



NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 12, 2018
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GENESEE COUNTY MAN CHARGED WITH OVER \$4,000 WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

BUFFALO – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of a Town of LeRoy man on charges he defrauded the Workers' Compensation system and stole more than \$4,000 in insurance benefits to which he was not entitled by claiming he was not working when in fact he was.

Sergio Forte, 52, of Wolcott Street, LeRoy, was arrested and arraigned today in the Town of LeRoy Justice Court on charges of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Insurance Fraud in the Third Degree, both felonies.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Forte received Workers' Compensation benefits during the spring of 2015 when he allegedly injured his knee while carrying construction materials while on a job laying tile for a flooring company. During that period, he stopped working his flooring job and began collecting workers' compensation benefits at a rate of \$853.34 per week. While collecting the benefits, Forte falsely reported to the Workers' Compensation Board that he was not working in any capacity when he was in fact employed as a farmhand. As a result of this alleged intentional misrepresentation, Forte obtained \$4,013.36 in Workers' Compensation insurance benefits to which he was not entitled.

“This defendant's alleged misrepresentation was an unabashed abuse of an insurance program that is meant to assist honest, hard-working New Yorkers who become disabled through a work-related injury,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue dedicating the resources of my office to protect the integrity of the state's vital Workers' Compensation system.”

Under State law, employers are required to maintain Workers' Compensation coverage for their employees, and employees are expected to provide truthful information regarding their work activity to insurance carriers and the Workers' Compensation Board during the time they are receiving benefits.

Forte was arraigned on the charges today in the Town of LeRoy Justice Court and remanded to the Genesee County Jail without bail pending his return to court on Monday, June 18.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the Erie Insurance Property Casualty, Co. for their assistance with the investigation, the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Genesee County District Attorney Lawrence Friedman 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: Office of the Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor, Albany, New York 12223