

PRESS RELEASE

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Insurance Company Ex-Employee Sentenced in \$278,900.00 Insurance Scam

Phoenix – An Arizona Department of Insurance (ADOI) Fraud Unit investigation lead to the conviction of 33 year old Sherry Berry, an insurance company computer technician from May 2001 to February 2003.

The insurance company who had employed Berry referred evidence of her suspicious activities to the ADOI. Our resulting investigation revealed Berry initiated her theft and illegal activities by first intercepting employee e-mails containing claim check request forms on existing auto accident claims. She would then alter the request forms to have the checks issued to her relatives and friends and either intercept the checks by mail, or, simply steal them from the company computer room. Berry then laundered the checks through her various bank accounts. The investigation indicates she took \$278,937.55 between May 2001 and February 2003.

On July 9, 2004, Berry entered a plea agreement in the Maricopa County Superior Court and pled guilty to two counts of theft arising from this investigation. The Judge sentenced her to seven months jail, seven years probation and ordered her to pay restitution in the amount of \$278,937.55.

About the Fraud Unit

The Legislature established the Fraud Unit in the Department of Insurance in 1994 to deter, investigate and facilitate convictions of insurance fraud. The Fraud Unit's efforts to deter fraudulent activity reduces the inflationary impact of fraud that insurers necessarily pass on to consumers through higher costs of insurance products. Since its inception, the Fraud Unit has investigated and referred over 500 cases for successful prosecution.

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