




Homeland Security

September 30, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: All DHS Personnel

FROM: Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary

SUBJECT: Cooperation with the Office of Inspector General



The Office of Inspector General (OIG) plays a critical role in helping the Department prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. By doing so, the OIG helps improve the economy, effectiveness, and efficiency of DHS programs and activities. The OIG does this through independent and objective audits, investigations, evaluations, and inspections. It cannot do so alone. To carry out this important mission, the OIG needs certain information (for example, facts, reports, statistics, and data) from the Department and our Components.

Accordingly, I expect DHS employees to respond to OIG requests for information in a timely manner. This expectation extends to requests from any contractor hired by the OIG, including, but not limited to, firms with which the OIG contracts to audit the Department's financial statements. Such cooperation includes:

- 1) providing information responsive to the OIG's work, including making DHS employees (for example, program officials, subject matter experts, and others) available to the OIG for interviews;
- 2) respecting employees' rights to speak directly and confidentially with the OIG in accordance with legal requirements; and,
- 3) refraining from any activity that might inhibit an employee's or contractor's communication or cooperation with the OIG.

Information related to an OIG request may be provided directly to the OIG. DHS employees should, however, advise the OIG when information provided contains classified national security information, privacy-protected materials, attorney-client or deliberative (in other words, pre-decisional and draft) communications, other sensitive information, or information from agencies outside the Department. DHS employees must ensure that all information provided to the OIG is properly identified, marked, and treated. It is important to note that when providing information to the OIG, DHS does not waive applicable privileges or other protections.

The Department is committed to supporting the OIG's mission. DHS employees are expected to cooperate with OIG audits, inspections, investigations, and other inquiries. Any effort to conceal information or obstruct the OIG in carrying out its critical work is against Department directives and can lead to serious consequences.

For its part, the OIG is likewise expected to operate with integrity and meet important obligations in the conduct of its work. Specifically, I expect OIG employees to:

- 1) honor requests for confidentiality consistent with the law;
- 2) coordinate with Department and Component managers and supervisors to avoid disrupting DHS programs and activities; and,
- 3) safeguard sensitive information received and be watchful for information that may not have been properly identified with restrictive markings, thereby ensuring that privileges and other obligations are not compromised. These important precautions protect the Department's ability to assert applicable claims prior to sharing the information externally.

If you have any questions regarding these expectations, you should consult your Component's counsel, the Office of the General Counsel, or the Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office.

Thank you for your service to our Department and our Nation.