
CHAPTER 5. DECLASSIFICATION AND DOWNGRADING

- 5-1. AUTHORITY. The Department does not have the authority to declassify or downgrade information classified under Executive Order 12356 or prior Orders. Such authority may be exercised only by agency heads and officials designated pursuant to Section 3-1 of Executive Order 12356.
- 5-2. DECLASSIFICATION POLICY. While the Department has no authority to declassify or downgrade information, custodians of classified information are responsible for carrying out declassification and downgrading instructions of the original classification authority. Within HUD these responsibilities are carried out by the Assistant Director for Security, Office of Investigation, and include but are not necessarily limited to the following:
- a. The systematic review of classified documents to identify those for which according to the posted instructions, downgrading or declassifying is required.
 - b. Coordinating with the original classification authority to determine whether the classification has been extended on those documents identified in a. above, and taking action to:
 - (1) extend the classification or
 - (2) downgrade or declassify the information in accordance with the original instructions.

Consistent with the above, classified information shall be declassified or downgraded, pursuant to Executive Order 12356, as soon as national security considerations permit. Any questions concerning declassification may be directed to the Assistant Director for Security.

- 5-3. PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR DECLASSIFICATION AND RELEASE OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION. All requests by the public, Government employees, or other Government agencies, for the release of classified information shall be directed to the Inspector General, who will ensure that:
- a. All requests are acknowledged within ten working days.

- b. The request is immediately coordinated with the original classification authority to determine whether the association of that authority with the classification of the information requires protection.
- c. In those instances when the answer to subparagraph b, above, is no, the request will be referred, along with the requested document and if appropriate any recommendations to withhold, for direct handling by the original classification authority. The requester shall be advised in writing of this action.
- d. Whenever it is necessary, by either the original classification authority or HUD to deny the declassification and release, in whole or part, of the requested information, the original classification authority shall notify the requester of:
 - (1) The reason for the denial,
 - (2) The requesters right to appeal the denial, and
 - (3) The name, title, and address of the appellate authority.

5-4. DOWNGRADING. The Assistant Director for Security, Office of Investigation, shall maintain a continuous review of all classified information in the Department and will downgrade all classified information that is marked for automatic downgrading. Downgrading will also be accomplished upon notification from the original classification authority to assign a lower classification designation when such downgrading is appropriate.