

Classified information has three levels:

1. **Top Secret** - when compromise of the information could reasonably be expected to cause **exceptionally grave injury** to the national interest, for example:
 - potential armed hostilities toward Canada or its allies
 - information about intelligence services
 - reports which could result in the death or torture of an individual
2. **Secret** - when compromise of the information could reasonably be expected to cause **serious injury** to the national interest, for example:
 - records of discussions of Cabinet or Cabinet committees
 - details of important international negotiations
 - developments relating to federal-provincial or national security
3. **Confidential** - when compromise of the information could reasonably be expected to cause **injury** to the national interest, for example:
 - record of discussions of interdepartmental committees
 - instructions on safeguarding highly classified information
 - reports from missions that might affect international relations

Protected Information

Information is protected if its compromise could cause injury to private and other non-national interests for which the government has an obligation. The information requires safeguarding, but it does not affect the national interest. The three levels of protected information are:

1. **Protected C** - when compromise of the information could reasonably be expected to cause a **high degree of injury** to private and other non-national interests such as to the safety of individuals; for example, important commercial information, law enforcement.
2. **Protected B** - when compromise of the information could reasonably be expected to cause a **medium degree of injury** to private and other non-national interests. Serious injury includes lasting harm or embarrassment that will have negative effects on an individual's career, reputation, etc.; for example, solicitor-client privilege, company financial information, personnel appraisals.
3. **Protected A** - when compromise of the information could reasonably be expected to cause a **low degree of injury** to private and other non-national interests; for example, disclosure of an individual's exact salary, Social Insurance Number.

Information from Other Organizations

Information received from any level of government in Canada, from governments of other nations, or from international organizations, must be safeguarded at the level as defined by that organization. For example, if you are preparing a briefing note for a document classified as SECRET, you simply classify the briefing note as SECRET.