



TULARE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

907 W. Visalia Road, Farmersville, CA – Phone # - (559) 747-8233 - Fax (559) 747-1024

STEVE SUNDERLAND
CHIEF

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Joe M. Garcia
Phone: (559) 967-8486

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2011

MAN SENTENCED TO STATE PRISON FOR DEFRAUDING THE PUBLIC

A case that began in 2008 when a fire protection company was investigated for fraud of numerous businesses in Tulare County finally came to fruition on May 20, 2011, when a superior court judge sentenced the owner to five years in State Prison. Danny Victor Williams, 45, of Camarillo, owner of American Fire Protection, was sentenced in Tulare County Superior Court after his conviction in March of 2011, for 29 felonies and 35 misdemeanors related to fraudulent work involving the installation and servicing of kitchen hood and duct systems and fraudulent servicing of fire extinguishers.

In December of 2008, the Tulare County Fire Department in conjunction with the Tulare County District attorneys Office and staff from various fire departments throughout the county executed four search warrants throughout central and southern California on properties occupied or held by the owner and employees of American fire Protection. The Tulare County Fire Department had received numerous complaints against this company and its employees for using high pressure tactics and other unlawful methods to convince business owners to buy their services. Amongst the complaints against the company were that they:

- Wore uniforms with patches similar to those worn by fire department staff and gave the impression that they were from the fire department.
- Claimed that they were fire marshals and were authorized to close their business if not allowed to do an inspection and subsequent work on fire protection systems.
- Claimed they were there to service the fire extinguishers or kitchen hood duct systems prior to the service date of the devices.
- Claimed that they where there to service the fire extinguishers and/or kitchen hood systems that had been previously serviced by other companies.

- In many cases, performed substandard and non-code compliant work when hired by a business owner.

The search warrants led to enough evidence for the case to be brought up before the Grand Jury. On June 4, 2009, the grand jury indicted Danny Williams, owner of American fire protection, and Ken Speck, an employee, on 112 out of the 150 complaints filed against the company. They were indicted on 34 felony counts of maintaining an impaired fire protection system, theft, diversion of construction funds and conspiracy, as well as 78 misdemeanor charges of theft and violations of the fire code totaling 112 criminal counts. The indictment created a criminal case that County officials believe has ultimately generated the most complaints in Tulare County history.

Working with The Contractors State Licensing Board, the State Fire Marshal and the Tulare County District Attorney's Office, investigators from Tulare County Fire Department were able to suspend Danny Williams contractor license, business license, fire extinguisher concern license and his fire extinguisher service license. It was later found that Danny Williams continued to operate despite suspended licenses and a restraining order.

On May 20th, in addition to sentencing Williams, the judge denied a request for retrial. An evidentiary hearing on restitution to the victims will be held in the coming months.

The Tulare County Fire Department wants to remind consumers and businesses to watch out for anyone coming to their offices, stores or restaurants who utilize any of the aforementioned high-pressure tactics. If you feel that you have been the victim of fraud, contact your local fire department.