

(a) Top secret. Information that requires the highest degree of protection, and the unauthorized disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

(b) Secret. Information that requires a substantial degree of protection, and the unauthorized disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause serious damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

(c) Confidential. Information that requires protection and the unauthorized disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe.

Classified information or “classified national security information” means information that has been determined under Executive Order 12958, or any predecessor or successor order, to require protection against unauthorized disclosure, and is marked to indicate its classified status when in documentary form.

Clearance means that an individual is eligible, under the standards of Executive Orders 10450 and 12968 and appropriate DOT regulations, for access to classified information.

Damage to the national security means harm to the national defense or foreign relations of the United States from the unauthorized disclosure of information, to include the sensitivity, value, and utility of that information.

Declassification means the authorized change in the status of information from classified information to unclassified information.

Downgrading means a determination by a declassification authority that information classified and safeguarded at a specific level shall be classified and safeguarded at a lower level.

Information means any knowledge that can be communicated, or documentary material, regardless of its physical form or characteristics, that is owned by, produced by or for, or is under the control of the United States Government. “Control” means the authority of the agency that originates

information, or its successor in function, to regulate access to the information.

Mandatory declassification review means the review for declassification of classified information in response to a request for declassification that qualifies under Section 3.6 of Executive Order 12958.

Original classification means an initial determination that information requires, in the interest of national security, protection against unauthorized disclosure.

Original classification authority means an individual authorized in writing, either by the President or by agency heads or other officials designated by the President, to classify information in the first instance.

§ 8.7 Spheres of responsibility.

(a) Pursuant to Section 5.6(c) of Executive Order 12958, and to section 6.1 of Executive Order 12968, the Assistant Secretary for Administration is hereby designated as the senior agency official of the Department of Transportation with assigned responsibilities to assure effective compliance with and implementation of Executive Order 12958, Executive Order 12968, Office of Management and Budget Directives, the regulations in this part, and related issuances.

(b) In the discharge of these responsibilities, the Assistant Secretary for Administration will be assisted by the Director of Security and Administrative Management, who, in addition to other actions directed by this part, will evaluate the overall application of and adherence to the security policies and requirements prescribed in this part and who will report his/her findings and recommendations to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, heads of Departmental elements, and, as appropriate, to the Secretary.

(c) Secretarial Officers and heads of Departmental elements will assure that the provisions in this part are effectively administered, that adequate personnel and funding are provided for this purpose, and that corrective actions that may be warranted are taken promptly.