

# 65-year old Massachusetts man sentenced for motor vehicle theft scheme

An Avon man has pleaded guilty and been sentenced to one year in state prison in connection with allegedly running a motor vehicle theft scheme, followed by three years of probation including one year of house arrest.

Jose Sostre, age 65, pleaded guilty on May 7 in Norfolk Superior Court to the charges of Possession of a Stolen Motor Vehicle (six counts), Removal or Alteration of Motor Vehicle Identification Numbers (28 counts), Possession of a Burglarious Tool (one count), Misleading a Police Officer (one count), Forging Certificates of Title and Related Documents (ten counts), and Counterfeit Inspection Stickers (two counts).

Police Officer (one count), Forging Certificates of Title and Related Documents (ten counts), and Counterfeit Inspection Stickers (two counts). After the plea was entered, Judge Peter Krupp sentenced Sostre to serve one year to one year and a day in state prison, followed by three years of probation including one year of house arrest. The state prison sentence will begin once Sostre finishes serving a sentence related to a probation violation.

“This defendant orchestrated a sophisticated scheme to defraud our state motor vehicle registration system and mask the identity of stolen cars,” AG Healey said. “We thank our state partners for working with us to investigate and prosecute this defendant.”

Sostre was arrested and indicted on the charges by a Statewide Grand Jury in August 2017. The case was referred to the AG’s Office by the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office due to

the multi-county nature of the investigation. Sostre was previously prosecuted by the AG's Office in connection with running a counterfeit motor vehicle inspection sticker scheme. He pleaded guilty to those charges in August 2015, served 90 days of a one-year sentence, and is currently serving nine months in jail for violating probation related to that conviction.

The AG's subsequent investigation began in January 2016, when a vehicle from Lawrence was reported stolen to the Massachusetts State Police. State Police troopers tracked a LoJack signal from the vehicle, locating and stopping it in Brockton. Sostre was the driver of that stolen vehicle. Upon further examination of the vehicle, troopers discovered that, in an attempt to disguise it, the vehicle had all manufacturer identifying numbers removed and replaced with those from a salvage vehicle. Troopers also found a forged application for a duplicate certificate of title for the salvage vehicle. The duplicate title was used to further hide the true identity of the stolen vehicle.

Through the course of the investigation, authorities found an additional five stolen cars that followed a similar criminal scheme, as well as additional criminal activity, including forged RMV documents, misleading statements to police officers, possession of burglarious tools, removal or alteration of vehicle identification numbers, and counterfeit motor vehicle inspection stickers.

Two of the motor vehicles recovered in the investigation had counterfeit motor vehicle inspection stickers placed on them. The state's motor vehicle inspection program, a joint program with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), requires yearly safety tests for all motor vehicles. Passenger vehicles that are less than 15 years old are subject to yearly safety and emission inspections, which can only be conducted at facilities licensed by the RMV. Inspection tests can only be

conducted by people licensed by the RMV. The program is designed to ensure only safe and clean vehicles operate on the state's roads.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Gabriel Thornton, through AG Healey's Environmental Crimes Strike Force, with assistance from Victim Witness Advocate Amber Anderson of AG Healey's Victim Witness & Assistance Division, Massachusetts State Police, detectives of the Massachusetts Environmental Police assigned to the AG's Office, Boston Police, National Insurance Crime Bureau, MassDOT, RMV, and the AG's Digital Evidence Lab.