



STATE OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

**Investigation by State Inspector General Results in Theft Conviction  
of Employee of Oneida County Motor Vehicles Department**

**November 7, 2006**

An investigation by the Office of the State Inspector General found that JoAnn Johnson, an assistant supervisor in the Oneida County Motor Vehicles Department, stole more than \$300 in registration fees received by the department.

The Oneida County Motor Vehicles Department is operated by the Oneida County Clerk's Office, and its staff members are county employees. However, the employees are considered agents of the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and must follow the same procedures established by DMV.

This Office began an investigation after receiving information from the manager of the Oneida County Motor Vehicles Department that customers had submitted boat registration renewals and payments to the office by mail, but had not received their registrations or plate stickers. Johnson was identified as the employee responsible for opening the mail each day and processing the registration renewals and other applications it contained.

The investigation determined that Johnson's scheme worked as follows: When a boat registration renewal application and accompanying \$46 check arrived in the mail, Johnson placed the check in her drawer, but did not process the application. Johnson then removed from her drawer cash equal to the amount of the check, keeping the cash for her own use. By these means, Johnson's daily record of payments received and transactions completed appeared to be balanced. Questions about Johnson's activities were raised when persons who had submitted boat registration renewals contacted DMV to ask why they had not received their registrations.

The investigation found that Johnson misappropriated a total of \$305 through her scheme until its discovery in May 2006. It is conjectured that Johnson targeted boat registration fees because they are uniform in amount, which made it easier for Johnson to know how much cash she could remove from her drawer without leaving her account short.

Johnson resigned her position as a result of this investigation, and on August 9, 2006 she was arrested on charges of Forgery in the First Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree. On October 17, 2006, Johnson pleaded guilty to Petit Larceny in Oneida County Court. She was fined \$500 and ordered to pay restitution of \$305.