§ 2001.21 Original classification.

(a) Primary markings. At the time of original classification, the following shall be indicated in a manner that is immediately apparent:

(1) Classification authority. The name and position, or personal identifier, of the original classification authority shall appear on the "Classified By" line. An example might appear as:

Classified By: David Smith, Chief, Division 5 or
Classified By: ID#IMNO1

(2) Agency and office of origin. If not otherwise evident, the agency and office of origin shall be identified and follow the name on the "Classified By" line. An example might appear as:

Classified By: David Smith, Chief, Division 5, Department of Good Works, Office of Administration.

(3) Reason for classification. The original classification authority shall identify the reason(s) for the decision to classify. The original classification authority shall include on the "Reason" line the number 1.4 plus the letter(s) that corresponds to that classification category in section 1.4 of the Order.

(i) These categories, as they appear in the Order, are as follows:

(A) Military plans, weapons systems, or operations;
(B) Foreign government information;
(C) Intelligence activities (including covert action), intelligence sources or methods, or cryptology;
(D) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States, including confidential sources;
(E) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to the national security;
(F) United States Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities;
(G) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to the national security; or
(H) The development, production, or use of weapons of mass destruction.

(ii) An example might appear as:

Classified By: David Smith, Chief, Division 5, Department of Good Works, Office of Administration Reason: 1.4(g)

(4) Declassification instructions. The duration of the original classification decision shall be placed on the "Declassify On" line. When declassification dates are displayed numerically, the following format shall be used: YYYYMMDD. Events must be reasonably definite and foreseeable. The original classification authority will apply one of the following instructions:

(i) A date or event for declassification that corresponds to the lapse of the information’s national security sensitivity, which is equal to or less than 10 years from the date of the original decision. The duration of classification would be marked as:

Classified By: David Smith, Chief, Division 5, Department of Good Works, Office of Administration
Reason: 1.4(g)
Declassify On: 20201014 or
Declassify On: Completion of Operation

(ii) A date not to exceed 25 years from the date of the original decision. For example, on a document that contains information classified on October 10, 2010, apply a date up to 25 years on the "Declassify On" line:

Classified By: David Smith, Chief, Division 5, Department of Good Works, Office of Administration
Reason: 1.4(g)
Declassify On: 20351010

(iii) If the classified information should clearly and demonstrably be expected to reveal the identity of a confidential human source or a human intelligence source, no date or event is required and the marking "50X1–HUM" shall be used in the "Declassify On" line; or

(iv) If the classified information should clearly and demonstrably be expected to reveal key design concepts of weapons of mass destruction, no date or event is required and the marking "50X2–WMD" shall be used in the "Declassify On" line.

(b) Overall marking. The highest level of classification is determined by the highest level of any one portion within the document and shall appear in a way that will distinguish it clearly from the informational text.
(1) Conspicuously place the overall classification at the top and bottom of the outside of the front cover (if any), on the title page (if any), on the first page, and on the outside of the back cover (if any).

(2) For documents containing information classified at more than one level, the overall marking shall be the highest level. For example, if a document contains some information marked “Secret” and other information marked “Confidential,” the overall marking would be “Secret.”

(3) Each interior page of a classified document shall be marked at the top and bottom either with the highest level of classification of information contained on that page, including the designation “Unclassified” when it is applicable, or with the highest overall classification of the document.

(c) Portion marking. Each portion of a document, ordinarily a paragraph, but including subjects, titles, graphics, tables, charts, bullet statements, subparagraphs, classified signature blocks, bullets and other portions within slide presentations, and the like, shall be marked to indicate which portions are classified and which portions are unclassified by placing a parenthetical symbol immediately preceding the portion to which it applies.

(1) To indicate the appropriate classification level, the symbols “(TS)” for Top Secret, “(S)” for Secret, and “(C)” for Confidential will be used.

(2) Portions which do not meet the standards of the Order for classification shall be marked with “(U)” for Unclassified.

(3) In cases where portions are segmented such as paragraphs, sub-paragraphs, bullets, and sub-bullets and the classification level is the same throughout, it is sufficient to put only one portion marking at the beginning of the main paragraph or main bullet. If there are different levels of classification among these segments, then all segments shall be portion marked separately in order to avoid over-classification of any one segment. If the information contained in a sub-paragraph or sub-bullet is a higher level of classification than its parent paragraph or parent bullet, this does not make the parent paragraph or parent bullet classified at that same level. Each portion shall reflect the classification level of that individual portion and not any other portions. At the same time, any portion, no matter what its status, is still capable of determining the overall classification of the document.

(d) Dissemination control and handling markings. Many agencies require additional control and handling markings that supplement the overall classification markings. See §2001.24(j) for specific guidance.

(e) Date of origin of document. The date of origin of the document shall be indicated in a manner that is immediately apparent.


(a) General. Information classified derivatively on the basis of source documents or classification guides shall bear all markings prescribed in §2001.20 and §2001.21, except as provided in this section. Information for these markings shall be carried forward from the source document or taken from instructions in the appropriate classification guide.

(b) Identity of persons who apply derivative classification markings. Derivative classifiers shall be identified by name and position, or by personal identifier, in a manner that is immediately apparent on each derivatively classified document. If not otherwise evident, the agency and office of origin shall be identified and follow the name on the “Classified By” line. An example might appear as:

Classified By: Peggy Jones, Lead Analyst, Research and Analysis Division or Classified By: ID # IMN01

(c) Source of derivative classification. (1) The derivative classifier shall concisely identify the source document or the classification guide on the “Derived From” line, including the agency and, where available, the office of origin, and the date of the source or guide. An example might appear as:

Derived From: Memo, “Funding Problems,” October 20, 2008, Office of Administration, Department of Good Works or Derived From: CG No. 1, Department of Good Works, dated October 20, 2008