



# Ministry of Defence

Ref: FOI2015/11443

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Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing regarding your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) dated 13 December 2015. You requested the following information:

*The Government Security Classifications Policy (GSCP) has replaced the Government's Protective Marking Scheme--or is about to do so. The new (GSCP) Scheme has three levels of security – Official Secret Top Secret.*

*Please advise if the British Nuclear Test records are to be re-classified. If so, which of the three new categories will they be placed in?*

*Insofar as British Nuclear Test records with a 100 year Lord Chancellor's Instrument ban on them, please advise how they are to be categorized under the new classifications.'*

On the 2 April 2014 the Ministry of Defence, along with Other Governments Departments, introduced the HMG Government Security Classification (GSC) system. The GSC system has three levels of classification, OFFICIAL, SECRET and TOP SECRET, and replaced the Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) with its six levels of classification.

A policy decision was taken that existing documents, such as the British Nuclear Test records, with the old classification markings did not need to be reclassified and could continue to be handled and protected as they had been under GPMS. When new documents are created on the same subject, however, it may be appropriate to reassess the threat and impact of compromise and use a different classification. For example, information owners might re-assess information that had previously been marked CONFIDENTIAL as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE or determine that information may have been over-classified as RESTRICTED and does not need to be marked as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the

MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Security.