

RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

I. Purpose

- A. This Directive establishes policy for relations between the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO).
- B. This Directive requires DHS employees to cooperate with GAO to the fullest extent in accordance with the law. This Directive contains expedited timeframes to provide GAO access to records and interviews of DHS employees, and streamlines departmental review of such records and interview requests. The Directive is intended to promote the objective that GAO have timely and complete access to appropriate records and DHS employees.

II. Scope

- A. This Directive applies throughout DHS with the exception of the Office of Inspector General.
- B. DHS Management Directive 0820, General Accounting Office Relations, is superseded by this Directive.

III. Authorities

- A. Public Law 110-161, Division E, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2008 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008
- B. Title 31, United States Code, Sections 712, Investigating the use of public money, 717, Evaluating programs and activities of the United States Government, 718, Availability of draft reports, 719, Comptroller General reports, 720, Agency reports, 3523, General audit authority of the Comptroller General, and 3529, Requests for decisions of the Comptroller General
- C. Title 31, United States Code, Section 716, Availability of information and inspection of records

D. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-50 (Revised), Audit Followup

E. OMB Circular A-11 Section 22, Communications with the Congress and the Public and Clearance Requirements

IV. Responsibilities

A. **Under Secretary for Management**: Has overall management responsibility for DHS relations with GAO and for implementation of this Directive. The Under Secretary for Management serves as the Department's designated audit follow-up official, and also ensures that there are sufficient resources within DHS dedicated to the management of the Department's relations with GAO. In conjunction with the Office of the General Counsel, the Under Secretary for Management ensures appropriate training of the Departmental Audit Liaison and Component Audit Liaisons.

B. **Office of the General Counsel (OGC)**: Provides legal advice and guidance on matters involving relations with GAO to ensure that the Department meets its legal obligations and that the scope of GAO audit and investigative activities is appropriate. OGC provides appropriate legal advice and guidance to Component heads, the Departmental Audit Liaison, and Component Audit Liaisons on GAO activities and, in conjunction with the Under Secretary for Management, ensures appropriate training of the Liaisons.

C. **Departmental Audit Liaison (DAL)**: The management official within DHS designated to implement this Directive on behalf of the Under Secretary for Management. The DAL monitors and tracks the status of GAO and department activities, including the status of responses to GAO requests for departmental records or interviews and DHS comments on GAO draft reports and testimony. The DAL implements this Directive consistent with the objective that GAO be given timely and complete access to appropriate records and DHS employees.

D. **DHS Component heads**: Ensure compliance with this Directive within each Component, and designate Component Audit Liaisons to assist the DAL in carrying out the DAL's responsibilities. Component heads are responsible for meeting expedited timeframes to furnish GAO with access to records and Component employees, and streamlining the review process for such records and interview requests consistent with the objective that GAO be given timely and complete access to appropriate records and employees. Component heads ensure that there are sufficient resources within the Component dedicated to the management of the Component's relations with GAO.

E. **Component Audit Liaisons (CALs)**: Serve as the Component's primary liaison to the DAL, and the management official within the Component responsible for assisting the DAL in implementation of this Directive.

F. **DHS Program Points of Contact**: DHS officials with knowledge of the program that GAO is reviewing may be designated by the DAL or CALs at or following the entrance conference to serve as Program Points of Contact for follow-up with GAO. The Program Points of Contact may, in coordination with the DAL or CALs, assist GAO in identifying and obtaining appropriate records and interviews. Requests for records and interviews should be in writing and directed to the DAL or CAL identified at the entrance conference.

G. **DHS Employees**: Work cooperatively with representatives of GAO, DAL, CALs, Program Points of Contact (when designated), and the Office of the General Counsel (including Counsel for the Components) to comply with the requirements of this Directive.

V. Policy and Requirements

A. Department employees provide GAO with access to records and interviews of DHS employees in response to written requests from GAO in accordance with the Department's obligations under the law. Where a GAO request clearly identifies the records requested, Department employees provide GAO with access to the records as soon as possible and not more than 20 calendar days from the date of the written request, unless there is a reasonable basis for not being able to meet the required timeframe. When GAO requests to interview a DHS employee, the DAL or CAL arranges a mutually-agreeable appointment for such interview as soon as possible after receiving the request. Such an arrangement should normally be reached within seven calendar days from the date of the written request, although the requested interview need not necessarily occur within those seven calendar days. Where these guidelines cannot reasonably be met, the DAL or CAL notifies GAO of an alternative timeframe for providing the requested records or interview.

B. In an effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department, DHS employees comply with the principles of audit follow-up in accordance with the law and OMB guidance.

VI. Questions

Any questions or concerns regarding this Directive should be addressed to the DAL or appropriate CAL.



Michael Chertoff
Secretary of Homeland Security

7/1/08
Date