

*Jackie Lacey*  
District Attorney  
<http://da.lacounty.gov>



NEWS RELEASE

**Media Contact:**

Paul Eakins  
Public Information Officer  
213-257-2000  
[PEakins@da.lacounty.gov](mailto:PEakins@da.lacounty.gov)  
Twitter: @LADAOoffice

March 26, 2018

**Public Adjuster Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison  
for Embezzling from Fire Victims**

An Orange County public adjuster was sentenced to 10 years in state prison today for pocketing more than \$1.2 million from fire victims' insurance payouts, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Jose Villa (dob 3/8/56) of San Clemente pleaded no contest to eight felony counts of diverting construction funds exceeding \$2,350, Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey Stodel of the White Collar Crime Division said. Villa also admitted to sentencing enhancement allegations of excessive taking of property and aggravated white collar crime.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Michael E. Pastor immediately sentenced Villa to prison. The judge also imposed a \$10,000 fine and ordered restitution to the victims in the amount of \$1,213,227.23.

According to Stodel, Villa was a licensed public adjuster who owned and operated Statewide Claims Advisors Inc. in Irvine. The victims in this case were the owners of a commercial building in Whittier and the owner of a residential rental property in Los Angeles. The victims had hired Villa to serve as their public adjuster after their properties were damaged in fires in 2013.

The prosecutor said Villa deposited the victims' insurance reimbursement checks into his business checking account, ostensibly so he could handle demolition and construction at the victims' properties in the months following the fires. However, he kept most of the insurance money instead of using it for the victims' benefit, Stodel said.

The District Attorney's Office filed charges on Oct. 4, 2017.

Case BA461496 was investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Commercial Crime Bureau and the California Department of Insurance.

As part of the negotiated plea agreement, a seven-year prison sentence that Villa is serving for another insurance fraud case will run concurrently to the 10-year term imposed in this case. In the earlier case, MA069231, Villa was convicted in May 2017 of two felony counts each of grand theft by embezzlement and forgery for taking insurance proceeds from other fire victims.

As a result of Villa's conduct, the California Department of Insurance revoked Villa's license to serve as a public adjuster and permanently barred him from applying for or holding any license it issues.

### **[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.