



City of Austin Fire Department Media Release



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NEWS

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Serial Arsonist Arrested *Man charged with two counts of Arson, bond set at \$2 million.*

AUSTIN, TX...Austin Fire Department (AFD) Arson Investigators have arrested Andrew Ryan Neely-Otts and have charged him with two counts of Arson, a 1st degree felony. The joint investigation between the AFD and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) included a response by the ATF's National Response Team, which assisted local ATF agents and local AFD fire investigators during the six-day investigation. Investigators were able to eliminate all potential accidental causes and determined that the cause of both fires was arson. Further, an accelerant detecting canine from the Austin Fire Department alerted on several areas at both scenes, indicating the presence of an ignitable liquid used as an accelerant. Evidence samples were taken and will be processed at the ATF laboratory.

Neely-Otts is accused of using these liquid accelerants to start fires in the leasing offices of the Austin Park and Chevy Chase apartments. It is believed Neely-Otts set the fires to try to conceal the theft of \$30,000 to \$40,000 worth of rent payments, most of which were in the form of money orders. Neely-Otts was arrested without incident at the Travis County Courthouse, where he had returned Monday morning for a probation revocation hearing. Neely-Otts has a previous arrest in Ohio for two counts of Aggravated Arson and an additional arrest in Michigan for forgery and counterfeiting.

Austin Fire Investigators have filed charges in 56 fire cases this year, or in approximately 33 percent of all fire events determined to be incendiary. The national average is 16 percent.

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