

# PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION MANAGEMENT FOR THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY



The Principles of Classification Management for the Intelligence Community (IC) are intended to facilitate and align IC decisions on classifying and marking Classified National Security Information (CNSI), particularly categories of CNSI common to multiple agencies.

The Principles articulate norms IC elements will follow in exercising their authorities when classifying and marking intelligence information, products, and reports.

Classifying and marking CNSI accurately and consistently are critical to ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the Community. The requirement to do so will grow in importance as the IC moves increasingly into an era of shared data and must respond to new technology that is changing ways information is communicated.

## 1) Risk Management:

Classification decisions should reflect a risk management strategy; classification policy should address how the strategy is applied in defining and differentiating classification levels. Fundamental principle – Passage of time diminishes sensitivity of some classified information.

## 2) Classification Levels:

E.O. 13526 cites three classification levels – Top Secret, Secret, and Confidential – characterized by the extent of damage reasonably expected to occur as a result of the unauthorized release of information.

## 3) Unclassified Information:

Classification policies should elucidate the reasoning agencies employ in determining whether information over which they have Original Classification Authority is Unclassified, Controlled Unclassified, or Classified.

## 4) Classification Categories and Marking Guidance:

Classification policies should convey how classification levels and markings are used to manage information, facilitate information sharing, and achieve mission objectives while appropriately protecting CNSI.

## 5) Declassifying and Downgrading Classified Information:

These are integral components of classification management and should be reflected in classification policies.

## 6) Information Sharing with Foreign Governments:

Classification policies should abet greater integration of information sharing and safeguarding with foreign partners, consistent with U.S. law and protection of sensitive information, sources, and methods.

## 7) Implementation:

All IC roles, resources, processes, and policies should be aligned to support robust implementation of these principles, consistent with applicable laws, Executive Orders, and directives.