

District Attorney Marc Bennett
18th Judicial District of Kansas



www.sedgwickcounty.org/da <https://www.facebook.com/SedgwickCountyDistrictAttorney>

For Immediate Release, December 16, 2021

WICHITA, KAN. – A man who moved into a vacant house where two police officers were injured in a shooting earlier this year was sentenced to 32 months in prison Tuesday in Sedgwick County District Court.

James Hathorn, 46 of Wichita, pleaded guilty in September to residential burglary, theft, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and possession of a sawed-off shotgun. Prior to being arrested, Hathorn was living with his girlfriend in the vacant house in the 1800 block of South St. Francis.

Hathorn admitted in his plea that he entered the vacant house without permission from the owner and that he was in possession of a sawed-off shotgun that was hidden in the side-pocket of a recliner chair. Hathorn also admitted to taking items from the house.

On February 27, 2021, three Wichita officers investigating a burglary report entered the house, but no one was home. While making their way through the front room, the officers bumped the chair where the shotgun was stored, causing it to discharge. The blast from the shotgun struck two of the officers in the legs, causing severe injuries. The loaded shotgun was not in safe mode and the trigger guard was not on the weapon.

District Judge David Dahl considered a request from the defense attorney to place Hathorn on probation, but declined to do so based on the defendant's violent criminal history and actions while on parole previously. Dahl found that while Hathorn did not intend to injure anyone, his actions in entering the home without permission and storing an illegal and loaded shotgun in the chair created an unsafe environment that led to the officers being injured. Judge Dahl pointed out the presumptive sentence in this case was prison.

District Attorney Marc Bennett
18th Judicial District of Kansas

CONTACT: DAN DILLON, MEDIA COORDINATOR 316-660-3707

Dan.Dillon@SEDGWICK.GOV