



## NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
Letizia Tagliafierro

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Contact: [Lee Park](#) - 518.474.1010

# **WATERFORD MECHANIC PLEADS GUILTY TO DEFRAUDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BY WORKING AT A SELKIRK USED CAR DEALERSHIP WHILE CLAIMING HE WAS NOT EMPLOYED**

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro announced the guilty plea of a Waterford mechanic who defrauded the Workers' Compensation system and stole benefits to which he was not entitled by claiming he was not working due to an injury when he was actually working for a used car dealership in Selkirk and getting paid off the books.

Lawrence Bunting, 50, of Waterford, pled guilty in the Town of Malta Justice Court to one count of Petit Larceny (misdemeanor) and must pay full restitution of \$4,964. He is due to be sentenced January 15, 2020.

An investigation by the Inspector General found that Bunting reported a work-related injury in January 2015 at the trucking company where he was employed as a mechanic and shortly thereafter stopped working and began receiving Workers' Compensation disability benefits. While on leave and receiving benefits, Bunting was working in Selkirk for a used car dealership that bought and sold vehicles for scrap. While receiving Workers' Compensation disability benefits, Bunting worked for months for up to eight hours a day performing maintenance on cars, working with tools, loading trucks with machinery, replacing tires, operating a front loader to move cars, and using a winching system to secure cars to trailers.

"The workers' compensation system provides a critical safety net to those who are injured on-the-job and in need of support," said Inspector General Tagliafierro. "We will continue to find individuals like this who abuse the system for personal profit and hold them accountable for their actions."

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.

The Inspector General's Office thanked the New York State Police for their assistance with the arrest and Saratoga County District Attorney Karen A. Heggen and her office for prosecuting this matter.

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