



Broome County  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**

---

Aaron M. Martin, County Clerk

News for Immediate Release  
October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026

For More Information Contact  
Jessica Haas, Chief of Staff  
607-778-2451 ext. 6  
Jessica.Haas@broomecountyny.gov

**Broome County Clerk Aaron Martin Joins Stakeholders to Warn of Deed Fraud**

Binghamton, NY – Broome County Clerk Aaron Martin joined Broome County District Attorney F. Paul Battisti, Attorney Kenneth F. Tomko from Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, and Christina Schaefer from the Greater Binghamton Association of REALTORS® ("GBAR") to warn Broome County residents of rising deed fraud concerns.

Deed fraud (also called home title theft) happens when someone records a fake or forged deed with the County Clerk's Office, making it appear in public records as though they now own your property. This crime occurs through two primary means: forgery or fraudulent inducement. In these instances, forgery is when a criminal fakes the property owner's signature and files the deed and fraudulent inducement is when the property owner is tricked into signing something they don't understand, believing it's for help or refinancing. Once the fraudulent deed is recorded, the scammer may sell the property to an unsuspecting buyer, take out loans or mortgages against it, or rent it out and collect income.

Criminals typically choose properties where the owner is less likely to notice changes quickly, such as vacant or absentee-owned homes or properties, homes without mortgages, inherited properties with outdated title records, and elderly homeowners.

"Property owners have become increasingly concerned about home title theft," said Broome County Clerk Aaron Martin. "It's important to educate the community about the risks and share important information about how to prevent being a victim of these frauds."

The fraud begins before the deed is delivered for filing at the County Clerk's Office typically through the real estate transaction. The Greater Binghamton Association of REALTORS® have created and disbursed to their members a best practices document to help prevent the fraud before it even begins.

"Fraud prevention begins long before a deed reaches the County Clerk's Office. Real estate professionals are uniquely positioned to help increase awareness of warning signs before a fraudulent real estate transaction reaches closing," said Christina Schaefer, Preside-Elect of the Greater Binghamton Association of REALTORS®. "Through the Greater Binghamton Association of REALTORS®, we share information with our members to help them recognize, pause, verify, preserve, and report. By working together with attorneys, government, and law enforcement, we are working towards strengthening the integrity of real estate transactions throughout our community."



## Broome County OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

---

Aaron M. Martin, County Clerk

If the scammer is successful with the real estate transaction, the closing documents including deeds are then drafted by Real Estate attorneys for filing in the County Clerk's Office. Once a purchase agreement is in place, Real Estate attorneys and their staff need to be vigilant in all aspects of the transaction, and identify any potential 'red flags' that might indicate a possible fraudulent transaction.

"Office protocols need to be established and followed for all aspects of the sale, including verifying the identify of all parties and the transfer of verifiable funds," said Kenneth F. Tomko, Partner at Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP. "In addition, all title and transfer documents need to be reviewed and carefully scrutinized, and clients need to be apprised of any issues that may pose a risk to their investment. An experienced Real Estate attorney should be able to assess these risks and discuss them with their client, and also advise whether additional measures such as title insurance can be obtained to protect that investment."

The Broome County Clerk's Office offers a free Fraud Alert system through our records management system, Info Quick Solutions or "IQS." Broome County residents or anyone who owns property in Broome County can register at <https://searchiqs.com/fraudalert> to be notified when documents are recorded under their name. The Broome County Clerk's Office also mails hard copy fraud letters to transferors of residential properties in Broome County whenever a deed is recorded.

"Once the appropriate transfer documents arrive at the County Clerk's Office, our staff has a statutory obligation to file them," said Broome County Clerk Aaron Martin. "This is why our Office is partnering with the Greater Binghamton Association of REALTORS® and local law firms like Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP to better inform realtors and Real Estate attorneys on what to look out for in relation to title theft or deed fraud before those documents even arrive at the County Clerk's Office. Further, our Office offers a free Fraud Alert system that can notify residents if anything is filed using their name. Our partnership with the District Attorney's Office will ensure that if deed fraud does occur, those who committed the crime will be held accountable."

Although all the aforementioned efforts by GBAR, real estate attorneys and the County Clerk's Office are intended to stop deed fraud, sometimes scammers are successful at stealing properties. The Broome County District Attorney's Office is committed to prosecuting crimes like this.

"Deed fraud is not a misunderstanding or a clerical error, it's a planned crime, carried out by someone who forges documents and exploits trust in order to steal a person's home or property out from under them," said Broome County District Attorney F. Paul Battisti. "My office is committed to thoroughly investigating and prosecuting anyone who commits this crime in Broome County, and to working with the County Clerk's Office, local law firms, and the Greater Binghamton Association of REALTORS® to protect our residents before it happens. If you believe you've been targeted, I want you to know that getting your home back is our first priority, and we will not stop until the people responsible are held accountable."



Broome County  
**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**

---

Aaron M. Martin, County Clerk

Broome County Clerk Aaron Martin and our partners are encouraging residents and property owners to enroll in the free Fraud Alert system at <https://searchiqs.com/fraudalert> and to check on their properties routinely in an effort to prevent becoming a victim of deed fraud.

The County Clerk is the Records Management Officer for records in Broome County and is an agent to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

-END-