



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd. • Baton Rouge, LA 70806

www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 7/21/26

CONTACT: Ken Pastorick
Public Affairs Director

PHONE: 225-406-8153
osfm.publicaffairs@la.gov

Two Washington Parish Inmates Face New Charges in Connection With Jail Fire

WASHINGTON PARISH (July 21, 2026) – Two inmates are facing new charges in connection with a July 18, 2026, fire that caused the evacuation of the entire Washington Parish Jail in Franklinton.

Following an investigation by the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal's Fire (SFM), 69-year-old Harold G. Russell, an inmate from Bogalusa, and 41-year-old Eric Causey, an inmate from Franklinton, were each charged with Fire Raising in a Correctional Facility, a violation of Louisiana Revised Statute 14:204.1.

On July 20, 2026, the Washington Parish Sheriff's Office requested the SFM investigate the fire.

SFM investigators determined that an improvised smoking device fell into an air-conditioning vent, where it caught fire. The fire produced significant smoke and smoke damage, prompting the evacuation of the entire jail.

No injuries were reported.

This remains an active investigation, and no further details are being released at this time.

The Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office reminds the public that anyone with information regarding fire-related crimes is encouraged to submit an anonymous tip by visiting lasfm.org and selecting the "Arson Fires" icon.

-END-END-END-END-