

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the United States Trustee

December 21, 2004

To the Chapter 7 and 13 Trustees:

SUBJECT: Use of the Great Seal and Department of Justice Seal by Trustees

Dear Trustees:

I have been asked to forward this policy to you, as a result of a misunderstanding in Florida.

Private trustees should make every effort to avoid confusion in the public's mind between their role as private individuals who are fiduciaries for bankruptcy estates and the United States Trustee Program, its officials and employees, or other government personnel. While it is permissible for trustees to designate that they are "United States Bankruptcy Trustees" or similar information on separate letterhead, business cards, and web sites, they should not employ a facsimile of the Great Seal of the United States or the Department of Justice seal similar to the ones reproduced below.



In certain contexts this or a similar display or representation may be found to be deceptive and to convey the false impression that the trustee is a government official. Such misuse may not only confuse or deceive the public, but it may subject the individual trustee to civil or criminal liability. *See* 18 U.S.C. §§ 712, 713; 28 C.F.R. § 0.146. *C.f.* 15 U.S.C. § 1692e.

To avoid unfortunate consequences, trustees should not use on their business cards, stationery, advertising, publications, offices, or web sites any likeness of the Great Seal of the United States, the Department of Justice seal, or any other government-like seal, emblem, logo, insignia, words, or phrase from which the public might infer that

such trustees are government officials or employees. In addition, a trustee's professional firm's stationery, business cards, and web sites should not contain references to his or her additional role as a trustee. A link from the firm's web site to the trustee's web site is permissible.

Trustee identification cards, which are issued by the United States Trustee Program, are not affected by this policy.

Monsita Lecaroz Arribas, AUST