



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Florence Woman Pleads Guilty To Insurance Fraud, Forgery

Columbia, S.C. – Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that Althea Ann James, 35, of 1627 Gregg Avenue, Apt. B-7, in Florence, pleaded guilty on October 11, 2005 to one (1) count of Presenting False Claims for Payment (between \$1,000 and \$5,000), a felony violation of §38-55-170, punishable to five (5) years imprisonment and/or a fine in the discretion of the court. James also pleaded guilty to one (1) count of Forgery (for an amount less than \$5,000), a felony violation of §16-13-10(B)(2), punishable to five (5) years imprisonment and/or a fine in the discretion of the court.

On August 11, 2002, James was involved in an automobile accident and filed a claim with Nationwide Insurance Company. On or about August 29, 2002, James presented a fraudulent lost wage statement to Nationwide Insurance, indicating she worked forty hours a week for Nurses, Etc., a temporary staffing company specializing in nursing. However, James did not have a regular work schedule with Nurses, Etc. because she was a subcontractor and only employed on an "as needed" basis. James never worked forty hours a week as she alleged in her lost wage statement. In addition, James forged the signature of her supervisor on the fraudulent lost wage statement that she presented to Nationwide Insurance.

James' supervisor contacted Nationwide Insurance Company regarding the misrepresentation, noting that James misrepresented her lost wages to Nationwide Insurance in the amount of \$1040.

Judge R. Markley Dennis, presiding over the General Sessions Court of Florence County, sentenced James to two (2) years imprisonment suspended to one (1) year probation and fined her \$350 for the Presenting False Claims count. On the Forgery count, James was sentenced to two (2) years imprisonment suspended to one (1) year probation. The sentences are to run concurrently.

The case was investigated by the State Law Enforcement Division, and prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

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