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Subject: DOJ Procedures on Enforcement of Agency Subpoenas

Sorry this took so long--I've been playing phone tag with people at DOJ all week. Anyway, I spoke to several friends and law school colleagues currently working at DOJ, none of whom provided any real help. Most of these people are trial lawyers, who told me that when they want documents from opposing parties, they send out requests for production of documents as part of discovery (which was what I always did). When they don't get the docs they want, they get orders to compel. A few of the people I spoke to referred me to Federal Programs Branch, which I finally called. I spoke to Art Goldberg, the Assistant Director. Art is in charge of the enforcement of agency issued subpoenas. Art said there are no internal rules or procedures to which he could refer me. He told me that when they enforce subpoenas they use the statutory authority of the agency. I read him the sections of our statute dealing with subpoenas. He told me (as have several other government lawyers) that ours was the most vague statutory reference to subpoenas he had ever heard. Generally, the agency statute provides an extensive grant of authority, with a list of circumstances under which subpoenas can be issued and enforced. He said the FTC's statute was a good example (I'm getting a copy today). He said if we wrote him a quick letter, he'd assign a junior lawyer to look further into it and come up with some suggestions for us. I told him I'd get back to him on that. I'd be happy to discuss this matter further with you. Also, if you have other projects you need help with, let me know.

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Categories: