SECURITY SMART:

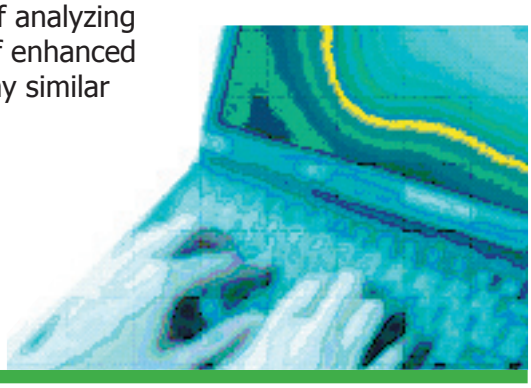
ISSM Best Practice: Email Classification Awareness

 February 2005

In 2004 the Security Inquiry Team reported 25 cases of improperly transmitted classified matter (email, fax, etc.). A high level of classification awareness among employees can assist in mitigating common security incidents that result from inadvertent inclusion of classified information, especially when the communication is via email.

The following information is provided as a recommendation only to encourage Responsible Line Manager (RLM) and Authorized Derivative Classifier (ADC) interactions through the process of analyzing the risks and specifying and implementing appropriate controls in the form of enhanced employee awareness. RLMs are free to not adopt this process or to adopt any similar process appropriately modified for their organizations.

For more detail on the following ISSM Best Practice, see
http://int.lanl.gov/cio/docs/employee_classification_awa.pdf



Employee Classification Awareness

This process is intended to apply to situations such as email where routine review by an ADC is either problematic or not feasible. It is not intended to replace or allow circumvention of the DOE classification review requirements for documents or other material generated in potentially classified subject areas.

The RLM, in conjunction with ADCs acting as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) (i.e., with detailed knowledge of both the activity and the applicable classification guidance), analyzes each activity's risk of generating classified information and

1) determines the classification awareness enhancements necessary to ensure that emails do not risk including classified information and thus ADC review is not required, or
2) determines that the risk of including classified information is high and ADC review is required. RLMs and/or ADCs may request an S-7 classification analyst to participate as an SME in this analysis.

Activity Risk Categorization

UNRESTRICTED	No risk of generating classified information.	• Includes activities judged to be free of risk of generating classified information. This includes, but is not limited to, information relating to administrative activities (i.e, no technical or programmatic content), and information falling under an existing approved Designated Unclassified Subject Area (http://int.lanl.gov/security/classification/dusa.shtml). • ADC review of email is not required.
CONDITIONAL	No risk of generating classified information, if appropriate controls are implemented in the form of enhanced classification awareness for workers.	• Workers are to be provided classification awareness briefings, presentations, etc. identified as necessary by RLM, and developed and delivered by organizational ADCs. • ADCs may work with S-7 as needed to develop awareness material. • Upon completion of this process (see "Documentation Process" below), ADC review of email is not required.
RESTRICTED	Risk of generating classified information.	• Classified information is likely to be involved and classification awareness for workers cannot be expected to provide sufficient assurance that compromise can be avoided without requiring ADC review. • This determination will be based on complexity of the subject matter and/or the relevant classification guidance. • ADC review of email is always required for this category.

NOTE: *For all categories, authors of unclassified email are responsible for appropriately handling Unclassified Controlled Information, such as UCNI, OUO, etc. Additional awareness in these areas can also be provided.*

Documentation of the Process

A variety of formats can be used to document the risk analysis and development and implementation of controls (enhanced worker classification awareness). Each such document should identify and describe the activity, project, research subject area, etc., and specify the risk category as described in the "Activity Risk Categorization" table, or in a similar fashion.

Also strongly recommended is the explicit instruction to workers that in all cases, if the worker is unsure of the activity scope, risk categorization, or applicability of the awareness briefings they have received, they must stop work and seek additional guidance.

Suggested Framework Below: *The following structure will guide the analysis of the need for enhanced classification awareness. The following content should appear in the documentation of the level of risk assigned.*

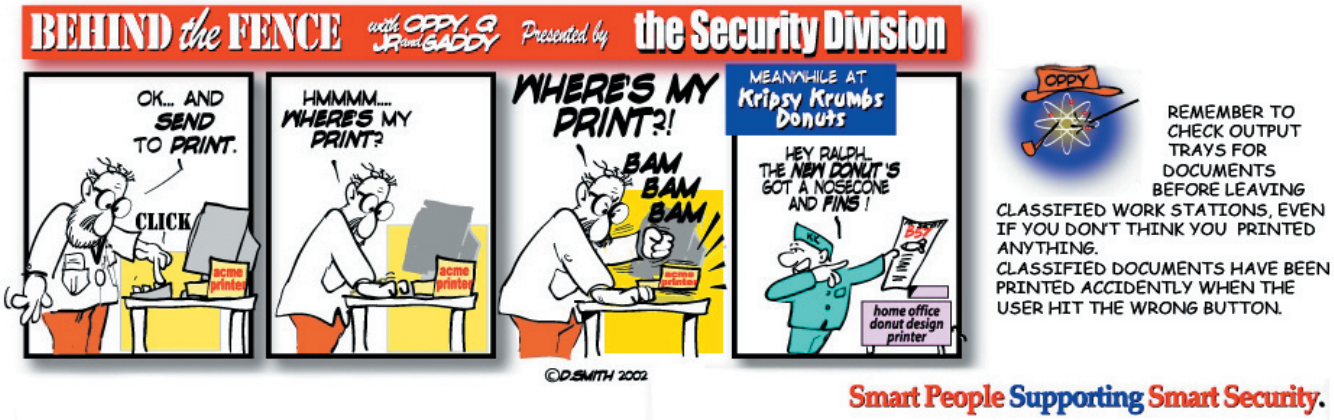
Documentation of Level of Risk

UNRESTRICTED

- Describe activity in sufficient detail to ensure workers understand boundaries and scope, within which ADC review of email is not required.

CONDITIONAL

- The RLM and ADC, with worker input and assistance from S-7 as necessary, develop classification awareness briefings, presentations, etc., focusing on providing clear guidance to workers about what information may / may not be included which does not need ADC review.
- Awareness materials should be succinct and clear, and should not include a level of technical detail that cannot be understood by all workers. The material must be consistent with and reflect applicable approved classification guidance.
- Workers will use enhanced awareness **not** to determine whether information is classified or unclassified, but whether information requires ADC review.
- The RLM and ADC should ensure workers are made aware that a substantial "buffer zone" or margin is required between the boundary where ADC review is required and the boundary where information becomes classified. **That is, workers who are not ADCs must not be expected, or allowed, to directly apply classification guidance, but seek ADC review before the content of their email approaches the classification "boundary."**
- If the RLM is not satisfied that enhanced classification awareness can effectively accomplish this for all involved workers, then the activity must be categorized as RESTRICTED. This circumstance may arise in areas where the subject matter, the applicable classification guidance, or both, are sufficiently complex or detailed to preclude attaining an acceptable level of awareness for all involved workers.

RESTRICTED

- The activity should be described in sufficient detail to ensure workers understand its boundaries within which ADC review of email is always required.