

SOP: Document Classification Guidelines

This SOP establishes **document classification guidelines** to categorize information based on sensitivity and intended audience, including classifications such as confidential, internal use, and public. It provides criteria for each classification level, outlines handling and access protocols, and ensures consistent labeling and protection of documents. The purpose is to safeguard sensitive information, facilitate proper information sharing, and maintain organizational security and compliance.

1. Purpose

To define standard guidelines for classifying, labeling, and handling documents according to their level of sensitivity and intended audience to ensure proper safeguarding and compliance with organizational policies.

2. Scope

These guidelines apply to all employees, contractors, and third parties who handle organizational documents in any format, including electronic and physical files.

3. Classification Levels

Classification	Description	Examples
Confidential	Information that may cause significant harm if disclosed to unauthorized individuals. Access is strictly limited.	Client data, financial records, trade secrets, employee personal details.
Internal Use	Information intended for use within the organization. Unauthorized disclosure poses a moderate risk.	Internal reports, meeting minutes, internal policies and procedures.
Public	Information approved for external release. Disclosure poses minimal or no risk.	Press releases, marketing materials, published annual reports.

4. Labeling Requirements

- Confidential:** All pages must be clearly marked “Confidential” at the top and bottom.
- Internal Use:** Documents should be labeled “Internal Use Only” on the first page.
- Public:** No special marking required, but may be labeled “Public” for clarity if deemed necessary.

5. Handling and Access Protocols

Classification	Access Control	Handling Guidelines
Confidential	Restricted to personnel with appropriate authorization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Do not share via unsecured channels.Store in locked cabinets or encrypted digital locations.Shred physical copies when no longer needed.
Internal Use	Available to all employees or designated teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Share within the organization only.Store in internal digital repositories with access control.Recycle or shred physical copies when no longer needed.

Classification	Access Control	Handling Guidelines
Public	No restriction; accessible by anyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure document has management approval before release.• No special storage requirements.

6. Training and Awareness

All personnel must be trained on these classification guidelines and review them annually.

7. Compliance and Enforcement

Failure to comply with classification and handling requirements may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and possible legal action if applicable.

8. Document Review

This SOP will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in regulatory or business requirements.

9. Revision History

Date	Version	Description of Change	Approved By
2024-06-01	1.0	Initial release	Document Owner