1) Identify the subject matter of the classification guide;
 - (2) Identify the original classification authority by name and position, or personal identifier;
 - (3) Identify an agency point-of-contact or points-of-contact for questions regarding the classification guide;
 - (4) Provide the date of issuance or last review;
 - (5) State precisely the elements of information to be protected;
 - (6) State which classification level applies to each element of information, and, when useful, specify the elements of information that are unclassified;
 - (7) State, when applicable, special handling caveats;
 - (8) State a concise reason for classification which, at a minimum, cites the applicable classification category or categories in section 1.4 of the Order; and
 - (9) Prescribe a specific date or event for declassification, the marking “50X1–HUM” or “50X2–WMD” as appropriate, or one or more of the exemption codes listed in 2001.26(a)(2), provided that:
 - (i) The exemption has been approved by the Panel under section 3.3(j) of the Order;
 - (ii) The Panel is notified of the intent to take such actions for specific information in advance of approval and the information remains in active use; and
 - (iii) The exemption code is accompanied with a declassification date or event that has been approved by the Panel.
3. To promote standardization and consistency for security classification guidance throughout the executive branch, ISOO is recommending a standard format for guides. ISOO also recommends the use of enhancement statements to indicate why the information must be protected, the damage impact of unauthorized disclosure, and how the information could be stated in an unclassified format. This is additional information that helps users manage risk and develop more useful security classification guidance. Enhancement statements can be applied to as many elements of information as necessary:

Value: explains why the information is being protected.

Damage: describes the potential impact to national security should an unauthorized disclosure occur.

Unclassified statement: outlines how a user can address a classified item in an unclassified manner.

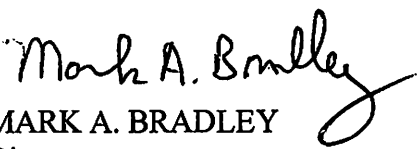
Example: (markings for training purposes only)

Line #	Element of Information	Classification Level	Reason (1.4)	Duration of Classification	Dissemination Controls	Remarks
2	Speed of aircraft	Secret	1.4(a)	25 years	N/A	
VALUE:						
DAMAGE:						
UNCLASSIFIED STATEMENT: [only used if the element of information itself is classified and you need to be able to describe it in an unclassified way]						

Note: Caveats (ex. REL TO, NOFORN, RD, etc.) may be annotated with the Classification Level, in the Remarks section, or as a Dissemination Control.

4. Security classification guides must be reviewed and updated as necessary, but at least every five years. To alleviate the burden of the review process, we recommend you spread out the review over the five year period, e.g. review approximately 20 percent of your guides each year.

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


MARK A. BRADLEY
Director