

ABC NEWS

'Adrenalin junkie' firefighter who deliberately lit Bedforddale blaze has sentence overturned

By Joanna Menagh

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A former volunteer firefighter who admitted starting a blaze in bushland that his brigade was deployed to extinguish, has had his jail term overturned by a Perth court.

Jourdan Dean Ashford was originally sentenced to 12 months' jail after pleading to starting a fire in the middle of the night in the southern Perth suburb of Bedforddale in August 2014.

At the time Ashford was a volunteer firefighter at the Bedforddale Bushfire Brigade.

The fire was put out in about 10 minutes after it had burnt about 10 square metres of bushland.

He told police he lit the fire because he was an adrenalin junkie and wanted to get an adrenalin rush.

Ashford also pleaded guilty to making two phone calls to triple-0 to report non-existent fires.

The sentencing judge decided an immediate jail term was appropriate because of the seriousness of the offences.

But in a judgement published today, the Court of Appeal ruled the jail term was manifestly excessive and instead imposed a suspended nine-month sentence.

The appeal court took into account what it called "unusual features" of Ashford's offending, and that the fire he started had caused "very little damage".

It also noted that Ashford was extremely remorseful and that he had taken "substantial positive steps" towards rehabilitating himself including undergoing regular psychological counselling.

Ashford was released on bail earlier this year pending the outcome of the appeal.

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PHOTO: Ashford was extremely remorseful, the judge says. (ABC News: Andrea Mayes)

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