

# NEWS

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**Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney**

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## Owner of Helicopter and Airplane Repair Business Accused of Endangering Aircraft

(More)

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**Breaking News (NJ)** <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/publicaffairs/index.html>

NEWARK – The owner of a Monmouth County helicopter and airplane repair business was arrested today on a federal Indictment charging him with creating a safety risk with respect to certain aircraft and, on occasion, doing so while his FAA certification was revoked, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

An Indictment returned on Wednesday and unsealed today charges John Ford, 62, of Farmingdale, with two counts of destruction of aircraft and nine counts of making false statements within the jurisdiction of a U.S. Government agency.

Ford was arrested at his business this morning by Special Agents of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General.

According to the Indictment, Ford is the owner of a company called Raco Helicopter Corporation, located at Monmouth County Airport in Farmingdale. The Indictment alleges that in June 2003, Ford created a safety risk by installing used parts, which had surpassed their useful life-span, to secure the rotor assembly on a Hiller helicopter. Furthermore, between March and April 2001, it is alleged that Ford made false statements about the inspection and maintenance performed on a Bell helicopter owned by the County of Monmouth. According to the Indictment, Ford stated that the helicopter was airworthy when, as the defendant well knew, it was not, thereby creating a safety risk.

The Indictment further alleges that, on a number of occasions, Ford represented in helicopter repair logs that he was certified by the Federal Aviation Administration to inspect and do repairs on helicopters when, in fact, his certification from the FAA had been revoked.

The defendant had an initial appearance today before U.S. Magistrate-Judge Mark Falk in Newark. Ford was released on a \$200,000 personal recognizance bond pending trial.

If convicted, Ford faces a maximum of twenty years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on each of the two destruction of aircraft counts. He also faces a maximum of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 on each of the nine counts of making false statements, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark R. Winston.

Despite Indictment, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

Christie credited Special Agents of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Ned Schwartz, Special Agent in Charge, with developing the case against Ford.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark R. Winston, of the U.S. Attorney's Government Fraud Unit in Newark.