



CRIME AND COURTS

Duluth man who set Adas Israel fire to remain jailed

Matthew James Amiot was arrested this week for a violation of his supervised release.
Written By: [Tom Olsen](#) | Oct 4th 2019 - 12pm.

A Duluth man who started the fire that destroyed the Adas Israel Congregation synagogue in downtown Duluth will remain jailed until sentencing.

Matthew James Amiot, 36, violated the terms of his supervised release within hours of being discharged from the St. Louis County Jail last week, failing to check in at the CHUM shelter and missing a scheduled meeting with probation officers.

Amiot was arrested by Superior police on Monday. He waived extradition back to Minnesota and appeared Friday morning before 6th Judicial District Judge Shaun Floerke.

"We had a deal," the judge told Amiot. "You didn't live up to it. I'm going to hold you



Matthew James Amiot

Amiot, who is homeless, pleaded guilty Sept. 24 to a felony count of starting a negligent fire resulting in more than \$2,500 in damage and a gross misdemeanor count of starting a negligent fire resulting in great bodily harm.

Having no place to stay and hoping to stay warm, he testified that he started a fire behind the synagogue on the morning of Sept. 9. He said he walked away when the flames grew out of control and spread to the 118-year-old building, causing more than \$350,000 in damage and wounding a firefighter.

Floerke granted a defense request to allow Amiot out on intensive pretrial release because the charges carry a presumptive probationary sentence and the defendant said he had a housing meeting scheduled for the next day. But the judge ordered him to spend every night at CHUM, unless he secured other housing.

Arrowhead Regional Corrections probation officer Dan Hoeschen reported last week that Amiot failed to check-in at CHUM on the night he was released, Sept. 25, and did not report to the probation office the next morning as directed.

Amiot said he did attempt to stay at CHUM, but arrived "a minute or two late" and wasn't allowed in, public defender John Lind said Friday. He did not offer a reason for the missed probation meeting the next morning.

Amiot shaved his head and beard in the days between his plea hearing and his arrest in Superior. He did not speak at Friday's hearing.

Sentencing is scheduled for Oct. 25.