



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
Public Safety Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: October 30, 2014

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State, Local Authorities Investigate Thefts of Fire Sprinkler System Devices

*As investigation expands, additional charges are expected
as number of locations victimized rises*

Baton Rouge, LA – Two brothers await additional charges in the thefts of brass fire sprinkler devices that have adversely affected a growing number of businesses, including hospitals, condominiums, and a kidney dialysis center.

John Michael Flattmann, Jr., 36, and Jason Matthew Flattmann, 31, both of Ponchatoula, who were arrested earlier last week by Probation & Parole authorities on unrelated charges, were also charged by Hammond police on Friday, October 24, on a growing number of felony thefts. However, the two are expected to be charged by the Office of State Fire Marshal and agencies in Jefferson Parish in the near future.

The investigation began after the State Fire Marshal was notified by the Kenner Fire Prevention Bureau that several of the devices, which can cost hundreds of dollars each, had been stolen from Ochsner Medical Center, a theatre, and a department store.

Two (2) days later, however, the focus of the investigation turned toward Hammond, where nearly two (2) dozen businesses, including a hotel, were victimized. The State Fire Marshal, working with Hammond police and fire prevention personnel, quickly began canvassing area scrap metal yards where many of the brass devices were believed to have been sold.

MORE – MORE – MORE

This concerted effort resulted in the Flattmann brothers being established as suspects as they were identified through photographic and monetary transactional means at several scrap yards in Tangipahoa and Jefferson parishes.

Furthermore, security video footage obtained from a Metairie condominium complex captured the men after they removed a fire department connection, which is used by fire departments to pump much-needed water into a burning building. One brother, John Flattmann, is observed wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with the name of a fire sprinkler company where the younger brother, Jason, had previously worked and who had knowledge as to how the devices are installed.

The siblings were later interviewed by State Fire Marshal and Hammond investigators at which time both men admitted they had removed numerous devices, scrapping them for quick cash. At one yard, for example, the brothers scrapped dozens of the devices, totaling over two-hundred (200) pounds.

In addition to felony theft charges, arising from their actions in multiple jurisdictions, the brothers will also be criminally charged for placing lives and property in jeopardy by adversely affecting the operation of sprinkler systems which are considered life safety systems.

It should be noted that in response to the thefts, a number of fire sprinkler companies are taking measures to prevent future thefts of the very important devices.

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LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

News Release – Addendum (10/30/14)



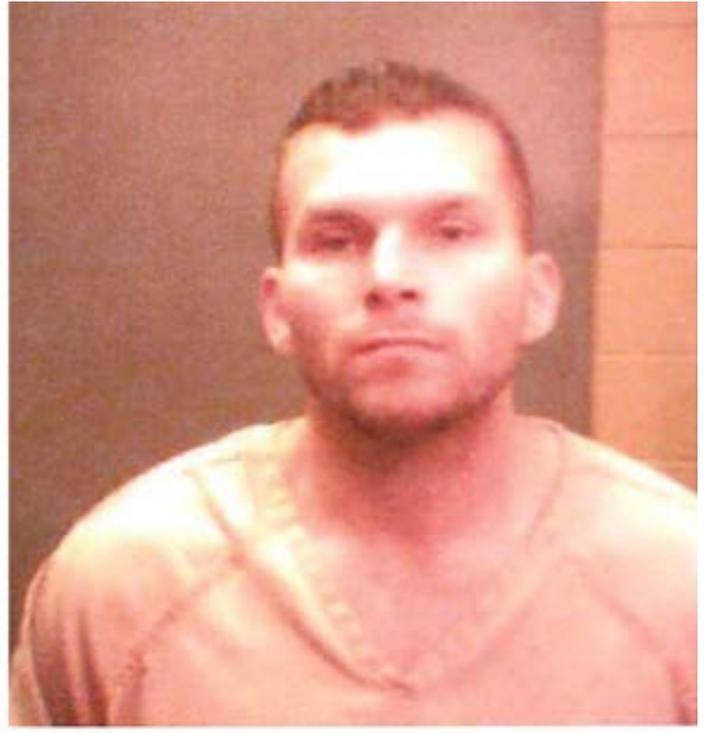
Example of standard Fire Department Connection

Example of fire pump test valves.





John Michael Flattmann, Jr.



Jason Matthew Flattmann



John Flattmann, Jr. and brother Jason Flattmann at Metairie condominium; 10/11/14.



John Flattmann, Jr. and Jason Flattmann leaving Metairie condominium after removing a fire department connection device; 10/11/14 (NOTE: the name of sprinkler company omitted).



Jason Flattmann and John Flattmann, Jr. at a Kenner scrap yard; 10/6/14.



Portion of stolen fire sprinkler devices recovered by the Office of State Fire Marshal from a Kenner scrap yard; 10/21/14.