



NEWS

County worker charged with stealing gas supplies



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An 18-year veteran of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works was charged today with grand theft for allegedly stealing thousands of dollars of gasoline from several county maintenance yards.

Ralph Soto, 43, is scheduled to be arraigned this morning in Division 5 of East Los Angeles Court on one felony count of grand theft by embezzlement, according to a statement from the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. If convicted, he could receive a maximum sentence of three years in state prison.

Soto is accused of unlawfully using the account number of a coworker to fill up his personal vehicle and take gasoline in case for the purpose of selling it, according to the D.A.'s office.

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Prosecutors allege that Soto charged more than \$5,000 worth of gasoline at three Los Angeles County maintenance yards between July 2 and Sept. 3, 2008. The theft was discovered when a security guard saw Soto fill his minivan and gasoline cans, they said.

Soto was arrested at his East L.A. home by sheriff's deputies on Sept. 25 and released two days later on \$25,000 bail.

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