



BCPO News

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Former Maple Shade First Aid Squad Chief Sentenced to Three Years in State Prison for Stealing Agency Funds

MOUNT HOLLY - Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that the former chief of the Maple Shade First Aid Squad was sentenced yesterday in Superior Court to three years in New Jersey state prison for stealing more than \$118,000 from the agency over a period of nearly seven years.

Joseph J. Freed III, 54, of the 400 block of North Coles Avenue in Maple Shade, pled guilty in March to one count of Theft by Deception (Second Degree). Assistant Prosecutor Andrew R. McDonnell requested a sentence of five years, in accordance with the plea agreement that was struck with the defendant. The Hon. Charles A. Delehey, J.S.C., handed down a three-year term following yesterday's hearing.

The thefts for which Freed is charged occurred between April 2010 and February 2017. The investigation revealed that Freed made several withdrawals during that period from a bank account belonging to the First Aid Squad that was under his direct control.

Freed, who was the only member of the squad with access to the account, used the money to pay personal bills and to fund other personal expenses. The majority of the withdrawals were made using automatic teller machines.

"We rely on emergency medical personnel to help us during times of urgent need," Prosecutor Coffina said. "We hold them in high regard due to their life-saving skills and their commitment to those that they serve. A breach of public trust of this nature is painful for the public to absorb because of the pride they have in their first responders. Fortunately, these criminal acts were discovered and this defendant will be punished for his actions."

He was terminated around the time of his arrest in May 2017. A relative of Freed's recently made restitution on his behalf to Maple Shade Township in the amount of \$118,345.50.

The case was investigated by detectives from Maple Shade Police Department and the Prosecutor's Office Financial Crimes Unit. The investigation was led by Maple Shade Detective Sergeant Scot Wallace and BCPO Detective Wayne Comegno.

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