

BUSINESSAFE

BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.

Florida Fusion Center 20-172

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BusinessSafe Threat Topic: Arson Attacks

Arson is the willful and unlawful burning of property. Arson attacks primarily occur when an individual sets fire to property with a criminal intent and may result in extensive financial and personal losses, including increased insurance premiums, loss of business revenue, and a decrease in property values. Because fires spread quickly, arson attacks may also result in serious physical injury for first responders and nearby residents.

Arson attacks require little to no expertise and planning. Therefore, this tactic may be used as an unsophisticated attack method and can be carried out at a variety of locations. Motives for arson attacks include crime concealment, extremism, profit, revenge, and vandalism. Arson may also be used by violent extremists as part of a complex coordinated attack to hinder first responder efforts.

- In July 2020, a man was charged with setting fire to a Catholic church in Ocala, Florida. The individual reportedly drove a minivan through the front doors of Queen of Peace Catholic church and set the foyer on fire with gasoline. There were no reported injuries; however, the structure sustained extensive damage.

[Man Charged in Florida Arson Attack](#)

- In February 2020, four teens set fire to a defunct train station in Delray Beach, Florida. While attempting to put out the fire, a firefighter was reportedly thrown to the ground by the force of the fire and suffered burns to his neck and ears.

[Four Teens Face Arson Charges after Fire Destroys Train Station](#)

- In January 2020, an individual spread a flammable substance on nine cars and set them on fire at a car dealership in Pompano Beach, Florida. The dealership owner's sister stated that the business did not have insurance and would have to cover the cost of the arson attack out of pocket.

[Officials Search for Arsonist behind Attack at Pompano Beach Car Dealership](#)



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(800) 342-0820

FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us

Author: FL8507, Approval: FL8600, HSEC-8, FSIN-2

Ways to Protect Yourself from Arson Attacks:

- Install and regularly update all security systems, smoke detectors, appropriate fire suppression system, and other fire safety equipment.
- Train employees to secure all doors, windows, skylights – especially entrances on alleys and keep your property well-lit at night.
- Join and participate in a local business watch.
- Review information from the [U.S. Fire Administration](#) on fire prevention and stay updated on any fire activity in your area.
- Be on the lookout for and report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement.

Resources

The Department of Homeland Security provides security awareness for fire used as a weapon in soft targets and crowded places.

[Fire as a Weapon: Security Awareness for Soft Targets and Crowded Places](#)

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence provides guidance on recognizing arson with a nexus to terrorism.

[Recognizing Arson with a Nexus to Terrorism](#)

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