



OIG Investigators Get Law Enforcement Authority

WASHINGTON (January 10, 2006) – Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales has approved Statutory Law Enforcement Authority to the Office of Inspector General (OIG), a move that allows OIG Agents to carry firearms, make arrests and seek and execute arrest and search warrants in the course of their official duties.

The OIG’s new enforcement powers are authorized under provisions of the Inspector General Act and the Homeland Security Act. In approving the new powers, Gonzales said “there is adequate evidence that your investigations have been significantly hampered and jeopardized due to the lack of such authority.”

The OIG sought the authority, already held by most Federal investigators, to lessen its reliance on local police and other officials for backup when OIG agents are in the field probing allegations of fraud, waste and abuse of Federal funds.

The Statutory Law Enforcement Authority is an important development for OIG agents, who often conduct their work in high-crime areas and who occasionally must deal with potentially violent suspects.

“The granting of Statutory Law Enforcement Authority to our already well-trained and highly experienced investigators rounds out our set of investigative tools,” said Deputy Inspector General Robert Shadowens. “It will allow us to pursue our investigations in a safer and more efficient manner.”

The OIG will implement its new powers with rigorous and continuous training, as well as new programs and policies to ensure the safety of all OIG personnel.