

³The provisions of this part do not apply to these records covered by notices of systems of records published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for all agencies. The regulations of the Commission alone apply.

⁴The provisions of this part do not apply to these records covered by notices of systems of records published by the Merit Systems Protection Board for all agencies. The regulations of the Board alone apply.

PART 4a—CLASSIFICATION, DECLASSIFICATION, AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Sec.

- 4a.1 General.
- 4a.2 Director for Security.
- 4a.3 Classification levels.
- 4a.4 Classification authority.
- 4a.5 Duration of classification.
- 4a.6 General.
- 4a.7 Mandatory review for declassification.
- 4a.8 Access to classified information by individuals outside the Government.

AUTHORITY: E.O. 13526; 75 FR 707, January 5, 2010 (as corrected at 75 FR 1013, January 8, 2010).

SOURCE: 66 FR 65650, Dec. 20, 2001, unless otherwise noted.

§ 4a.1 General.

Executive Order 13526 provides the only basis for classifying information within the Department of Commerce (Department), except as provided in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. The Department's policy is to make information concerning its activities available to the public, consistent with the need to protect the national defense and foreign relations of the United States. Accordingly, security classification shall be applied only to protect the national security.

[85 FR 35375, June 10, 2020]

§ 4a.2 Director for Security.

The Director for Security is responsible for implementing and ensuring compliance with E.O. 13526 and this part.

[85 FR 35375, June 10, 2020]

§ 4a.3 Classification levels.

Information may be classified as national security information by a designated original classifier of the Department if it is determined the information concerns one or more of the categories described in section 1.4 of E.O. 13526. The levels established in section 1.2 of E.O. 13526 (Top Secret,

Secret, and Confidential) are the only terms that may be applied to national security information. Except as provided by statute, no other terms shall be used within the Department for the three classification levels.

[85 FR 35375, June 10, 2020]

§ 4a.4 Classification authority.

(a) Authority to originally classify information as Secret or Confidential may be exercised only by the Secretary of Commerce and by officials to whom such authority is specifically delegated. No official of the Department is authorized to originally classify information as Top Secret.

(b) In accordance with section 1.3(c)(1) of E.O. 13526, delegations of original classification authority shall be limited to the minimum required to administer E.O. 13526. The Secretary of Commerce shall ensure that designated subordinate officials have a demonstrable and continuing need to exercise delegated original classification authority.

(c) In accordance with section 1.3(c)(4) of E.O. 13526, each delegation of original classification authority shall be in writing and the authority shall not be redelegated except as provided in E.O. 13526.

(d) In accordance with section 1.3(c)(4) of E.O. 13526, each delegation shall identify the official by name or position.

(e) In accordance with section 1.3(c)(5) of E.O. 13526, delegations of original classification authority shall be reported or made available by name or position to the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office in the National Archives and Records Administration.

(f) In accordance with section 1.3(d) of E.O. 13526, all original classification authorities and their designates shall receive training in proper classification (including the avoidance of overclassification) and declassification as

§ 4a.5

provided in E.O. 13526 and its implementing directives at least once a calendar year.

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§ 4a.5 Duration of classification.

(a) Information shall remain classified no longer than ten years from the date of its original classification, unless, in accordance with section 1.5(b) of E.O. 13526, the original classification authority otherwise determines that the sensitivity of the information requires that it be marked for declassification for up to 25 years from the date of the original decision.

(b) For Department of Commerce originally classified information marked for an indefinite duration which contains incomplete declassification instructions, or lacks them entirely:

(1) The information shall be declassified in accordance with E.O. 13526 as soon as it no longer meets the standards for classification under E.O. 13526, or

(2) if the standards for classification under E.O. 13526 are met, the information shall be declassified after 10 years from the date of the original classification, unless the original classification authority determines that the sensitivity of the information requires that it remain classified for up to 25 years from the date of the original classification, as provided in section 1.5.(b) of E.O. 13526.

[85 FR 35375, June 10, 2020]

§ 4a.6 General.

National security information over which the Department exercises final classification jurisdiction shall be declassified or downgraded as soon as national security considerations permit. If information is declassified, it may continue to be exempt from public disclosure by the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) or other applicable law.

§ 4a.7 Mandatory review for declassification.

(a) *Requests.* Classified information under the jurisdiction of the Department is subject to review for declassification in accordance with 32 CFR

15 CFR Subtitle A (1–1–25 Edition)

2001.33, upon receipt of a written request that describes the information with sufficient specificity to locate it with a reasonable amount of effort. Requests must be submitted to the Director for Security, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20230.

(b) *Exemptions.* The following are exempt from mandatory review for declassification:

(1) Information that has been reviewed for declassification within the past two years;

(2) Information that is the subject of pending litigation;

(3) Information originated by the incumbent President, the incumbent President's White House Staff, committees, commissions, or boards appointed by the incumbent President, or other entities within the Executive Office of the President that solely advise and assist the incumbent President; and

(4) Information specifically exempt from such review by law.

(c) *Processing requirements.* (1) For requests for review of classified information not received from the National Archives and Records Administration, the Director for Security, or their designate, shall acknowledge receipt of the request directly to the requester. If a request does not adequately describe the information sought in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, the requester shall be notified that unless additional information is provided, no further action will be taken. The request shall be forwarded to the component that originated the information or that has primary interest in the subject matter. The component assigned action shall review the information in accordance with § 4a.7(c)(2) through (4) within twenty working days.

(2) The component assigned action shall determine whether, under the declassification provisions of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Manual of Security, the entire document or portions thereof may be declassified. Declassification of the information shall be