



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**DEPARTMENT WIDE**

EFFECTIVE DATE  
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PAGE NUMBER  
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NUMBER  
**DOC 280.515**

# POLICY

TITLE  
**ELECTRONIC DATA CLASSIFICATION**

## REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective: 8/22/11

## SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:

New policy. Read carefully!

## APPROVED:

Signature on file

\_\_\_\_\_  
**BERNARD WARNER**, Secretary  
Department of Corrections

7/19/11  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

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## REFERENCES:

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [RCW 42.52.050](#); [RCW 43.105.041](#); [Governor's Executive Order 00-03](#); [DOC 130.200 Lawsuit Processing/Staff Liability Protection](#); [DOC 280.100 Acceptable Use of Technology](#); [DOC 280.310 Information Technology Security](#); [DOC 280.510 Public Disclosure of Records](#); [DOC 280.525 Records Management](#); [DOC 280.925 Offender Access to Electronic Data](#); DOC 400.100 Incident and Significant Event Reporting; [Data Classification Guidelines](#); [Data Classification Standards](#); [Data Classification Standards Glossary](#); [Records Retention Schedule](#)

## POLICY:

- I. Data classification is the process of categorizing data based on its importance and sensitivity to the Department.
- II. Department electronic data will only be used and released for official Department business. For the purposes of this policy, electronic data is defined as any information or communication that is stored or accessed by computer or computer storage device (e.g., CD, DVD, thumb drive, etc.). This policy governs all electronic data that is created, stored, or transmitted by the Department or its staff.
- III. Data classification does not determine retention. Data will be retained per the Records Retention Schedules and DOC 280.525 Records Management.
- IV. Data classification does not apply to the release of electronic data for:
  - A. Public disclosure requests, which will follow DOC 280.510 Public Disclosure of Records.
  - B. Discovery or litigation hold requests, which will follow DOC 130.200 Lawsuit Processing/Staff Liability Protection.
- V. The requirements in this policy apply for all new business related to the creation, storage, release, or transfer of electronic data, including data sharing agreements that are being updated or renewed. Existing data sharing agreements and processes for storing, releasing, or transferring data must comply with this policy by August 2012.

## DIRECTIVE:

- I. Data Classification and Handling
  - A. Electronic data will be classified into 4 groups per the Data Classification Standards:

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1. Category 1 Data: Public Information - Data that is currently made available to the public by the Department and cannot be defined as confidential or restricted.
    - a. Category 1 data does not require authorization to be released.
  2. Category 2 Data: Sensitive Information - Data that is created for internal Department use only.
    - a. Category 2 data does not require authorization to be released for official Department business.
  3. Category 3 Data: Confidential Information - Data that is specifically protected from release by law.
    - a. Category 3 data requires a data sharing agreement approved through the Contracts Office to be released outside the Department, except for public disclosure or discovery/litigation hold requests or as covered in other Department policy.
  4. Category 4 Data: Restricted Information - Data containing information that may endanger the health or safety of others or that has especially strict handling requirements by law, statute, or regulation.
    - a. Staff must receive authorization from the data owner prior to accessing Category 4 data.
    - b. Category 4 data requires Appointing Authority approval and a data sharing agreement approved through the Contracts Office to be released outside the Department, except for public disclosure or discovery/litigation hold requests or as covered in other Department policy.
- B. Electronic data will be stored and transmitted consistent with their classification per the Data Classification Standards unless a more restrictive data sharing agreement is in place.
1. Electronic data sharing agreements must be approved by the appropriate Appointing Authority/designee and be on file with the DOC Contracts Office.
- C. If electronic data contains information from multiple classification groups, it will be handled based on the most restrictive classification.

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- D. Offenders will not have access to Category 2, 3, or 4 electronic data except through public disclosure or as authorized in DOC 280.925 Offender Access to Electronic Data.
- E. Electronic data must be destroyed in accordance with its data classification category as defined in the Data Classification Standards and Data Classification Guidelines.
  - 1. Staff will complete DOC 01-089 Records Destruction Request when destroying Category 2, 3, or 4 data.

II. Staff Responsibilities

- A. The Chief Information Security Officer will be the point of contact for addressing:
  - 1. Privacy and data classification issues for electronic data from staff or the public.
  - 2. Data breaches for electronic data.
- B. Each staff is responsible for electronic data in his/her care, and will:
  - 1. Protect data at all times to avoid unauthorized access, loss, theft, or improper disclosure,
  - 2. Access, use, and release of Department electronic data as necessary to satisfy the business need,
  - 3. Handle non-Department electronic data in compliance with applicable laws and data sharing agreements, and will not request electronic data unless necessary to satisfy a business need, and
  - 4. Identify the classification of electronic data in his/her care, and maintain/release the data consistent with its classification per the Data Classification Standards.

III. Obligation to Report

- A. Staff will immediately report to the Chief Information Security Officer any:
  - 1. Unauthorized access or release of Category 2, 3, and 4 data.
  - 2. Lost or stolen computer equipment or portable electronic storage media (e.g., laptop, USB drive, flash drive) that contains Category 2, 3, or 4 data.

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a. Lost/stolen equipment or media must also be reported per DOC 400.100 Incident and Significant Event Reporting.

B. The Department will notify all persons affected by the unauthorized release of electronic data following federal and state laws.

#### IV. Violations

A. Failure or refusal to perform assigned responsibilities or willful violation of data classification policy or standards may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

B. In addition to Department action, wrongful release of Department data which constitutes a violation of federal or state law may be prosecuted and could result in civil or criminal penalties, including fines or imprisonment.

#### V. Exceptions

A. Exceptions to this policy must be authorized by the Chief Information Officer using DOC 08-058 Information Technology Service Request.

#### DEFINITIONS:

The following words/terms are important to this policy and are defined in the Data Classification Standards Glossary: Business Partners, Data Owner, New Business, Official Department Business. Other words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

None

#### DOC FORMS:

[DOC 01-089 Records Destruction Request](#)

[DOC 08-058 Information Technology Service Request](#)