



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro

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Contact: [Lee Park](#) - 518.474.1010

WATERLOO TRUCK DRIVER WHO CLAIMED INJURY BUT MOWED LAWNS AND DROVE FOR RIDE-SHARING COMPANIES ARRESTED FOR STEALING MORE THAN \$10K IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS

New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliafierro announced the arrest of a Waterloo truck driver who allegedly stole more than \$10,000 in workers' compensation benefits by claiming he was not working due to an injury when he was actually driving for Uber and Lyft and mowing lawns.

Joshua M. Hernandez, 37, of Waterloo, was arraigned yesterday in Waterloo Village Court on one count of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a felony. As part of a related investigation led by the Seneca County Department of Social Services, Hernandez was arraigned December 21, 2019 in Waterloo Village Court on one count each of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, and Misuse of Food Stamps, all felonies.

An investigation by the Offices of the Inspector General and Seneca County Department of Social Services found that Hernandez claimed a work-related injury in May 2019. After applying for workers' compensation benefits, Hernandez began mowing lawns and driving for Uber and Lyft. Hernandez continued this activity through the summer of 2019 but failed to report to his health care providers, the New York State Workers' Compensation Board, and the Department of Social Services that he was working.

"This individual's alleged actions led him to wrongly benefit from critical state safety net programs," said Inspector General Tagliafierro. "All New Yorkers must be up-front and truthful about their work status when receiving workers' compensation benefits."

Inspector General Tagliafierro thanked the Seneca County Department of Social Services and the New York State Insurance Fund for their assistance with the investigation, and Seneca County District Attorney Mark Sinkiewicz and his office for their assistance with the investigation and for prosecuting this matter.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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