



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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MOHAWK VALLEY TRUCK DRIVER ADMITS STEALING MORE THAN \$20,000 IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the guilty plea of a Fort Plain resident on charges he defrauded the Workers' Compensation system by more than \$20,000.

Charles Brownell, 47, formerly of Little Falls, pleaded guilty to the crime of Insurance Fraud in the Fifth Degree and paid \$20,887 in restitution for his theft of Workers' Compensation benefits to which he was not entitled.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Brownell had been collecting Workers' Compensation benefits since sustaining an injury in 2013 as a truck driver for a Palantine Bridge trucking and hauling company. In the years since, he repeatedly reported to medical examiners and the Workers' Compensation insurer that he was not working in any capacity and was unable to drive more than short distances when in fact he was working as a long haul truck driver for a Little Falls business. As a result of Brownell's misrepresentations, he collected more than \$20,000 in Workers' Compensation benefits to which he was not entitled.

"This defendant purposefully concealed his employment and misrepresented his injuries to brazenly enrich himself with benefits to which he was not entitled," said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. "Workers' Compensation benefits are crucial to help honest workers injured on the job, and I will use all of the resources of my offices to pursue anyone who defrauds the system."

Brownell pleaded guilty in Little Falls Town Court Monday evening and was sentenced to full restitution and a one-year conditional discharge.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Herkimer County District Attorney Jeffrey S. Carpenter and his office for prosecuting this matter.

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The New York State Office of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse and/or illegal acts against the New York State Workers' Compensation system, including fraud by medical service providers, employers seeking to evade appropriate Workers' Compensation charges, and employees who fabricate injuries to fraudulently receive system benefits. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form at <http://www.ig.ny.gov> or sending an email to: inspector.general@ig.ny.gov. You also can write to our office at:

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