



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

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Release #33-2007
nyc.gov/html/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, MAY 7, 2007

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DOI ARRESTS BUSINESS OWNER FOR SUBMITTING A FRAUDULENT CERTIFICATE REQUIRED TO OPERATE A FIRE EXTINGUISHING SERVICE BUSINESS

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), announced the arrest today of MARK STERNEFELD for submitting two fraudulent Certificates of Training to the New York City Fire Department ("FDNY"). The certificates stated STERNEFELD had the necessary training that allowed him to operate Abway Security Systems in Yonkers, N.Y., a portable fire extinguisher servicing company that has been in operation since 2000.

STERNEFELD, 55, of Yonkers, will be charged with Tampering of Public Records in the First Degree, a class D felony; Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, a class D felony; Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, a class E felony; and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in jail.

Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This individual is accused of evading standards put in place to ensure the public has a safe and reliable means of defending themselves from fires. This kind of criminal behavior is reprehensible because it compromises the protection of the public, not to mention that it is illegal to submit fraudulent documents to the City."

DOI and the FDNY Bureau of Fire Investigation jointly investigated the matter. The FDNY Public Certification Unit -- which is responsible for issuing fire extinguisher businesses their permits, certificates and licenses -- discovered that STERNEFELD submitted two fraudulent Certificates of Training that said he completed the necessary skills to operate a fire extinguisher business. STERNEFELD serviced fire extinguishers primarily in commercial properties, such as schools and places of public assembly.

The investigation determined that STERNEFELD forged the certificate allegedly issued by Badger Fire Protection of Charlottesville, Va., which allowed him to service a variety of fire extinguisher makes and models. The Certificates of Training STERNEFELD submitted to the City were for advanced fire extinguisher servicing of wet and dry chemical systems. Representatives of Badger reported that STERNEFELD never had been issued the certificates, the certificates STERNEFELD submitted were not consistent with Badger's Certificates of Training and the certificates included an incorrect address for Badger.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked FDNY Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta and members of his staff, including the Bureau of Fire Investigation and the Public Certification Unit, for their assistance and cooperation.

This investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for FDNY. The Office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.

Criminal complaints are merely accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

***Get the worms out of the apple.
To report someone ripping off the City, call 311 or DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.***