

PRESS RELEASE

Released by: George Copadis, Department of Employment Security Commissioner
Gordon J. MacDonald, Attorney General

Subject: State v. Christine Dearden

Date: June 20, 2017

Release Time: Immediate

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Department of Employment Security Commissioner George Copadis and Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announce that Christine Dearden of Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, pleaded guilty and was sentenced yesterday in the Rockingham County Superior Court to 1 count of class A felony unemployment compensation fraud. Between June 1, 2014 and December 1, 2014, Ms. Dearden filed for 22 weeks of unemployment compensation benefits while knowingly underreporting her gross earnings in order to obtain or increase her benefits. As a result, she fraudulently received \$5,960.00 in unemployment benefits.

Ms. Dearden was sentenced to 12 months in the House of Corrections, with all but 15 days deferred for 1 year and then suspended for 2 years conditioned on good behavior, meaningful participation in any counseling, treatment and educational programs as directed by the correctional authority and the use of her likeness in the Department of Employment Security Benefits Rights Interview video which discusses the ramifications of committing unemployment fraud. Ms. Dearden is disqualified from the receipt of unemployment compensation benefits for 52 weeks. Additionally, Ms. Dearden must repay the entire amount of benefits received during the time period charged in the amount of \$10,312.00 plus a 20% penalty of \$2,062.40 for a total of \$12,374.40 within one year.

The Department of Employment Security provides unemployment compensation benefits to eligible claimants who are unemployed through no fault of their own. The Department investigates and prosecutes both criminal and civil unemployment compensation fraud with the goal of protecting New Hampshire's unemployment fund.