

Webinar Questions and Answers

Classification of Information Released to the Public

Webinar guests submitted several questions before and during the September 19 Classification of Information Released to the Public session. The following responses are provided by the Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE):

Question: For cleared personnel, with respect to classified information released without authorization that is appearing in the news, what is a best practice?

Answer: If classified information appears in the public media, including on public Internet sites or if approached by a representative of the media, DoD personnel shall be careful not to make any statement or comment that confirms the accuracy of or verifies the information requiring protection. Report the matter as instructed by the appropriate DoD Component guidance. Do not discuss it with anyone who does not, in the case of classified information, have an appropriate security clearance or need to know. Further guidance can be found in DoDM 5200.01 "DoD Information Security Program," Enclosure 7. NISPOM 3-102 refers to FSO training; with this particular issue, FSOs should refer back to their Government Contracting Agency for additional guidance (Usually addressed in DD 254).

Question: How should we address a staff member inadvertently landing on a public web page that displays obvious classified information?

Answer: Paragraph b. Enclosure 7 of the DoDM 5200.01 "DoD Information Security Program," states that the Component Senior Agency Official should consider whether the workforce needs to be reminded of actions to be, or not to be, taken by individuals in response to the disclosure. Reminders may include such topics as not viewing or downloading the classified information from unclassified IT systems, not confirming the accuracy of the information, and providing a point of contact for media inquiries. Contractors should follow the procedures outlined above and/or refer back to their Government Contracting Agency for additional guidance (Usually addressed in DD 254).

Question: Please address information released to the public via PAO. Who does the check and balances on what they post on websites?

Answer: The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA)) has the responsibility to issue public affairs guidance to the DoD Components. Additional guidance regarding DoD PAO responsibilities is addressed in DoDD 5122.05.

Question: What are the training requirements for FSOs to ensure protection of release of information? Is there any training required of the industry administrative staff?

Answer: FSOs are required by the NISPOM to comply with the provisions of paragraph 3-102. However, there is no specific training requirement in this particular area. Security/administrative staff members are not required to take any formal training. It's assumed the FSO will provide the required training based on the staff member's level of classified involvement.

Question: Will you address Snowden?

Answer: It is not appropriate for us to comment on Mr. Snowden's situation at this point in time since he has not been convicted of any crime.