



Office of Commissioner of Insurance

NEWS RELEASE

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Hudgens Announces Arrest of Darien Insurance Agent

Atlanta -- Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens and McIntosh County Sheriff Steve Jessup today announced the arrest of a Darien, Ga., insurance agent of fraud charges.

Dennis Calvin Avera, 35, was arrested on three counts of insurance fraud, related to his insurance business. An investigation by Hudgens' Fraud Unit revealed that Avera was allegedly converting to his own personal use money given to him for automobile coverage from insurance clients.

Avera was arrested at his home, 1027 O'Cain Ave., which also serves as the office for his business, Sapelo Insurance Agency.

"I intend to continue aggressively investigating and acting on fraudulent insurance practices that place our citizens at risk," Commissioner Hudgens said.

In addition to the criminal charges, an administrative order immediately revoking Avera's agent's license has been signed by the Commissioner. Avera has ten days from receiving the order to request a hearing on the license revocation.

The order alleges Avera took insurance premium payment from three clients and failed to forward the money to the insurance company. The administrative and criminal investigations of this case continue.

"Since the premiums paid were not properly forwarded to the insurance companies issuing the policies, the effect was that none of these customers were insured," Commissioner Hudgens said. "If there were accidents, it could create a hardship for any potential victims."

Anyone who believes they may have purchased insurance from this agent and has questions about their policy should call Hudgens' office at **(800) 656-2298**. Also, Insurance Department Fraud Investigators will be at the McIntosh County Sheriff's Office on Wednesday, April 5 from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. to assist clients of Avera with concerns.

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