



NEWS RELEASE

Orange County Fire Authority
Captain Greg McKeown/PIO

1 Fire Authority Rd.
Irvine, CA 92602
(714) 573-6201

MAY 28, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: ARSONIST PLEADS GUILTY TO MULTIPLE COUNTS OF ARSON

**CONTACT: GREG MCKEOWN, FIRE CAPTAIN/ PIO, 714-402-3739,
GREGMCKEOWN@OCFA.ORG
DEVIN LEONARD, CHIEF INVESTIGATOR, 714-573-6701
DEVINLEONARD@OCFA.ORG**

On May 7th, 29-year-old Mathew Deason was sentenced to multiple counts of arson stemming from fires that he set on December 28, 2008. Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) firefighters responded to five separate fires in the cities of Mission Viejo and Laguna Hills last December. All five fires occurred within 90 minutes and burned in the vicinity of Alicia Parkway and the I-5 Freeway. The fires included a commercial dumpster, a vegetation fire, two commercial building fires, and a building fire within an apartment complex community center. Damages from those fires exceeded \$800,000.

In the days following the fires, OCFA Investigators were able to identify several persons of interest. Ultimately, one of the suspects was detained, questioned, and admitted to his involvement in the fires. Deason was sentenced to 40 months in prison, lifetime Arson Registrant, restitution to the property owners, 3 felony "strikes," and psychiatric counseling (to be determined at a later time).

The OCFA is committed to fire prevention in the jurisdictions that we serve. The OCFA will thoroughly investigate all intentional and accidental fires and will aggressively arrest and prosecute suspected arsonists. Through a cooperative effort, OCFA Fire Investigators work in partnership with local law enforcement agencies in the arrest and prosecution of persons responsible for intentionally starting fires.

If you witness a suspected arson or have information regarding a fire, you are urged to call our anonymous arson tip line at (800) 540-8282 or your local police agency. Fire prevention and safety information can be found at www.ocfa.org.

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The Orange County Fire Authority is a joint powers authority that serves more than 1.3 million residents in 22 cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.