



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN  
COMMISSIONER

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**Release # 65-2004**  
**nyc.gov/doi**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004**

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**DOI ARRESTS MAN FOR FILING HUNDREDS OF FRAUDULENT DOCUMENTS WITH THE CITY**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of IRVENS ISRAEL for unlawfully using the professional stamp of an engineer in order to submit technical drawings for home renovation projects that needed to be approved by the New York City Department of Buildings (Buildings). ISRAEL was registered to file these renovation plans, but was not professionally licensed to vouch for their compliance with the City's zoning and buildings regulations and he did not have the permission of the professional engineer to use his stamp.

ISRAEL, 37, of Hempstead, N.Y., has been charged with Forgery in the Second Degree, Criminal Possession of a Forgery Devices, Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and Falsifying Records in the First Degree. If convicted, ISRAEL faces up to seven years in jail.

DOI's investigation began after the Department of Buildings' Special Investigation Unit (BSIU) reported that a licensed, professional engineer claimed that ISRAEL was unlawfully using the engineer's stamp in order to have design plans approved by that agency. Although he told clients he is a registered architect, ISRAEL is neither a licensed engineer nor a licensed architect. He is, however, a registered expeditor, someone who is paid to file documents with Buildings on behalf of clients, often architects, engineers or homeowners. DOI investigators determined that ISRAEL, on at least 100 occasions over the past three years, used the stamp and signature belonging to a professional engineer while filing documents he wanted Buildings to approve for his clients who were undertaking home renovation projects, such as adding a room to a house. Investigators are still determining how ISRAEL gained access to the engineer's professional stamp as well as determining who rendered the architectural drawings.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This was a great example of DOI's collaborative efforts with the Department of Buildings. This defendant would be wise to learn that DOI and Buildings will not be duped into allowing fraudulent building plans to be approved."

DOI Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Buildings Commissioner Patricia J. Lancaster, FAIA, and her staff, particularly the BSIU, for their assistance and cooperation in this investigation.

Buildings Commissioner Lancaster said Buildings will seek to revoke ISRAEL's expeditor registration and the agency has notified via letter all members of the public who had hired ISRAEL to submit their construction applications. She added, "This arrest should send a loud and clear message to anyone who thinks that s/he can use the Department of Buildings to cheat New Yorkers and circumvent the City's zoning and building laws. My thanks go to Commissioner Gill Hearn and the staff at DOI, as well as at the Department of Buildings who assisted in this investigation."

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, whose office is prosecuting the case, said, "The defendant is accused of using a rubber stamp to falsely file hundreds of false documents with the City, cheating scores of unwitting consumers in Queens and the rest of the City who made payments to him under the mistaken belief that they were obtaining professional services from a reputable expeditor, working in conjunction with a licensed professional engineer, not a charlatan. As a result of a joint investigation by the City's Department of Investigation, Department of Buildings and my Economic Crimes Bureau, the defendant has been apprehended and will be prosecuted and punished."

This investigation was conducted by DOI Chief of Staff and Assistant Commissioner Robert Roach and members of his staff, including First Deputy Inspector General Joseph Ferraro, Special Inspector General Dennis Curran, Examining Attorney Sandi Richman, Chief Investigator Belinda Colon, and Investigator Darius Zysk. Queens County Assistant District Attorney Christine Burke will prosecute.

Criminal complaints are merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple.***  
***To report someone ripping off the city, call 311 or DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.***