



NEWS RELEASE

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

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Contact [John Milgrim](#): 518-474-1010

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE SENTENCED TO PAY \$15,000 RESTITUTION AND SERVE THREE YEARS PROBATION FOR WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced that a City of Amsterdam employee was sentenced to probation supervision and to pay restitution for defrauding the Workers' Compensation system and stealing benefits to which he was not entitled.

William Forte, 51, of Coolidge Road, Amsterdam, a seasonal maintenance worker for the city, pleaded guilty Amsterdam City Court to the Workers' Compensation crime of Attempted Fraudulent Practices. As part of the plea, Forte was sentenced today to three years of probation supervision and to pay \$15,000 in restitution.

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 has 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 lifting tools, painting and climbing ladders.

“This defendant tried keeping his city employment secret to enrich himself with Workers' Compensation benefits to which he was not entitled,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue to use my office to relentlessly pursue anyone who steals critical benefits to which they are 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.

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 and her office 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