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State Human Rights Worker Accused of Stealing, Shipping Agency Property

New York State Inspector General Kristine Hamann announced that an investigation by her office has resulted in the arrest of an employee of the New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR) on 27 criminal charges related to the alleged theft of items from the agency's mailroom.

Richard Steed, a Mailroom Clerk in DHR's offices at 1 Fordham Plaza, the Bronx, was arrested March 29, 2007 by investigators from the Inspector General's Office and the Bronx District Attorney's Office. Steed was charged in Bronx Criminal Court with seven counts of Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a felony; seven counts of Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree, and 13 counts of Petit Larceny.

Steed, 53, of Brooklyn, is accused of stealing DHR office supplies and other items, which he arranged to have shipped by United Parcel Service from the DHR mailroom at DHR's expense. In some instances, Steed prepared mailing labels indicating the items were being shipped to a well-known Manhattan law firm, when in fact they were going to a relative's residence in Manhattan. Other items were sent to Steed's girlfriend at her place of work in Manhattan.

Investigators identified 13 occasions between June 2005 and February 2006 when unauthorized and illegal shipments were allegedly made by Steed from the DHR mailroom. On February 23, 2006, Steed is believed to have shipped to his girlfriend the DHR Commissioner's used executive chair, using the same box in which a new chair for the Commissioner had just been received.

The matter was brought to the attention of the Inspector General's Office by DHR, which had become suspicious of Steed's activities. Steed has been suspended from his DHR position. He released on his own recognizance and is due back in court in June.

For additional information, contact Stephen Del Giacco at (518) 474-1010.