



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of the Attorney General

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For Immediate Release

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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ADOPTS REGULATIONS TO STRENGTHEN INVESTIGATIVE SUBPOENA PROCESS

Office of the Attorney General, Saipan – The Office of the Attorney General today adopted regulations establishing a clear and fair process for the use of investigative subpoenas, a critical tool that ensures thorough, just, and efficient criminal investigations.

When the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was formed, the people adopted a constitution establishing an Office of the Attorney General to represent executive-branch agencies in civil matters and to prosecute criminal cases. Before filing criminal charges, the Attorney General, through the appointed prosecutors and investigators, must review the evidence collected by law enforcement. A thorough investigation is essential to ensure justice by protecting the innocent and charging those accountable on the basis of sufficient, credible evidence. Investigative subpoenas are a crucial tool for obtaining information and evidence needed to make fair and informed decisions.

Attorney General Manibusan reviewed the proposed regulations under the CNMI Administrative Procedure Act and determined they were properly noticed. All written comments received during the period of public comment were considered and reviewed as part of the record. The Attorney General further determined that the proposed regulations are consistent with the constitutional and statutory authority and shall become effective ten (10) days after publication.

“Investigative subpoenas are widely used across the United States by federal, state, and territorial agencies. They are essential for gathering facts, not only to establish guilt, but also to verify innocence,” says Attorney General Manibusan.

Contrary to misconceptions, investigative subpoenas are not unusual or overreaching. The use of subpoenas is more likely to benefit the innocent, as it will quickly reveal which charges should not be filed and help prosecutors ensure that only strong cases are brought. Any person served with a subpoena may challenge its legality by filing a motion to quash with the court.

Civil Division

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“The Commonwealth must implement a transparent public process that enhances justice for victims and ensures that only well-supported cases are prosecuted,” states Attorney General Manibusan.

The regulations, as adopted, were published today, January 15, 2026 and will become effective in ten (10) days.

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