

Former Employee Of The Department Of Veterans Affairs Pleads Guilty To The Misuse Of Government Funds - GSA Office of Inspector General

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Florida

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Former Employee Of The Department Of Veterans Affairs Pleads Guilty To The Misuse Of Government Funds

Orlando, Florida – Edwin Torres Arenas (49, Oviedo) has pleaded guilty to seven counts of stealing government funds. He faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison on each count. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

According to the plea agreement, over the course of two years, Torres Arenas misused vehicles rented through the General Services Administration's (GSA) Short Term Rental Program (STR) on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and, in so doing, caused a loss of \$58,114.12 to the VA. In or about October 2017, Torres Arenas began renting STR vehicles for his personal use, in violation of the STR program policy, and converted rentals associated with seven government contract bids to his own use. Torres Arenas also loaned STR rentals to his family members and provided them with the fuel cards assigned to their respective STR vehicles. Torres Arenas and his family incurred toll fees and utilized the fuel cards to fuel their respective STR rentals, the costs of which were charged to the VA.

Torres Arenas also caused a car accident with one of the STR rentals. The damage from this accident resulted in the total loss of that STR vehicle, the cost of which was also charged to the VA.

"VA employees are public servants who owe a solemn duty to the veterans they serve," said David Spilker, Special Agent in Charge of VA OIG's Southeast Field Office. "Today's guilty pleas by the defendant demonstrate VA OIG's commitment to holding accountable anyone who abuses the public trust. VA OIG thanks the U.S. Attorney's Office and GSA OIG for their strong partnership in this important matter."

"GSA OIG is committed to preserving the integrity of GSA programs such as the GSA Fleet Short-Term Rental Program, which is intended to supply federal agencies with easy, one stop access to vehicles and equipment," stated Floyd Martinez, Special Agent in Charge of GSA OIG's Southeast and Caribbean Field Office. "We will continue to work with our investigative partners in pursuing those individuals who fraudulently exploit GSA programs for personal benefit and financial gain."

This case was investigated by the Department of Veterans Affairs – Office of Inspector General and the General Services Administration – Office of Inspector General. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Amanda Daniels.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice [press release](#).