

**Forest Service Handbook  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
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**Forest Service Handbook 6209.11 – Records Management Handbook  
Chapter 60 - Management of Special Records**

**Amendment:** 6209.11-2006-2

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**Approved by:** Jacqueline Myers, Associate Deputy Chief

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**Responsible Staff:**

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6209.11,60, Amendment 6209.11-96-1, July 19, 1996

**Digest:** Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

**60:** Recodes and reorganizes entire chapter. Renames chapter from “Classified Records Security” to “Management of Special Records.” Incorporates direction formerly contained in chapter 70, “Priority Information.” Clarifies direction on the management of classified records and priority information.

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## 60.1 - Authority

1. Title 18 United States Code, section 739 (18 U.S.C. 739), Espionage and Censorship Act. This act provides for the prosecution of anyone who negligently allows national defense related records to be lost, stolen, or destroyed.

2. U.S. Department of Agriculture Manual, (DM 3440-001) Classification, Declassification, and Safeguarding Classified Information. This manual sets policy and guidance for the United States Department of Agriculture and its units for the management and care of national security or classified information.

3. U.S. Department of Agriculture Manual, (DR 3440-002) Control and Protection of “Sensitive Security Information”. This manual sets policy and guidance for the United States Department of Agriculture and its units for the management and safeguarding of unclassified but sensitive information.

## 60.5 - Definitions

Classified Records. Records that warrant special handling and security because the improper disclosure of the information or data contained therein could damage national security. There are three levels of classified information. See FSM 6232.05 for definitions of classification levels.

Sensitive Security Information (SSI). Unclassified information of a sensitive nature, that if publicly disclosed could be expected to have a harmful impact on the security of Federal operations, assets, or public health or safety.

Special Records. Records, documents, or data that Federal laws or guidelines, or Departmental or Agency policies require special processing, storage, or disposition.

## 61 - Management of Special Records

Special records include any documents or records in any format, in the possession of Forest Service employees or contractors that have a national security classification, and are labeled “For Official Use Only.” This also includes documents or records that contain confidential business information, proprietary information, or trade secrets owned by a contractor either currently doing business with the Forest Service, or preparing to do business with the Agency.

### 61.1 - Maintaining Classified Records

File classified and unclassified records separately unless one of the following conditions exists:

1. The volume of the classified material is small and it is more advantageous to use otherwise empty space in a file cabinet for unclassified material. Separate the classified material from the unclassified material or place them in separate drawers. Storage facilities must meet the requirements of USDA Departmental Manual 3440-001, chapter 6.

2. If the record of an action consists of both classified and unclassified documents and reference needs require that both be filed together. Clearly mark files, folders, and similar groups of documents containing classified and/or sensitive information as to the highest classification and/or sensitivity of information contained therein. Mark the classification and or sensitivity on the outside, front and back, and top and bottom of the file or folder. When cover sheets are removed and the items are in secure storage, the files or folders must be marked to indicate the highest level of classified and /or sensitive information contained therein. Attaching a document cover sheet to the outside of the file or folder will satisfying this requirement. Do not attach cover sheets when the files are in a secure storage container.

3. When classified and unclassified documents are filed together, secure the records or containers and monitored access to the area as if all contents are classified to preclude the inadvertent disclosure of the classified materials. Mark all classified documents, both originally and derivatively classified (except those containing restricted data or formerly restricted data), on the face of the document with a "Declassify on" line, with instructions for the declassification of the information. See USDA Departmental Manual 3440-001 for specific instructions for completing the "Declassify on" marking and further guidance on the classification and marking of documents, files, and records.

### 61.2 - Non-classified Special Records

Records in the custody of Forest Service personnel that contain information or data that is not classified but is considered Sensitive Security Information (SSI), trade secrets, proprietary information, or confidential business information must be carefully administered. Monitor these records to insure that only the appropriate personnel have access to them.

### 61.3 - Transfer of Special Records

1. Consult agency security managers before transferring classified records or initiating other actions related to these records. Federal Record Centers (FRC) will not accept classified records for storage that were not reviewed for declassification and marked with declassification dates. Do not disclose classified information on the Records Transmittal and Receipt (SF 135, SF 135-A), or equivalent; use only unclassified titles to identify the records.

2. Do not retire TOP SECRET records until downgraded to a lower classification. When TOP SECRET records must be retired, transmission and accountability must be in accordance with USDA Departmental Manual 3440-001.

Instructions for listing, receipting, and packing material with SECRET and CONFIDENTIAL classifications are the same as those for unclassified, except that unclassified titles may be used on the SF 135, SF 135-A, or equivalent, to list the records.

3. Ship material with these classifications in accordance with USDA Departmental Manual 3440-001. Do not intermingle restricted data and formerly restricted data with other information being transferred to a FRC.

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4. Retire non-classified special records and For Official Use Only records using the same process as other non-classified records. Destroy records that have reached the end of the Forest Service Records Retention Schedule life cycle. Retire SSI records in accordance with USDA Departmental Regulation 3440-002.