



Department of Justice

United States Attorney District of Maryland

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FEMA EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH EMBEZZLING OVER \$149,000

Greenbelt, Maryland - Sheila Ann Howard, age 55, of Capitol Heights, Maryland, has been charged by criminal complaint with embezzling over \$149,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The complaint was filed yesterday and unsealed today upon the arrest of the defendant. Howard had her initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Greenbelt this afternoon and was released under the supervision of U.S. Pretrial Services.

The charges were announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein and Acting Special Agent in Charge Michael Dawson of the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General, Washington Field Office.

According to the criminal complaint, Sheila Howard began working at FEMA in 1990 and since June 2008 has been employed as a Human Resources Specialist. As part of her responsibilities, Howard processes payments through FEMA's Special Payroll Processing System, which handles payments that cannot be processed through the normal payroll system, such as cash awards and special bonuses, compensatory time payments and restored annual leave. The complaint alleges that between December 7, 2009 and March 31, 2011, Howard processed 26 fraudulent payments, totaling \$149,459.23, in the names of 16 former FEMA employees, and one current FEMA employee. The payments were allegedly for compensatory time, restored annual leave, or cash awards and special bonuses. Each of these payments was deposited into one of four bank accounts associated with Howard. Law enforcement contacted seven of the former employees to whom payments were allegedly made. According to the complaint, these individuals reported that they did not received any of the funds, nor did they recognize the bank account into which the deposits were made.

If convicted, Howard faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

A criminal complaint is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by criminal complaint is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised DHS Office of Inspector General for their work in the investigation. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Special Assistant United States Attorney Erin Pulice and Assistant U.S. Attorney Hollis Weisman, who are prosecuting the case.