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Category: Collaborative Activities/Initiatives
Synopsis of Presentation at InForum 99 for Conference Proceedings

How to Overcome Information Anxiety: Assignment and Use of Distribution Markings for Technical Documentation

Proper distribution of technical documentation has both national security and economic implications. Inappropriate distribution of technical data can have significant negative national security and international economic consequences, while excessive restriction limits the usefulness of technical information and may lead to funding duplicate research efforts. The correct use of distribution markings is necessary to achieve the proper balance between national security concerns and economic considerations.

Originally developed for the Department of Defense Office of Scientific and Technical Information Policy, this course is applicable to all federal and contractor personnel who play a role in the creation and management of scientific and technical data, documents, and information. The training addresses specific concerns and issues, including:

\# Determining what *is* scientific and technical information—and what *is not*

\# Determining who should make the decision regarding the distribution of technical documents when contractors are engaged in research and the production documentation and data.

\# Balancing the need for restriction versus the need for dissemination

\# Failure to properly mark classified or export-controlled documents, including the failure to mark documents at all

This course and its supporting resources were developed with the overall objective of providing a basic understanding of information distribution policies and the mechanics of properly assigning distribution markings to technical documents, data, and information.

After completing the course, each participant should:

\# Understand the principles that guide the assignment and use of distribution markings, and specifically, those issues that are important for the materials each participant routinely handles.

\# Recognize the variables and complexities that must be considered with each document,

drawing, data set, or other body of information.

\#   Be able to demonstrate the process of correctly assigning distribution markings to technical information, data, and documents with the help of take-home materials and job aids.

The course content is organized into four modules:

1.   Getting Started and Getting Motivated
2.   What Are Technical Documents and How Are They Controlled?
3.   Who Are You? Roles and Responsibilities
4.   Assigning Distribution Markings

Module 1, "Getting Started and Getting Motivated", prepares participants to receive the training by providing a context in which to place the information they will receive in the other modules. During this module, participants begin identifying mutual areas of concern and issues to discuss with their fellow participants. Module 2, "What Are Technical Documents and How Are They Controlled?" focuses on how to identify scientific and technical information that requires distribution markings, particularly sensitive unclassified information. In the third module, "Who Are You? Roles and Responsibilities" participants build a list of contacts and "players" essential to the process of marking information correctly. The course concludes with Module 4, "Assigning Distribution Statements, in which participants learn to apply a model process f or assigning distribution statements to scientific and technical information in a variety of formats, such as CD-ROM, videotape, databases, etc.

The instructor-led course emphasizes participant discussion and sharing of information and experience. Small group activities are interspersed throughout the modules to provide the participants practice in:

\#   Distinguishing scientific and technical information requiring distribution markings from other information
\#   Matching roles to specific responsibilities for information marking
\#   Assigning distribution markings to technical and scientific information

The course uses a variety of media to facilitate training, including:

\#   Facilitator Guide
\#   Participant Manual
\#   Video Presentations
\#   Overhead Projection Slides
\#   Posters
\#   Electronic Performance Support Aid (web-based)