

SOP Template: Document Classification and Labeling Procedures

This SOP defines **document classification and labeling procedures** to ensure proper organization, security, and accessibility of documents. It covers criteria for categorizing documents based on sensitivity and confidentiality, standardized labeling formats, handling and storage requirements, and guidelines for authorized access and distribution. The objective is to maintain document integrity, facilitate efficient retrieval, and comply with regulatory and organizational policies.

1. Purpose

To standardize the classification and labeling of documents for efficient retrieval, data protection, and compliance with organizational and regulatory requirements.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all physical and electronic documents created, received, processed, or maintained by [Organization Name].

3. Definitions

- Document:** Any record, file, or data in physical or digital form.
- Classification:** The process of assigning documents to categories based on sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Label:** A marking indicating the classification status and other relevant details of a document.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Document Owners:** Classify and label documents appropriately.
- Employees:** Comply with classification and handling procedures.
- IT/Records Management:** Provide tools and guidance for labeling and storage.

5. Classification Criteria

Classification Level	Description	Examples
Public	Information intended for general public release.	Marketing materials, published reports
Internal	Non-public information for internal use only.	Internal memos, organizational policies
Confidential	Sensitive information with restricted access.	Client data, HR files, contracts
Restricted	Highly sensitive or regulated data requiring strict controls.	Financial records, trade secrets, PII/PHI

6. Labeling Format

All documents must be clearly labeled according to their classification. Sample labeling format:

- [Classification Level]** â€“ [Document Title] â€“ [Date] â€“ [Owner/Department]

For digital documents, labeling should be included in header/footer and metadata. For physical documents, use designated stamps or stickers.

7. Handling and Storage Requirements

- Store confidential and restricted documents in secure, access-controlled locations.
- Encrypt electronic documents classified as confidential or restricted.
- Limit duplication and transmission to authorized individuals only.
- Retain documents as per records retention policy, and securely dispose of when no longer needed.

8. Access and Distribution Guidelines

- Access to documents is based strictly on classification and job responsibilities.
- Distribution outside the organization of confidential or restricted documents requires written authorization.
- Maintain distribution logs for restricted documents.

9. Compliance and Review

- Periodic audits will be conducted to ensure adherence to this SOP.
- Non-compliance will result in disciplinary action in accordance with organizational policy.
- This SOP will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

10. References

- [Insert applicable laws, regulations, and internal policies]

11. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	[Date]	Initial Release	[Name]