



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, Jan. 23, 2020
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Lee County Man Sentenced to 100 Months for Methamphetamine Trafficking and Possession of Firearm by Felon

FRANKFORT, Ky. - A Beattyville, Kentucky, man, Howard Kirk Hall, 57, who previously pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, was sentenced to 100 months in federal prison on Thursday, by U.S. District Judge Gregory Van Tatenhove.

In his plea agreement, Hall admitted that on January 17, 2019, law enforcement officers responded to a “shots fired” call at his residence, where he exited the residence and told officers that he was shooting at others inside. Hall advised officers he had firearms in the home. After entering the residence, officers determined that no one else was inside the home, observed drugs and weapons in plain view, and obtained a search warrant. During the execution of the search warrant, officers discovered 352 grams of methamphetamine, 20 firearms, and a substantial amount of ammunition. Hall admitted that he knew he had been previously convicted of a felony offense and he was not allowed to possess a firearm.

Evidence from that search warrant led to a search of a second residence maintained by Hall. Officers obtained a second search warrant for this location and located a marijuana grow operation with plants in various growth stages and two pounds of processed marijuana ready for distribution.

Hall pled guilty in July 2019. Hall previously was convicted of cultivating/manufacturing marijuana in 1999 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky and received a sentence of 60 months. As part of his plea agreement, Hall agreed to forfeit his interest in the firearms and ammunition.

Under federal law, Hall must serve 85 percent of his/her prison sentence and will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for five years. Additionally, Hall will have to pay a \$2,500 fine.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky;
Tommy Estevan, Acting Special Agent in Charge, ATF Louisville Field Division; Dan Dodds,

Acting Special Agent in Charge, DEA Louisville Field Division; Commissioner Rodney Brewer, Kentucky State Police, jointly announced the sentence.

The investigation was conducted by Kentucky State Police, ATF, and DEA. The U.S. Attorney's Office was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Todd Bradbury.

This is another case prosecuted as part of the Department of Justice's "[Project Safe Neighborhoods](#)" Program (PSN), which is a nationwide, crime reduction strategy aimed at decreasing violent crime in communities. It involves a comprehensive approach to public safety — one that includes investigating and prosecuting crimes, along with prevention and reentry efforts. In the Eastern District of Kentucky, U.S. Attorney Robert Duncan Jr., coordinates PSN efforts in cooperation with various federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.

This case is also part of Project Guardian, the Department of Justice's signature initiative to reduce gun violence and enforce federal firearms laws. Initiated by the Attorney General in the fall of 2019, Project Guardian draws upon the Department's past successful programs to reduce gun violence; enhances coordination of federal, state, local, and tribal authorities in investigating and prosecuting gun crimes; improves information-sharing by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives when a prohibited individual attempts to purchase a firearm and is denied by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), to include taking appropriate actions when a prospective purchaser is denied by the NICS for mental health reasons; and ensures that federal resources are directed at the criminals posing the greatest threat to our communities. Click [here](#) for more information about Project Guardian.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

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