



Controlled Unclassified Information

National Archives and Records Administration

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Background

Across the federal government there are more than 107 unique markings and over 130 different labeling or handling processes for Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) information, which includes categories such as “For Official Use Only” and “Law Enforcement Sensitive.” Current processes and procedures—some driven by statute and regulation and some by department and agency policy—have confused producers and users of SBU, impeded the timeliness, accuracy and flow of terrorism-related information that should be shared, and failed to control the flow of information that should not be shared.

The new CUI Framework

To address these issues, the President issued a Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on the *Designation and Sharing of Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)* on May 9, 2008. The memorandum:

- adopts, defines, and institutes “Controlled Unclassified Information” (CUI) as the single categorical designation for all information referred to as “Sensitive But Unclassified” (SBU) in the Information Sharing Environment (ISE);
- establishes a corresponding new CUI Framework for designating, marking, safeguarding, and disseminating information designated as CUI; and
- designates the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as the Executive Agent (EA), to oversee and implement the new CUI Framework.

What Information is CUI?

The President’s CUI Memo also describes what information shall be designated as CUI and what information shall not be designated as CUI.

Information shall be designated as CUI if...

- a statute so requires or authorizes; or
- the head of the originating department or agency, through regulations, directives, or other specific guidance to the agency, determines that the information is CUI. Such determination should be based on mission requirements, business prudence, legal privilege, the protection of personal or commercial rights, or safety or security.

Information shall not be designated CUI...

- to conceal violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error;
- to prevent embarrassment to the U.S. Government, any U.S. official, organization, or agency;
- to improperly or unlawfully interfere with competition;
- to prevent or delay the release of information that does not require such protection;
- if it is required by statute or Executive Order to be made available to the public; or
- if it has been released to the public under proper authority.

Current Actions

NARA, as the CUI EA with advice from the CUI Council, will develop and issue CUI policy standards and implementation guidance including appropriate recommendations to State, local, tribal, private sector, and foreign partner entities for implementing the CUI Framework.

Federal departments and agencies are responsible for implementation of the CUI Framework within the next five years. During this time, they will work with the CUI EA to develop and issue CUI policy standards; define business processes; develop technology designs and testing strategies; and build performance measurement and training plans.

For Additional Information

For additional information on Controlled Unclassified Information please visit www.archives.gov/cui, email your questions to cui@nara.gov, or call the CUI Office at 202-357-5250.