

they have had access to, their obligation not to disclose the information, and be requested to sign an acknowledgement of this briefing.

(d) The reclassified information must be appropriately marked and safeguarded. The markings should include the reclassification authority and the date of the action. Apply other markings as provided in subpart B of this part.

§ 2001.14 Classification challenges [1.8].

(a) *Challenging classification.* Authorized holders wishing to challenge the classification status of information shall present such challenges to an original classification authority with jurisdiction over the information. An authorized holder is any individual, including an individual external to the agency, who has been granted access to specific classified information in accordance with the provisions of the Order to include the special conditions set forth in section 4.1(h) of the Order. A formal challenge under this provision must be in writing, but need not be any more specific than to question why information is or is not classified, or is classified at a certain level.

(b) *Agency procedures.* (1) Because the Order encourages authorized holders to challenge classification as a means for promoting proper and thoughtful classification actions, agencies shall ensure that no retribution is taken against any authorized holders bringing such a challenge in good faith.

(2) Agencies shall establish a system for processing, tracking and recording formal classification challenges made by authorized holders. Agencies shall consider classification challenges separately from Freedom of Information Act or other access requests, and shall not process such challenges in turn with pending access requests.

(3) The agency shall provide an initial written response to a challenge within 60 days. If the agency is unable to respond to the challenge within 60 days, the agency must acknowledge the challenge in writing, and provide a date by which the agency will respond. The acknowledgment must include a statement that if no agency response is received within 120 days, the challenger

has the right to forward the challenge to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP) for a decision. The challenger may also forward the challenge to the ISCAP if an agency has not responded to an internal appeal within 90 days of the agency's receipt of the appeal. Agency responses to those challenges it denies shall include the challenger's appeal rights to the ISCAP.

(4) Whenever an agency receives a classification challenge to information that has been the subject of a challenge within the past two years, or that is the subject of pending litigation, the agency is not required to process the challenge beyond informing the challenger of this fact and of the challenger's appeal rights, if any.

(c) *Additional considerations.* (1) Challengers and agencies shall attempt to keep all challenges, appeals and responses unclassified. However, classified information contained in a challenge, an agency response, or an appeal shall be handled and protected in accordance with the Order and its implementing directives. Information being challenged for classification shall remain classified unless and until a final decision is made to declassify it.

(2) The classification challenge provision is not intended to prevent an authorized holder from informally questioning the classification status of particular information. Such informal inquiries should be encouraged as a means of holding down the number of formal challenges.

§ 2001.15 Classification guides [2.2].

(a) *Preparation of classification guides.* Originators of classification guides are encouraged to consult users of guides for input when developing or updating guides. When possible, originators of classification guides are encouraged to communicate within their agencies and with other agencies that are developing guidelines for similar activities to ensure the consistency and uniformity of classification decisions. Each agency shall maintain a list of its classification guides in use.

(b) *General content of classification guides.* Classification guides shall, at a minimum: