



NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 12, 2017
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FORMER CITY OF AMSTERDAM EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced that a former City of Amsterdam employee has pleaded guilty to defrauding the Workers' Compensation system by \$15,000.

William Forte, 51, of Coolidge Road, Amsterdam, pleaded guilty today to Attempted Workers' Compensation Fraud.

“This defendant hoped to hide his public employment for his own personal gain, but ended up with a criminal conviction and a restitution bill of \$15,000,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “I will continue to use my office to pursue anyone who compromises the Workers' Compensation system by stealing critical benefits to which they are not entitled.”

Inspector General Leahy Scott's investigation found that Forte was employed as a truck driver in 2012 when he purportedly injured his left arm and both hands and began receiving Workers' Compensation coverage. Since the summer of 2014, Forte been receiving weekly Workers' Compensation payments and repeatedly asserted to his doctors and the insurance company that he was not working in any capacity. Contrary to his assertions, Forte was indeed an employee working for the City of Amsterdam and had been observed using his purportedly injured arm to lift tools, paint, and climb ladders. He was accused of stealing more than \$15,000 in Workers' Compensation benefits to which he was not entitled.

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.

Workers' Compensation fraud impacts all New Yorkers, from increased insurance premiums to increased workloads for coworkers and an overall reduction in workforce productivity.

Forte pleaded guilty today in Amsterdam City Court to Attempted Workers' Compensation Fraud, a misdemeanor, with restitution in the amount of \$15,000 and was released pending sentencing on May 31, 2017.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the City of Amsterdam for assisting with the investigation, the Amsterdam Police Department for assisting with the arrests, and Montgomery County District Attorney Kelli P. McCoski for prosecuting the 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