Student Guide

NATO Information Short

Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a political and military alliance created to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries from Europe and North America. Known as NATO, the member countries consult and cooperate in the fields of security and defense.

NATO may create and possess information for strategic use by its member nations. And when member nations possess any NATO information they must safeguard it appropriately.

The United States requirements for marking, storing, and handling NATO information are outlined in United States Security Authority for NATO Instruction 1-07, and Department of Defense Manual or DoDM 5200.01, Volume 2, DoD Information Security Program: Marking of Classified Information, and Volume 3, Safeguarding Classified Information.

NATO Information

NATO obtains information from multiple sources to share with its member nations. To be considered NATO information, the information must either be generated by or for NATO, released into the NATO security system by a member nation, or sent directly to the United States from another NATO member nation, already marked "NATO." In this case, even though the information did not come directly from NATO, the originating nation marked it as such so it should be controlled under the NATO Security Program and directives.

The United States, as a member of NATO, may share its information with NATO as well. Before this can happen, however, the United States must provide "RELEASABLE TO NATO" statements and follow applicable disclosure policies for release. This information will then be dispatched and controlled by NATO.

NATO Classification Levels

NATO has four levels of classification: COSMIC TOP SECRET, NATO SECRET, NATO CONFIDENTIAL, and NATO RESTRICTED. NATO also distinguishes official, unclassified information using the classification NATO UNCLASSIFIED.

The classification ATOMAL is used in conjunction with COSMIC TOP SECRET, SECRET, and CONFIDENTIAL to further define NATO Classification.

Review the table for additional information about each Classification Level:

Classification Level	Additional Information
COSMIC TOP SECRET	Applied when the unauthorized disclosure of the information would cause exceptionally grave damage to NATO • Term "COSMIC" is applied to identify it as NATO TOP SECRET • Term "NATO TOP SECRET" is not used
NATO SECRET	Applied when the unauthorized disclosure would cause serious damage to NATO
NATO CONFIDENTIAL	Applied when the unauthorized disclosure would be damaging to the interests of NATO
NATO RESTRICTED	Applied when the unauthorized disclosure would be disadvantageous to the interests of NATO • Security safeguards are similar to those of FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY or SENSITIVE, BUT UNCLASSIFIED information • "NATO RESTRICTED" is a security classification • Should be marked "CONFIDENTIAL – Modified Handling"
NATO UNCLASSIFIED	Applied when the information does not meet criteria for classification • Official information that is the property of NATO • Access permitted to non-NATO entities when such access would not be detrimental to NATO. (Similar to U.S. Government official information that must be reviewed prior to public release.)

ATOMAL	This marking is only used in conjunction with : • U.S. Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data that is classified pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, provided it has been officially released to NATO • Or United Kingdom ATOMIC information that has been officially released to NATO Markings include: • COSMIC TOP SECRET ATOMAL (//CTS-A) • SECRET ATOMAL (//NS-A) • CONFIDENTIAL ATOMAL (//NC-A)

Accessing NATO Information

NATO classification levels are used to safeguard NATO information. You should be familiar with these classification levels, and the access authorizations required for each.

Remember, access to NATO information is not based on duty position, rank, or level of clearance alone. Instead, access is based on three criteria: the requester must have a need to know the information, he or she must have the appropriate U.S. clearance level, AND must have received the NATO access briefing for the specific level and type of information.

This access authorization applies to all modes of NATO information including oral, written, visual, and electronic information. Note that COSMIC TOP SECRET and ATOMAL information may not be processed, stored, or transmitted in electronic form.

Your agency or organization should maintain a list of all personnel and their current NATO access level. When in doubt, seek assistance from your Security Officer, NATO Sub-registry, or control point.

As with all NATO information, access to ATOMAL information requires DoD personnel or contractors to have a need-to-know to perform their job, the appropriate U.S. clearance level, and a restricted data access briefing.

Remember, as a potential user of NATO information you are responsible for safeguarding that information. To do so, you must ensure that individuals are authorized to access NATO information BEFORE you allow them access.

Marking NATO Information

In order to properly safeguard NATO information, you must be familiar with NATO markings and how they are applied.

NATO banner line markings may be applied only to documents that contain NATO information.

You will also see portion markings for NATO information. Documents that consist entirely of NATO classified information must contain ONLY NATO portion markings, and must have a NATO banner line. These documents will not carry a classification authority block and they cannot be labeled with the classification Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals, or NOFORN.

Sample NATO Document

| NATO Banner Line |
| NATO Portion Marking |

//NATO SECRET

(//NS) This paragraph contains NATO Secret information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "//NS."

(//NC) This paragraph contains NATO Confidential information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "//NC."

(//NC) This paragraph contains NATO Confidential information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "//NC."

//NATO SECRET

Review the specific banner lines and portion markings used for NATO classified information:

NATO Banner Lines	Portion Markings
//COSMIC TOP SECRET	(//CTS)
//NATO SECRET	(//NS)
//NATO CONFIDENTIAL	(//NC)
//NATO RESTRICTED	(//NR)
//NATO UNCLASSIFIED	(//NU)
//COSMIC TOP SECRET ATOMAL	(//CTS-A)
//SECRET ATOMAL	(//NS-A)
//CONFIDENTIAL ATOMAL	(//NC-A)

NATO Information in U.S. Documents

Some U.S. classified documents may also contain NATO information. In this case, only the portions with NATO information will use the NATO portion markings.

The document's banner line will indicate the highest classification of information in the document, whether that is the U.S. information, or the U.S.-equivalent classification for the NATO information.

After the classification level, the banner line will display two forward slashes and the text FGI NATO, indicating the presence of NATO Foreign Government Information in the document or material.

