



Homeland Security

April 8, 2008

MEMORANDUM FROM THE SECRETARY

TO: All DHS Employees

SUBJECT: Cooperation With the Office of Inspector General

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Homeland Security serves an important role in helping the Department prevent and detect fraud, waste, mismanagement, and abuse. The OIG does so by conducting independent and objective audits, investigations, and inspections, thereby improving the economy, effectiveness, and efficiency of our programs and activities. The OIG needs information from Department offices to conduct its work effectively.

This memorandum is a reminder that I expect all DHS employees to cooperate fully with the OIG in its valuable endeavors, and should provide prompt access to requested materials and information. These expectations for DHS employees also extend to requests from any contractor hired by the OIG, such as the firm hired by the OIG to audit the Department's financial statements. This cooperation includes:

- Promptly providing materials responsive to a request and other relevant information (even if not specifically requested);
- Honoring OIG requests for interviews with program officials in a timely manner;
- Respecting employees' rights to speak directly and confidentially with the OIG in accordance with legal requirements;
- Refraining from inappropriate activity that might inhibit or chill an employee or contractor's communication or cooperation with the OIG.

Production of requested materials should be prompt, and the vast majority of such materials may be produced to the OIG directly and immediately upon request. DHS employees should advise the OIG when requested materials contain classified national security information, privacy-protected materials, attorney-client or deliberative (pre-decisional and draft) communications, and other sensitive information, or materials from agencies outside the Department. If there is any question about the status of certain materials or how to handle them, employees should consult with their supervisors or the Office of the General Counsel to ensure that documents are properly identified, marked and treated, and that records obtained from outside the Department are properly coordinated with the other agency, but doing so should not unduly delay delivery to the OIG. The production of these materials to the OIG does not waive our ability to assert privileges or other protections in any forum.

DHS employees are not to conceal information or obstruct audits, inspections, investigations, or other OIG inquiries. Doing so is against Department directives and can lead to serious consequences.

The OIG has important obligations in the conduct of its audits, investigations, and inspections, and will:

- Honor requests for confidentiality to the extent permitted by law;
- Coordinate with agency managers and supervisors to avoid disrupting ongoing work;
- Respect sensitive materials that are segregated (and be watchful for documents that have not been segregated), so that Department privileges and other obligations are not compromised (thus allowing the Department to assert applicable claims prior to any production outside the Department); and
- Comport with all other responsibilities under the DHS Management Directive.

If you have any questions regarding your obligations regarding the OIG or the OIG's authorities, you should consult with your supervisor or the Office of the General Counsel.