



Minneapolis Criminal Defense Attorney

Ryan Garry LLC, Criminal Defense Attorneys

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[In Minnesota, arson crimes are charged as misdemeanors or felony offenses, depending on the nature of the crime and the severity of damages.](#)

[Charged with Arson in Minnesota](#)

[The charges and penalties for arson crimes in Minnesota vary depending on the severity of the crime, the level of injuries, and the amount of](#)

[property damages that result from the fire. An arson crime can be charged as a misdemeanor offense that carries fines and short jail terms or as a felony offense with steep fines and up to 20 years behind bars.](#)

[Arson is a serious offense due to the potential for severe personal injuries or death to fire victims and massive destruction of property. Minnesota laws put arson crimes into several categories:](#)

Arson of a Dwelling

Dwelling fires are the most serious type of arson offense. They are usually charged as First Degree Felonies because they often involve injuries or loss of life to dwelling inhabitants. Any person who intentionally sets a fire or uses explosives that cause damage to a dwelling, whether inhabitants are present at the time or not, face fines up to \$35,000 and prison sentences up to 20 years, or both.

Arson of Other Buildings

Building fires are charged as First Degree Felonies due to their potential for personal injuries, loss of life, and extensive property damages. Intentionally setting a fire or using explosives that cause damage to a building can result in fines up to \$35,000 and prison sentences up to 20 years, or both.

Wildfire Arson

Dwelling and building fires cause destruction and devastation, but they are reasonably easy to contain and extinguish. Wildfires are not. When a fire is intentionally set in a forest or open land area, it can burn thousands of acres for days, even weeks, before it is extinguished. Because of the potential for massive damage, wildfire arson is automatically charged as a felony offense in Minnesota, with fines up to \$10,000 and prison sentences up to 5 years, or both. More serious penalties may be imposed if:

The fire burns 1,500 acres or more
The fire causes damage to 100 dwelling or buildings
The fire causes damage to crops in excess of \$250,000

If a person is stopped or found with items such as matches, torches, flame throwers, or flammable liquids that could start a wildfire, he/she may be arrested and charged with a gross misdemeanor.

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