

Student Guide

Course: Derivative Classification

Lesson: Derivative Classification Basics

Introduction

Because protecting classified information from improper disclosure is so critical, there are responsibilities and procedures to follow when using classified information to create new documentation. You must be familiar with these responsibilities and procedures as well as where to go for guidance so you can successfully implement and execute them at your activity or facility.

Lesson Objectives

- Define derivative classification
- Identify the requirement for and importance of derivative classification
- Identify who will have derivative classification responsibilities and the requirements he or she must meet
- Identify the steps involved in the derivative classification process
- Identify authorized sources to use when derivatively classifying information

Derivative Classification Overview

1. What is Derivative Classification?

The initial decision about what information should be classified is called *original* classification. Because this is a very important, sensitive decision, the Government has granted only a limited number of government officials the authority to perform original classification.

Derivative classification is different. It is the process of using *existing* classified information to create new material, and marking that newly-developed material consistent with the classification markings that apply to the source information. Copying or duplicating existing classified information is not derivative classification.

Whereas only authorized government officials can perform original classification, no specific delegation of authority is required to be a derivative classifier. In fact, all cleared DoD and authorized contractor personnel who generate or create material from classified sources are derivative classifiers.

Like original classification, derivative classification has far-reaching effects on the Department of Defense and industry. Classifying information helps protect our national security. It limits access to only those individuals with the appropriate clearance level

and a legitimate need to know the information. Classification also impacts resources; it imposes costs for things like security clearances, physical security measures, and countermeasures. Because of the importance of classification, but also its inherent limitations and costs, it is crucial that derivative classifiers follow appropriate procedures and observe all requirements.

2. Derivative Classification Responsibilities

In general, derivative classifiers are responsible for ensuring that they apply the highest possible standards when derivatively classifying information. Derivative classifiers who generate new products bear the principal responsibility for the accuracy of the derivative classification. For this reason, it is important to follow DoD policy requirements.

Derivative classifiers have a variety of responsibilities they must meet in order to properly perform derivative classification. First, they must understand derivative classification policies and procedures. Before derivative classification can be accomplished, the classifier must have received the required training. Training must be accomplished in the proper application of the derivative classification principles of as specified in EO 13526, as well as emphasizing the avoidance of over-classification. At a minimum, the training shall cover the principles of derivative classification, classification levels, duration of classification, identification and markings, classification prohibitions and limitations, sanctions, classification challenges, security classification guides, and information sharing. Personnel shall receive this training prior to derivatively classifying information. In addition to this preparatory training, derivative classifiers shall receive such training at least once every two years. Derivative classifiers who do not receive such mandatory training at least once every two years shall have their authority to apply derivative classification markings suspended until they have received such training. They must also have expertise in the subject matter on which they are creating documentation, as well as on classification management and marking techniques. Derivative classifiers must also have access to classification guidance. This helps meet the responsibility of analyzing and evaluating information to identify elements that require classification.

The most important responsibilities derivative classifiers have is to observe and respect the original classification authority's decision and to use only authorized sources to determine derivative classification.

The information in boxes like the one below is supplemental content that you may find useful; however, it will not be addressed in the course examination.

To understand derivative classification policies and procedures:

- Complete the online course: Derivative Classification
- Complete the Marking Classified Information online training course offered by CDSE
- Consult DoDM 5200.01, Volumes 1-4 and/or DoD 5220.22-M
- Contact your government security official or Facility Security Officer (FSO)

3. Policy Guidance

There are two primary sources of policy guidance for derivative classification.

Within the Department of Defense, DoDM 5200.01, Volumes 1-4, Information Security Program, provides the basic guidance and regulatory requirements for the Department of Defense Information Security Program.

For industry, DoD 5220.22-M, the National Information Security Program Operating Manual (NISPOM) contains information on derivative classification responsibilities.

How Does Derivative Classification Work?

1. Derivative Classification Concepts

So how do you determine whether the information contained in a new product is classified? As a derivative classifier, you are responsible for checking whether the content of the information already exists in one of the acceptable forms of classification guidance. If the guidance tells you the information in your new product is classified, you must classify and treat it as such. Note that for derivative classification purposes, the term "document" refers to any physical medium in or on which information is recorded or stored. This includes written or printed matter, audiovisual materials, and electromagnetic storage media. Let's take a closer look at these authorized sources for derivative classification.

2. Authorized Sources for Derivative Classification

To ensure that the original classification of information is maintained, derivative classifiers must use *only* authorized sources of classification guidance to derivatively classify information. While it might be tempting, derivative classifiers must *not* rely on their memories or general rules about classification.

There are only three authorized sources for derivative classification. The first source is a Security Classification Guide (SCG). An SCG is a collection of precise, comprehensive guidance about a specific program, system, operation, or weapon system telling what elements of information are classified. For each element of information, the SCG includes its classification level, the reasons for that classification, and information about when that classification will be downgraded or terminated. For this reason, SCGs are the primary source for derivative classification.

