

PRESS RELEASE

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Tucson Man Arrested for Fraudulent Insurance Sales

Special Investigators with the Arizona Department of Insurance Fraud Unit, and the Tucson Police Department, arrested **Wesley Neil Bass** at his residence in Tucson, Arizona on May 19, 2003. Bass was arrested on an outstanding warrant charging him with Attempted Fraudulent Schemes (a class 3 felony), on allegations of selling long term care insurance policies to local elderly residents without a license.

Bass' insurance license was previously revoked by an administrative order on November 21, 2002 for misappropriation, misrepresentation, and deceptive sales tactics (Docket No. 02A-110-INS). Bass took insurance premiums for long term care insurance from two different widows, over 80 years of age, but he kept their money rather than remitting it to any insurance companies. Bass gave the women fictitious policy documents to deceive them into believing they had the long term care insurance he had purportedly sold to them.

Without a license, Bass is barred from selling insurance in Arizona. Bass ignored the revocation of his license and continued selling insurance, which led to his recent arrest. The Department became aware of Bass' continued sales activity when contacted by the caregiver of an elderly Tucson woman who was suspicious about Bass' activities. Fraud Unit investigators identified at least three life and long term care insurance policies that Bass had sold to elderly victims after his license had been revoked.

Prior to his arrest yesterday, Bass was awaiting trial in Pima County on felony charges related to an indictment from the state Grand Jury on November 2, 2002 on prior allegations of misappropriation of premiums (fraudulent schemes, class 2 felony). Trial was scheduled for early June, but has been continued.

Tucsonans who bought insurance from Bass should review their insurance paperwork and contact the insurance company named on the documents if they have concerns about the legitimacy of the policy. If the insurer has no record of a policy for them, consumers can write to the Department of Insurance at:

**Arizona Department of Insurance
Consumer Affairs Division
2910 N. 44th Street, Second Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85018**

Unfortunately this situation illustrates the importance of verifying that an insurance agent is licensed in Arizona *before* you conduct business with them. The Department of Insurance offers the public two quick and easy ways to check on the license status of insurance producers: Visit our website at www.id.state.az.us/consumer.html and click on the box "Information About Agents". Or, you can call our Consumer Affairs Division personnel at (602) 912-8444 (in Phoenix), (520)628-6370 (in Tucson), or (800) 325-2548 (statewide, outside Phoenix).