



NEWS RELEASE

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

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STATE CORRECTIONS OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY AND RESIGNS AFTER STEALING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS BY SUBMITTING FRAUDULENT LEAVE DOCUMENTATION

BUFFALO – New York State Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the guilty plea, restitution order and resignation of a New York State corrections officer who defrauded the Workers' Compensation system and, through the submission of improperly altered leave documents, stole over \$4,000 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Brendon Clontz, 31, of Buffalo, NY, a corrections officer with the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, pleaded guilty and submitted proof of resignation from State service in Wyoming County Court today. As part of a prearranged agreement, Clontz will pay \$4,268.69 in restitution and pleaded guilty to larceny as a misdemeanor.

An investigation by Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Clontz began receiving Workers' Compensation benefits in January 2018 for a December 2017 injury that occurred while working at Wyoming Correctional Facility. Clontz subsequently submitted two altered "Documentation for Workers' Compensation Leave" forms as well as a "Work Release Form", all purportedly completed and signed by his treating medical providers and intended to justify Clontz's absences from work. The investigation revealed that the documents had been altered from those originally provided to Clontz by the medical providers. As a result of his intentional submission of altered documents, Clontz obtained \$4,268.69 in Workers' Compensation indemnity benefits between January 2018 and June 2018 to which he was not entitled.

"The defendant's intentional deceptions and theft made him unfit for public service and his resignation and restitution payment are wholly appropriate for someone who so brazenly violates the public trust," said Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General Leahy Scott. "The Workers' Compensation system is meant to protect and benefit hard-working New Yorkers, not for those looking to abuse it for unearned paid days off."

Clontz is due back in Wyoming County Court on April 25 for sentencing.

Workers' Compensation Fraud Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the New York State Insurance Fund and the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision for their assistance with the investigation, the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest, and Wyoming County District Attorney Donald G. O'Geen 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