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White House tightens secrecy

The Reagan administration has issued an order requiring all government employees to cooperate with federal agents investigating cases of unauthorized disclosure of classified information and setting for the first time a standard policy on the use of polygraph machines.

The directive, which tightens procedures of handling classified information by government employees, said "adverse consequences will follow an employee's refusal to cooperate with a polygraph examination." The lie detector devices cannot provide evidence in federal courts on criminal cases because they are of questionable reliability.

Administration officials said many more federal employees will have to sign secrecy agreements as a result of the directive.