

grave damage to the national security. Examples of *exceptionally grave damage* include armed hostilities against the United States or its allies; disruption of foreign relations vitally affecting the national security; the compromise of vital national defense plans or complex cryptologic and communications intelligence systems; the revelation of sensitive intelligence operations; and the disclosure of scientific or technological developments vital to national security. This classification is to be used with the utmost restraint.

(2) *Secret*. Secret refers to national security information or material which requires a substantial degree of protection. The test for assigning Secret classification shall be whether its unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to the national security. Examples of *serious damage* include disruption of foreign relations significantly affecting the national security; significant impairment of a program or policy directly related to the national security; revelation of significant military plans or intelligence operations; and compromise of significant scientific or technological developments relating to national security. The classification Secret shall be sparingly used.

(3) *Confidential*. Confidential refers to national security information or material which requires protection, but not to the degree described in paragraphs (a) (1) and (2) of this section. The test for assigning Confidential classification shall be whether its unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the national security.

(b) Classified information will be assigned the lowest classification consistent with its proper protection. Documents will be classified according to their own content and not necessarily according to their relationship to other documents.

(c) The overall classification of a file or group of physically connected documents will be at least as high as that of the most highly classified document therein. When put together as a unit or complete file, the classification of the highest classified document contained therein will be marked on a cover sheet, file folder (front and back), or

other similar covering, and on any transmittal letters, comments, or endorsements.

(d) *Administrative Control Designations*. These designations are not security classification designations, but are used to indicate a requirement to protect material from unauthorized disclosure. Material identified under the provisions of this subparagraph will be handled and protected in the same manner as material classified Confidential except that it will not be subject to the central control system described in § 3a.71. Administrative Control designations are:

(1) *For Official Use Only*. This designation is used to identify information which does not require protection in the interest of national security, but requires protection in accordance with statutory requirements or in the public interest and which is exempt from public disclosure under 5 U.S.C. 552(b) and § 388.105(n) of this chapter.

(2) *Limited Official Use*. This administrative control designation is used by the Department of State to identify nondefense information requiring protection from unauthorized access. Material identified with this notation must be limited to persons having a definite need to know in order to fulfill their official responsibilities.

(e) A letter or other correspondence which transmits classified material will be classified at a level at least as high as that of the highest classified attachment or enclosure. This is necessary to indicate immediately to persons who receive or handle a group of documents the highest classification involved. If the transmittal document does not contain classified information, or if the information in it is classified lower than in an enclosure, the originator will include a notation to that effect. (See § 3a.31(e).)

[Order 470, 38 FR 5161, Feb. 26, 1973, as amended by Order 225, 47 FR 19055, May 3, 1982]

#### § 3a.12 Authority to classify official information.

(a) The authority to classify information or material originally under E.O.

### § 3a.13

11652 is restricted to those offices within the executive branch which are concerned with matters of national security, and is limited to the minimum number absolutely required for efficient administration.

(b) The authority to classify information or material originally as Top Secret is to be exercised only by such officials as the President may designate in writing and by the heads of the following departments and agencies and such of their principal staff officials as the heads of these departments and agencies may designate in writing;

Such offices in the Executive Office of the President as the President may designate in writing.

Central Intelligence Agency.  
Atomic Energy Commission.  
Department of State.  
Department of the Treasury.  
Department of Defense.  
Department of the Army.  
Department of the Navy.  
Department of the Air Force.  
U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
Department of Justice.  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration.  
Agency for International Development.

(c) The authority to classify information or material originally as Secret is exercised only by:

(1) Officials who have Top Secret classification authority under § 3a.11(b); and

(2) The heads of the following departments and agencies and such principal staff officials as they may designate in writing:

Department of Transportation.  
Federal Communications Commission.  
Export-Import Bank of the United States.  
Department of Commerce.  
U.S. Civil Service Commission.  
U.S. Information Agency.  
General Services Administration.  
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.  
Civil Aeronautics Board.  
Federal Maritime Commission.  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.  
National Science Foundation.  
Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

(d) The authority to classify information or material originally as Confidential is exercised by officials who have Top Secret or Secret classification authority.

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(e) Pursuant to E.O. 11652, the authority to classify information or material originally as Secret or Confidential in the FERC shall be exercised only by the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, and the Executive Director. When an incumbent change occurs in these positions, the name of the new incumbent will be reported to the Interagency Classification Review Committee NSC.

[Order 470, 38 FR 5161, Feb. 26, 1973, as amended by Order 756, 77 FR 4893, Feb. 1, 2012]

### § 3a.13 Classification responsibility and procedure.

(a) Each FERC official who has classifying authority (§ 3a.12) shall be held accountable for the propriety of the classifications attributed to him. Unnecessary classification and overclassification shall be avoided. Classification shall be solely on the basis of national security considerations. In no case shall information be classified in order to conceal inefficiency or administrative error, to prevent embarrassment to the FERC or any of its officials or employees, or to prevent for any other reason the release of information which does not require protection in the interest of national security.

(b) Each classified document shall show on its face its classification and whether it is subject to or exempt from the General Declassification Schedule (§ 3a.22(b)). It also shall show the office of origin, the date of preparation and classification and, to the extent practicable, be so marked as to indicate which portions are classified, at what level, and which portions are not classified in order to facilitate excerpting and other use. Material which merely contains references to classified materials, which references do not reveal classified information, shall not be classified.

(c) Material classified under this part shall indicate on its face the identity of the highest authority authorizing the classification. Where the individual who signs or otherwise authenticates a document or item has also authorized the classification, no further annotation as to his identity is required.