



Office of the Inspector General
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Press Release

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<http://oig.ssa.gov>

Contact: Tracy Lynge
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Insurance Agency and Printing Company Will Pay SSA \$45,000

Two Missouri companies, Haberstroh Insurance Agency, Inc., d/b/a National Reply Center and Stolze Printing, will pay \$35,000 and \$10,000, respectively, for referencing the Social Security Administration's (SSA) name on mailed advertisements. Both companies—without admitting they violated Section 1140 of the *Social Security Act*—are settling with SSA.

Section 1140, enacted by Congress, prohibits the use of SSA words and letters in advertisements or solicitations in a manner that leads the public to believe that SSA approves or endorses the program or product, or that falsely indicates that there is an official connection between SSA and the owner of the product. Congress passed this legislation primarily to curtail deceptive insurance-related lead card mailing practices of this nature.

The Haberstroh Insurance Agency used The Stolze Printing Company to print and mail the insurance related solicitations, or lead card mailings. The mailings contained references to Social Security on the outside of the envelopes in a manner that led the SSA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to determine that the mailings reasonably leads the receiver to think that it's an SSA endorsement.

Both companies out of Bridgeton, Missouri cooperated with OIG's inquiry, and agreed to pay a penalty and comply with Section 1140 in the future. Haberstroh, in addition to paying the fine, also agreed not to use a significant portion of the leads generated from the deceptive mailings.

The \$35,000 and \$10,000 are civil monetary penalties, which the OIG can impose, using authority delegated to us from the Commissioner of Social Security, against individuals, organizations, or other entities that violate Section 1140 of the *Social Security Act*. All monies collected under the OIG's Civil Monetary Penalty Program go directly to SSA's Old Age and Survivors Trust Fund.

We encourage public citizens to report companies or individuals who may be misusing Social Security's name or symbols to mislead the public. You can contact the OIG Office of the Counsel at 410-966-6211, and you can also report suspected violations to the Social Security Fraud Hotline:

- online at <http://oig.ssa.gov/report>;
- write to P.O. Box 17768, Baltimore, MD, 21235;
- fax (410) 597-0118; or
- call (800) 269-0271 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

For more information, please contact Tracy Lynge, Communications Director, at 410-965-2671.