A second authorized source is an existing, properly marked source document from which information is extracted, paraphrased, restated, and/or generated in a new form for inclusion in another document. You must carry the classification of that existing material forward into your new end product.

The third authorized source is the DD Form 254, the DoD Contract Security Classification Specification. DD Form 254 provides classification guidance to contractors performing on classified contracts. It informs them of the level of information they will need to access, the required level of security clearance for access, and the performance requirements; for example, safeguarding and special security requirements.

These three sources are the *only* authorized sources for derivative classification. Any other source is *unauthorized*, and must *not* be used as the basis for derivative classification. Some examples of such unauthorized sources appear in the box below:

Examples of unauthorized sources of classification:

- ❌ Memory: "I remember that project was classified Secret 5 years ago, so it must be Secret now."
- ❌ Unconfirmed source: "Someone told me this document can be declassified."
- ❌ Just because: "I am going to classify this document Top Secret because that is how we have always done it."
- ❌ Media/Internet: "I saw it on the news last night so it must be declassified."

3. Process Overview

Derivative classifiers must carefully analyze the material they are classifying to determine what information it contains or reveals, and evaluate that information against the instructions provided by the classification guidance or the markings on source documents.

To perform that evaluation, derivative classifiers may use only authorized sources of guidance about the classification of the information in question.

If the authorized sources do not provide sufficient guidance, you may need to refer to other officials, such as the Security Manager or Original Classification Authority for DoD personnel, or the Facility Security Officer or Government Contracting Authority for contractors. Your chain-of-command or appropriate reporting channels will provide specific guidance about who you should consult.

In addition to assigning the appropriate classification level to information, derivative classifiers are also responsible for carrying forward guidance about when the classification of that information may be downgraded, and when it may be declassified altogether. This is an important part of the derivative classification task.

Every time information is classified, a determination must be made regarding how long the information will be protected. This is an essential part of the classification and declassification process. For derivatively classified information, the classifier must specify one of the following on the "Declassify on" line:

1. A specific date or event for declassification, within 25 years of the document's origin; or
2. Absent a declassification instruction or other declassification guidance from the OCA, a calculated date 25 years from the date of the document's origin; or
3. 25X1 through 25X9, and a specific date or event for declassification taken from the source document; or
4. 50X1-HUM or 50X2-WMD (Does not require a date or event for declassification)
5. An approved 75-year exemption (i.e., 75X2 through 75X9) with date or event for declassification

Finally, once you have determined the derivative classification of the new material, you are responsible for marking it appropriately.

For information on marking, refer to DoDM 5200.01, Volumes 1-4, Information Security Program, and the Marking Classified Information web-based training course offered by the DSS CDSE.

Review Activity

Question 1

Which of the following is NOT a function of derivative classification? Select the best answer.

- Creating new classified materials from properly marked, existing classified source materials and marking them accordingly
- Making an initial determination that information requires protection against unauthorized disclosure in the interest of national security
- The process of extracting, paraphrasing, restating, or generating in a new form, information that is already classified
- Carrying forward the correct classification level for classified information used to generate new materials or documents

Question 2

Which of the following are authorized sources for derivative classification? Select all that apply.

- Security Classification Guides (SCG)
- DoD 5220.22-M (NISPOM)
- Your level of expertise with the content
- DoDM 5200.01, Volumes 1-4 (Information Security Program)
- A properly marked classified source document
- DD Form 254 (Department of Defense Contract Security Classification Specification)
- The Facility Security Officer (Industry) or Security Manager (DoD)

Question 3

Select True or False for each statement.

	True	False
Photocopying a Secret document and marking the photocopy Secret is derivative classification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Only government officials may perform derivative classification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consulting your FSO or security manager is always the first step in the derivative classification process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Derivative classifiers are responsible for analyzing and evaluating information to identify elements that require classification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Lesson Conclusion

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of derivative classification and how it is different from original classification. You also learned about the responsibilities of derivative classifiers. You learned about the three authorized sources for derivatively classifying information, and you learned the basic process for derivatively classifying information.

Answer Key

Question 1

Making an initial determination that information requires protection against unauthorized disclosure in the interest of national security describes **original** classification, not derivative classification.

Derivative classification involves all of the other listed activities:

- Creating new classified materials from properly marked, existing classified source materials and marking them accordingly
- The process of extracting, paraphrasing, restating, or generating in a new form, information that is already classified
- Carrying forward the correct classification level for classified information used to generate new materials or documents

Question 2

The only authorized sources for derivative classification are SCGs, properly marked classified source materials, and DD Form 254.

Question 3

	True	False
Photocopying a Secret document and marking the photocopy Secret is derivative classification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Only government officials may perform derivative classification.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Consulting your FSO or security manager is always the first step in the derivative classification process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Derivative classifiers are responsible for analyzing and evaluating information to identify elements that require classification.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>