



New York City Department of Investigation

Summary of Investigation into Fraudulent Parking Placards

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I. DOI Investigation

In March 2017, the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), in partnership with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), began a proactive initiative to investigate the use of fraudulent parking placards by drivers in Manhattan. The investigation focused on:

1. The use of fraudulent placards to park illegally on Manhattan streets;¹
2. Vehicle owners submitting copies of fraudulent parking placards to the New York City Finance Department (DOF) in order to avoid paying parking tickets; and
3. The sale of fraudulent parking placards.

On October 3, 2017, this initiative resulted in arrests by DOI, the NYPD, and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office of 30 individuals relating to parking placard abuse, as well as an arrest on September 29, 2017, of a perpetrator who sold a single fraudulent parking placard for \$1200. These individuals were charged with misdemeanors and felonies, including Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument, Offering a False Instrument for Filing, and Criminal Impersonation. They deliberately intended to defraud the City by filing copies of fake parking placards, deceiving traffic agents by displaying fake parking placards inside their vehicles, and/or pretending to be public servants by displaying fraudulent parking placards purportedly issued to employees of New York City and federal agencies.

II. DOI Findings

After DOI investigators began observing what appeared to be an increase in the use of fraudulent parking placards in and around lower Manhattan, DOI began a proactive initiative with the NYPD to uncover the extent fraudulent DOT placards² were being used to park illegally. Using DOI's expertise to identify fraudulent parking placards, combined with the regular sharing of intelligence between DOI and the NYPD, as well as referrals from DOT, investigators uncovered a pervasive problem of fraudulent parking placards being used by drivers in Manhattan, as well as the outer boroughs. These fraudulent placards impact the residents and businesses of New York City on a daily basis and have potential safety implications. Specifically, the rampant use of these fraudulent parking placards results in the following:

- Parking spaces reserved for handicapped individuals and ambulettes being illegally occupied, thus depriving individuals with medical disabilities the essential access to curbside pick-up and drop-off. For example, one fraudulent parking placard was seized from a Mercedes that was parked in a space reserved for ambulettes transporting passengers with disabilities;
- On numerous occasions DOI confiscated fraudulent placards from drivers parked in spaces reserved for commercial drivers. These spaces are intended for drivers supplying goods to local businesses. Not only are businesses negatively impacted

¹ This initiative remains ongoing to target the use of fake placards in Manhattan, as well as the outer boroughs.

² DOT issues parking placards to city agencies that are to be used by city employees while on official business.

by these fake placards, but there is a ripple effect when commercial drivers double park their vehicles, adding to congested streets; and

- The City is deprived of revenue obtained from the issuance of parking tickets. Specifically, this investigation uncovered individuals that submitted copies of fraudulent parking placards in order to avoid paying parking tickets. The dollar amount on these parking tickets ranged from \$60 to \$115.

This investigation uncovered that the selling of parking placards is a very profitable business with the price for the placards on the black market ranging from \$500 to \$2600. On September 29, 2017, Mahmoud Jeaidi was arrested after, as charged in a criminal complaint, selling a fraudulent New York City Law Department parking placard to an undercover investigator. The undercover investigator paid \$1200 to Jeaidi for the fake placard. Jeaidi was also arrested for possessing an additional fraudulent parking placard that he kept for his own personal use.

The fraudulent parking placards confiscated by DOI and the NYPD purported to be issued to City agencies, federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. For example, some of the seized placards had the following entities displayed on the placards:

- The New York City Law Department;
- The New York City Administration for Children's Services;
- New York City DOT Handicapped Parking;
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency;
- The American Red Cross; and
- The New York Blood Center.

These fake parking placards were displayed in an array of vehicles that included a Rolls Royce, a Mercedes, BMWs, and Range Rovers.

III. Conclusion

This initiative has highlighted the widespread problem of fraudulent parking placard abuse in New York City and the negative consequences these crimes create. However, this investigation demonstrates the positive results that come from proactive initiatives and interagency coordination. Going forward, DOI, NYPD, and DOT will continue to educate workers on the ground so that fraudulent parking placards can be identified and confiscated. Additionally, these agencies will work on using technology so that license plates of vehicles can be quickly scanned to confirm if a valid parking placard was issued to the vehicle.