

Classification Conflicts and Evaluations

Glossary

Classification: The requirement for classification of information occurs when the Original Classification Authority (OCA) determines that the information must be protected from unauthorized disclosure to ensure the safety of our national security, democratic institutions, citizens, and interactions with foreign entities.

Classification Conflict: When individuals or agencies do not agree upon a classification decision made by the OCA.

Declassification: Previously classified information may be declassified if determined it can no longer pose a threat to national security.

Executive Order (E.O.) 13526: Defines process for classifying national security information.

Formal Challenge: The formal challenge process described in DOD Manual 5200.01 involves the disputing agency, all authorized holders of the information, and the OCA. An impartial, external review panel may also be employed. This process also follows specific parameters regarding time, artifacts, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for appeals. Formal challenges must include a sufficient description of the information being challenged to permit identification of the information and its classification with reasonable effort. In addition, the challenge must include the reason why the challenger believes that the information is improperly or unnecessarily classified.

Informal Challenge: An informal challenge occurs at the department or organizational level. Agency heads of component commands are encouraged to investigate and address classification challenges within the organization prior to escalating the challenge to the formal process.

Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP): A Presidential panel that decides on certain classification and declassification issues.

Original Classification Authority (OCA): An individual authorized in writing, either by the President, the Vice President, or by agency heads or other officials designated by the President, to originally classify information.

Re-evaluation: In a situation when the integrity of information has been compromised, the level of classification is re-evaluated to determine whether the classification should be continued, changed, or discontinued.

Reclassification: Classified information that has been previously declassified may be reclassified, based upon changes in the potential for threat posed by the information. This process is subject to provisions of Executive Order 13526, Ch. 1.7.5.1.

Regrade: Regrading or classified information occurs when the classification level of information has been either upgraded or downgraded.

Types of Classification Actions:

- Classification
- Reclassification
- Declassification
- Regrade
- Re-evaluation