

iPhone and iPad approved by NATO: classified data up to NATO RESTRICTED level

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Apple has announced that **iPhone and iPad are the first (and, according to the company, the only) consumer devices** to meet the *information assurance* requirements of NATO countries, obtaining authorization for use with **classified information up to the "NATO RESTRICTED" level** in NATO environments.

The *NATO RESTRICTED* level is **the lowest threshold among NATO classifications**, but it is still "classified": we are talking about information whose disclosure would be **disadvantageous to the interests of the Alliance**, although not reaching higher levels such as *CONFIDENTIAL*, *SECRET*, or *COSMIC TOP SECRET*.

In practice, the approval paves the way for the use of iPhone and iPad for **sensitive documents and information flows** in institutional and operational contexts where specialized devices or custom solutions were often used until now.



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The key point: no “special solutions” (but a certified configuration)

Apple emphasizes that this suitability is achieved **without requiring additional software or special settings** beyond the integrated security capabilities of the platform.
In the NATO catalog, however, the certification is associated with an **“Indigo configuration”**: in other words, the recognition concerns iOS/iPadOS with a **baseline configuration** defined within the evaluation (typically applicable through centralized management/MDM in enterprise and governmental contexts), while **without installing “extra” security components** on the device.

The process originated in Germany: iPhone and iPad had already received approval to handle classified data from the German government thanks to the native measures of iOS and iPadOS, following an evaluation by the **Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik (BSI)**.
Now, with **iOS 26 and iPadOS 26**, the certification is extended to use in **all NATO countries**.

According to Apple, the BSI conducted **thorough technical tests, comprehensive trials, and detailed security analyses** to verify that the platform's capabilities met the operational and assurance requirements demanded by member states.

Why Apple calls it a “historic moment”

The approval brings iOS 26 and iPadOS 26 to appear in the NATO Information Assurance Product Catalogue **(NIAPC)**, a step that — in terms of procurement and policy — counts as much as (if not more than) a marketing announcement.

Apple attributes the result to the “security-by-design” approach across the entire supply chain: **encryption, biometric authentication (Face ID), and platform protections** like *Memory Integrity Enforcement*, cited as an example of advanced defense against certain classes of attacks.



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Possible impacts (and limits not to forget)

For administrations, defense, suppliers, and large organizations, the message is clear: **the possibility of using consumer devices in regulated contexts is expanding**, with benefits on costs, usability, and interoperability. At the same time, two firm points remain:

1. **The perimeter is “up to NATO RESTRICTED”**, no further.
2. In real-world scenarios, adoption will almost certainly occur with **policy and centralized management** consistent with the certified configuration (Indigo), especially for control, auditing, and compliance.

News link: https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2026/02/iphone-and-ipad-approved-to-handle-classified-nato-information/