



COUNTY OF FRESNO

Lisa A. Smittcamp  
District Attorney

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 17, 2016

### **PLEA DEAL REJECTED FOR JULIA HARPER IN ARSON CASE THAT INJURED FIREFIGHTER PETER DERN**

Today, February 17, 2016, a plea agreement was rejected in the arson case of Julia Harper, who is charged with an arson related residential fire that seriously injured Fresno Firefighter Peter Dern on March 29, 2015.

Ms. Harper has been charged with felony violations of Arson causing Great Bodily Injury and Arson of an Inhabited Structure, as well as a special allegation that a firefighter suffered great bodily injury as a result of the arson.

Ms. Harper faces a prison sentence of up to fourteen (14) years if convicted of the charges at trial.

Ms. Harper's case is currently scheduled for a Preliminary Hearing on February 29, 2016 in Department 34 of the Fresno County Superior Court. At the Preliminary Hearing, the prosecution must present sufficient evidence to convince a Judge that probable cause exists to believe that a crime has been committed, and that the defendant committed it.

The defendant is currently in custody at the Fresno County Jail.

The media may contact Administrative Legal Assistant Leslie Gillespie at (559) 600-4442 with any questions.

###