

# Drafting Cabinet material: Applying a security classification and endorsement

## Four Principles

### 1. You are responsible for handling Cabinet material securely.

Cabinet Material must be kept secure. Familiarise yourself with the "Handling Cabinet material" requirements on page 2.

### 2. Cabinet material is only made available to government officials who have a legitimate "need to know".

### 3. Cabinet material should only be released in accordance with legislative requirements, government policies and directives.

### 4. The Official Information Act 1982 applies to Cabinet material

Classifications in themselves do not allow official information to be withheld under the Official Information Act. All requests under the Official Information Act must be considered using the criteria in the Act regardless of the classification given to the document concerned.

## Classifications

### In Confidence



Compromise of information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of law and order, impede the effective conduct of government in New Zealand or affect adversely the privacy of its citizens.

### Sensitive



Compromise of information would be likely to damage the interests of New Zealand or endanger the safety of its citizens.

*'Special Handling Required' endorsement used with Sensitive for material in the public interest/personal privacy area that requires additional protection. Not in CabNet.*

### Restricted



Compromise of information would be likely to affect the national interests in an adverse manner.

### Confidential

Compromise of information would damage national interests in a significant manner.

### Secret

Compromise of information would damage national interests in a serious manner.

### Top Secret

Compromise of information would damage national interests in an exceptionally grave manner.

## Endorsements

Endorsement markings may be used along with security classifications to identify protected information.

**Use endorsements only when there is a clear need for special care.**

Endorsement markings may indicate:

- the specific nature of information
- temporary sensitivities
- limitations on availability
- how recipients should handle or disclose information.

Cabinet material may carry one or more of these endorsement markings:

- Budget [CabNet]
- Commercial [CabNet]
- Staff [CabNet]
- Legally Privileged [CabNet]
- NZ Eyes Only
- Addressee Only
- Special Handling required