

Arson paper

Law



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Abstract

Arson is one of the world's oldest known crimes. It can cost a life or a generous amount of money in damages. Even though it can take a person's life, arson is classified as a property crime to law enforcement agencies. It is time-consuming and very difficult to investigate. Only twenty percent of arrests result in a conviction because it is classified as a "property crime" rather than a violent crime. The motives of arson range from profit to murder.

People who use arson use it because it's a quick easy act of terrorism to a person or company they are trying to hurt. I believe there should be more and better adequate training for investigators and prosecutors to put away the people that can commit such a crime. The United States has one of the highest fire death rates in the world. In 1998 the "NFPA reported about 14.9 deaths per million population. Between 1994 and 1998 about 4,400 Americans died and about 35,100 were injured yearly. Also about 100 firefighters a year lost their lives in their hazardous job-related duties. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arson>) Fires kill more Americans a year than natural disasters combined. Arson is the most expensive crime committed, this can be attributed to the several factors which are the lack of education on the problems of arson, and prosecutors do not want to take on the case because of circumstantial evidence, quick payments from insurance companies, and inadequate training for investigators. Legal arson is categorized in two categories; aggravated arson and arson. "Aggravated arson is burning of the property while endangering human life.

Arson is the burning of property that does not include the risk of human life. “ (<http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Arson>) Fire crime scenes begin like any other investigation. The trick is to connect the suspect to the crime. There are clues to determine if a fire is suspicious or not. For example, the color of the flames has to do with the accelerant use. Like alcohol burn with a blue-orange flame. The descriptions are usually gained from the witnesses. The odor of smoke can explain what material was used to start the fire. Before a fire is visible, the smoke can be observed.

If the smoke is black then it is petroleum-based. If the smoke is a white color the vegetation material was used (hay or straw.) If the structure is completely engulfed in flames then it is difficult to determine which material was set to burn. The size of the fire gives the investigator information if it was arson or not. For instance, if a building is engulfed in flames in a short period of time, then that might be because of arson. Natural fire tends to burn at a slower steadier pace with a natural pattern but this is circumstantial.

One of the articles that I decided to write about was the incident that took place at the beginning of September in Needville, TX. “ It was a fire that burned 400 acres and charred a barn in the Needville area and was intentionally set, officials said. The blaze started at the corner of a pasture on Foster School Road near Brinkmeyer on Sept. 7, according to the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office. The blaze raced southwest and jumped Baker Road. It also destroyed a facility that housed two vehicles and a travel trailer.

More than 100 firefighters from 20 agencies from nearby areas, including the Needville Fire Department, battled the blaze. In conclusion, arson is a very serious crime and should be taken very seriously when one is criminally charged. Way too much money is lost, as well as the lives of others who are less fortunate.

Works Cited

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