Finally, the face of the U.S. document must clearly identify the presence of NATO classified information, and its level of classification within the U.S. document.

Sample U.S. Document Containing NATO Information

NATO Banner Line: Indicates the presence of NATO FGI

Required Statement for NATO Information

NATO Portion Marking

SECRET// FGI NATO

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS NATO-SECRET INFORMATION

October 9, 2012

Subject: (U) Mixed NATIO/U.S. Marking Instructions

(C) This paragraph contains Confidential information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "C."

(S) This paragraph contains Secret information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "S."

(//NS) This paragraph contains NATO Secret information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "//NS."

(C) This paragraph contains Confidential information; therefore it will be marked with the designation "C."

SECRET// FGI NATO

Handling NATO Information

When handling NATO Classified information, you should carefully consider both how to safely transmit the information from one location to another, and how to safely reproduce the information, if needed.

Section 5 of the USSAN 1-07 and enclosure 2, section 17 of the DoDM 5200.01, Volume 3 both provide guidance for approved transport methods and reproduction of NATO information.

Transmitting NATO Information

The NATO classification level determines which methods may be used to transport NATO materials domestically.

Review the transmission methods approved for each NATO classification level:

NATO Classification	Approved Transmission Methods
COSMIC TOP SECRET* ‡ COSMIC TOP SECRET ATOMAL* ‡	• Registry system by cleared government courier (i.e. diplomatic pouch or military courier service)
NATO SECRET* SECRET ATOMAL* ‡ NATO CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL ATOMAL* ‡	• Cleared courier • Appropriately cleared employee possessing courier identification and authorization • U.S. registered mail using same provisions as prescribed for U.S. classified material, with few exceptions

*Delivery receipts are required
‡No electronic transmission

Note that delivery receipts are required for COSMIC TOP SECRET, NATO SECRET, and all ATOMAL information.

NATO information may only be transmitted electronically over a NATO accredited network. Note that electronic transmission is not permitted for COSMIC TOP SECRET or ATOMAL information.

Reproducing NATO Information

The NATO classification level determines the requirements for reproducing the information.

Review the reproduction requirements for each document type:

Document Type	Reproduction Requirements
COSMIC documents	• Only <u>CUSR</u> and COSMIC Sub-registries may reproduce • COSMIC Sub-registries must report the number of copies to CUSR • CUSR must maintain records of the exact numbers and locations of copies
ATOMAL documents	• Only CUSR, ATOMAL Sub-registries, and ATOMAL Control Points may reproduce
NATO SECRET documents and below	• Reproduction permitted under strict need-to-know principle, if not restricted by originator • Copies must be accounted for and safeguarded as the original

Storing NATO Information

If you are handling NATO information, you will also need to know how to securely store it.

Information designated NATO CONFIDENTIAL or higher requires the same physical security safeguards as information with the equivalent U.S. classification.

NATO RESTRICTED information may be stored in a locked file cabinet, book case, desk, or other container, in a room or building that only authorized personnel may access.

You must store NATO information separately from non-NATO information. In addition, ATOMAL information must be stored separately from non-ATOMAL information.

To meet these requirements, use separate containers, separate drawers, or separate file dividers.

Organizations may use Automated Information Systems, or AIS, to store NATO Classified information, provided the AIS is accredited and the organization provides users with system instructions and policies.

Remember, COSMIC TOP SECRET and all ATOMAL information may not be processed, stored, or transmitted in electronic form.

Finally, to properly safeguard stored NATO classified information, storage container combinations must be changed annually, when an individual with the access combination departs, or anytime a suspected compromise occurs.

Summary

This Short introduced you to the proper identification, handling, and storage of NATO classified information.

If you would like to learn more about identifying, handling, or storing NATO information, see USSAN 1-07 and DoDM 5200.01, Volumes 2 and 3.

If you have specific questions concerning NATO classified information you can also reference the NIPRNet CUSR website (https://secureweb.hqda.penatgon.mil/cusr) or SIPRNet CUSR website (http://classweb.hqda-s.army.smil.mil/cusr), available only on .gov and .mil domains.

Review Activity

1. Which of the following is a portion marking that indicates ATOMAL information?

   Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

   ○ //NC
   ○ //COSMIC TOP SECRET
   ○ //NATO SECRET
   ○ //NS-A

2. Which of these markings will be present on a document that requires a military or government courier for transmission?

   Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

   ○ //NC
   ○ //COSMIC TOP SECRET
   ○ //NATO SECRET
   ○ //NS-A

3. You are working with a document that contains ONLY the portion markings //NC, //NS, and //NU. Which of the following would be an appropriate banner line?

   Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

   ○ //NC
   ○ //COSMIC TOP SECRET
   ○ //NATO SECRET
   ○ //NS-A

Answer Key

1. Which of the following is a portion marking that indicates ATOMAL information?

   Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

   ○ //NC
   ○ //COSMIC TOP SECRET
   ○ //NATO SECRET
   ⊙ //NS-A

   Feedback: NATO portion markings are appended –A to indicate ATOMAL information.

2. Which of these markings will be present on a document that requires a military or government courier for transmission?

   Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

   ○ //NC
   ⊙ //COSMIC TOP SECRET
   ○ //NATO SECRET
   ○ //NS-A

   Feedback: COSMIC TOP SECRET requires transmission by military or government courier.

3. You are working with a document that contains ONLY the portion markings //NC, //NS, and //NU. Which of the following would be an appropriate banner line?

   Select the best response. Check your answer in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

   ○ //NC
   ○ //COSMIC TOP SECRET
   ⊙ //NATO SECRET
   ○ //NS-A

   Feedback: The NATO banner line should reflect the highest classification portion level marking listed in the information.