

New Zealand Government Information Security Classification System

Table 1: Classification Levels mapped to Business Impact Levels

	UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION	CLASSIFIED INFORMATION						
		Policy & Privacy Information that should be protected because of national interest, national policy, or personal privacy.			National Security Information that should be protected because of the national interest, security, defence, or international relations of the Government of New Zealand			
Classification	UNCLASSIFIED	IN-CONFIDENCE	SENSITIVE	RESTRICTED	CONFIDENTIAL	SECRET	TOP SECRET	
Business Impact Level*	1-LOW	2-MEDIUM	3-HIGH	3-HIGH	4-VERY HIGH	5-EXTREME	6-CATASTROPHIC	
Classification definition	Compromise would likely have low impact on individuals, organisations, or New Zealand's national interest ¹ .	Compromise would likely prejudice the maintenance of law and order, impede the effective conduct of government in New Zealand or affect adversely the privacy of its citizens.	Compromise would likely cause harm to organisations, damage the interests of New Zealand, or endanger the safety or wellbeing of its citizens.	Compromise would likely adversely affect New Zealand's security, defence, or international relations.	Compromise would likely cause significant (short-term) damage to New Zealand's security, defence, or international relations.	Compromise would likely cause extreme (medium-term) damage to New Zealand's security, defence, or international relations.	Compromise would likely cause catastrophic (longer-term) damage to New Zealand's security, defence, or international relations.	
What this means	The compromise of UNCLASSIFIED information would likely cause only temporary reduced effectiveness and does not need special security or handling over and above the standard protections afforded to all government information to keep it secure. If authorised for public release, information at this level may be published publicly. UNCLASSIFIED is optional for use as a protective marking but its inclusion informs readers that its sensitivity has been assessed.	The compromise of IN-CONFIDENCE information would cause a loss of privacy and may cause inconvenience to an individual or organisation. However, its compromise would not reasonably be expected to cause actual harm. The compromise of IN-CONFIDENCE information may degrade organisational processes or hinder commercial activity. However, the impact would be unlikely to require regulatory or legal intervention. Organisations should be expected to manage these events using their internal processes.	The compromise of SENSITIVE information is very likely to cause actual harm (including the potential for loss of life) and/or severe distress to individuals. The compromise of SENSITIVE information may well require formal investigation and result in action being taken against the organisation.	RESTRICTED is the lowest level of classification at which information that would harm national security can be classified. Typically, this applies to routine national security issues that can be managed without escalation and are highly unlikely to have a severe or lasting impact. The compromise of RESTRICTED information is disruptive to national security but any negative effects can reasonably be expected to be minor or short-term.	The compromise of CONFIDENTIAL information would materially threaten the security, defence, or international relations of New Zealand. Compromise of such information would not be expected to bring the country as a whole into disrepute, but would be high-profile and seriously disadvantage New Zealand in a specific area, e.g. by materially damaging New Zealand's relationship with a partner nation.	The compromise of SECRET information would likely cause high levels of damage to New Zealand's reputation and have a significant negative impact on another country's willingness to work (and share information) with New Zealand. For example, compromise could result in New Zealand being formally sanctioned by its partners and result in a major loss in its international reputation.	The compromise of TOP SECRET information could cause such harm to New Zealand that its reputation as a trusted ally would be brought into question. This could result in a long-term withdrawal from key international partnerships and treaties. Compromise of such information would threaten New Zealand's role and membership in the international community.	
Applies to	All public sector organisations create or handle UNCLASSIFIED information.	Most public sector organisations create or handle IN CONFIDENCE information.	Most public sector organisations create or handle SENSITIVE information.	Many public sector organisations create or handle RESTRICTED information.	Few public sector organisations create or handle CONFIDENTIAL information.	Few public sector organisations create or handle SECRET information.	Very few public sector organisations create or handle TOP SECRET information.	

*See Business Impact Levels (BIL) matrix