



NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 16, 2015
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SCHENECTADY HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTOR CHARGED WITH REPEATED FELONY FALSE FILINGS IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD SCHEME

SCHENECTADY – New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott today announced the arrest of the Schenectady-based home improvement business, who has a history of criminal fraud, for repeatedly certifying that she had valid Workers' Compensation insurance coverage for her employees when she in fact did not.

Christina Prasad (also known as Christina St. Andrew), 35, of State Street, Schenectady, owner of CK Construction and Remodeling LLC, was charged with three counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a felony.

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott found that Prasad, on three separate occasions from March through June 2015, applied for building permits with the City of Schenectady Office of Code Enforcement for small residential projects valued at between \$1,400 and \$5,500. Each application contained a certification that her business had the required Workers' Compensation insurance. Her insurance coverage, however, had been cancelled in January for non-payment of premiums.

“Workers' Compensation coverage is meant to protect employees, but this home improvement contractor's alleged criminal acts put her workers at risk and gave her an unfair competitive advantage over honest competitors,” said Inspector General Leahy Scott. “I will continue to use the resources of my office to pursue anybody who abuses the system at the expense of hard-working New Yorkers.”

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.

Today's arrest is part of an ongoing coordinated effort by Inspector General Leahy Scott with local and State law enforcement partners involving multiple investigations across New York. Additional arrests are expected imminently. It also coincides with enhanced outreach efforts, including stakeholder trainings by the Inspector General, to increase public awareness of Workers' Compensation fraud in the State.

Workers' Compensation fraud impacts all New Yorkers, from increased insurance premiums to increased workloads for coworkers and an overall reduction in workforce productivity.

Prasad – who pleaded guilty in Lenoir County, N.C., to six counts of felony forgery in 2003, and pleaded guilty in Onslow County, N.C. in 2004 to Felony Attempted Obtaining Property by False Pretense and Misdemeanor Financial Card Fraud – was arraigned on the Workers' Compensation charges in Schenectady City Court and is due to return to court on Jan. 13, 2016.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked Schenectady County District Attorney Robert M. Carney and his office for prosecuting this matter, the Schenectady Police Department for assisting with the arrest and the Schenectady Office of Code Enforcement for assisting with the investigation.

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

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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