

P.L. 1997, CHAPTER 108, *approved June 2, 1997*  
Assembly, No. 2166 (*First Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** concerning arson and amending N.J.S.2C:17-1.

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3 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
4 of New Jersey:

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6 1. N.J.S.2C:17-1 is amended to read as follows:

7 2C:17-1. Arson and related offenses.

8 a. Aggravated arson. A person is guilty of aggravated arson, a  
9 crime of the second degree, if he starts a fire or causes an explosion,  
10 whether on his own property or another's:

11 (1) Thereby purposely or knowingly placing another person in  
12 danger of death or bodily injury; or

13 (2) With the purpose of destroying a building or structure of  
14 another; or

15 (3) With the purpose of collecting insurance for the destruction or  
16 damage to such property under circumstances which recklessly place  
17 any other person in danger of death or bodily injury.

18 b. Arson. A person is guilty of arson, a crime of the third degree,  
19 if he purposely starts a fire or causes an explosion, whether on his own  
20 property or another's:

21 (1) Thereby recklessly placing another person in danger of death  
22 or bodily injury; or

23 (2) Thereby recklessly placing a building or structure of another in  
24 danger of damage or destruction; or

25 (3) With the purpose of collecting insurance for the destruction or  
26 damage to such property.

27 c. Failure to control or report dangerous fire. A person who  
28 knows that a fire is endangering life or a substantial amount of  
29 property of another and either fails to take reasonable measures to put

**EXPLANATION** - Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Assembly AJU committee amendments adopted September 19, 1996.

1 out or control the fire, when he can do so without substantial risk to  
2 himself, or to give prompt fire alarm, commits a crime of the fourth  
3 degree if:

4 (1) He knows that he is under an official, contractual, or other  
5 legal duty to prevent or combat the fire; or

6 (2) The fire was started, albeit lawfully, by him or with his assent,  
7 or on property in his custody or control.

8 d. Any person who, directly or indirectly, pays or accepts any form  
9 of consideration including, but not limited to, money or any other  
10 pecuniary benefit, for the purpose of starting a fire or causing an  
11 explosion in violation of this section commits a crime of the first  
12 degree.

13 e. Notwithstanding the provisions of any section of this Title to the  
14 contrary, if a person is convicted of aggravated arson pursuant to the  
15 provisions of subsection a. of this section and the structure which was  
16 the target of the offense was a health care facility or a physician's  
17 office, the sentence imposed shall include a term of imprisonment.  
18 The court may not suspend or make any other noncustodial disposition  
19 of a person sentenced pursuant to the provisions of this subsection.

20 f. Definitions. "Structure" is defined in section 2C:18-1. Property  
21 is that of another, for the purpose of this section, if any one other than  
22 the actor has a possessory or proprietary interest therein. If a building  
23 or structure is divided into separately occupied units, any unit not  
24 occupied by the actor is an occupied structure of another.

25 As used in this section, "health care facility" means health care  
26 facility as defined in section 2 of P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-2).

27 g. Notwithstanding the provisions of any section of this Title to the  
28 contrary, if a person is convicted pursuant to the provisions of  
29 subsection a., b. or d. of this section and the structure which was the  
30 target of the offense was a church, synagogue, temple or other place  
31 of public worship, <sup>1</sup>that person commits a crime of the first degree  
32 and<sup>1</sup> the sentence imposed shall include a term of imprisonment. The  
33 term of imprisonment shall include a minimum term of 15 years <sup>1</sup>[for  
34 a crime of the first degree, 10 years for a crime of the second degree,  
35 five years for a crime of the third degree, or 18 months in the case of  
36 a fourth degree crime]<sup>1</sup>, during which the defendant shall be ineligible  
37 for parole. The court may not suspend or make any other noncustodial  
38 disposition of a person sentenced pursuant to the provisions of this  
39 subsection.

40 (cf: P.L.1991, c.498, s.1)

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42 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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3 Provides for mandatory terms of imprisonment for arson under certain  
4 circumstances.