



CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Code: 60002258
Date Established: 10/2001
Last Reviewed: 08/2024
Last Revised: 08/2024
Last Title Change:
FLSA: non-exempt
Probation: 12 months

CRIMINALIST TRAINEE

DEFINITION

Under direct supervision, performs professional laboratory analysis of physical evidence in a general or specialized field of Criminalistics; performs crime/death scene investigation for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office Forensic Science Division; and performs related work as required.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a natural science, physical science, forensic science, or a closely related field which included natural or physical science coursework.

LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE

A valid driver's license is required at the time of appointment and must be maintained for continuous employment.

May require licenses and/or certification as required by specific assignment (see SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS).

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is the entry and training level in the Criminalist job class series and provides for progression to the next level in the series upon meeting the requirements of the class and recommendation of the appointing authority. Incumbents receive supervised training in laboratory examination and interpretation of physical evidence, perform basic assignments, author reports, and testify in court. It is distinguished from Criminalist I by the fact that incumbents perform a narrower range of duties under closer supervision.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

Exercises no supervision.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES *(The following is used as a partial description and is not restrictive as to duties required.)*

Operate equipment required for casework. Assist in routine maintenance and quality assurance checks of laboratory equipment and instrumentation.

Evaluate, with guidance, information received from investigating agencies to determine the appropriate test or calibration methods needed for the examination of evidence.

Receive training to perform detailed investigations in conjunction with law enforcement agencies regarding a wide variety of crimes, to include crime/death scene investigations. Work includes examinations for the presence of evidence such as: biological fluids (i.e., blood, etc.), hairs/fibers, control substance, latent prints, gunshot residue (GSR), shoe and tire impressions, firearms/weapons, clothing, etc., and maintain accurate documentation of observations and actions taken.

Perform basic forensic analysis, such as latent print, toxicology, firearm, controlled substances, DNA, etc., on submitted evidence following laboratory policies and procedures.

Prepare reagents, solutions, standards, and controls using laboratory procedures.

Routine cleaning and upkeep of laboratory rooms and equipment.

Assist with purchasing and stocking of laboratory supplies.

Operate specialized instrument software and computer applications.

Collect, receive, preserve, and handle physical evidence such as biological samples, impressions, firearms, clothing, controlled substances, etc. Implement evidence control, maintain chain of custody, and preserve the integrity of evidence while in the custody of the division.

Document and photograph crime scenes, victims, and arrestees if assigned to the Forensic Investigation Section.

Maintain accurate examination records for the analysis of evidence to support written reports. Document findings and conclusions in written reports.

Testify in court as an expert witness.

May assist with training for local and regional law enforcement agencies and members of the judicial system.

JOB RELATED AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS

Full Performance *(These may be acquired on the job and are needed to perform the work assigned.)*

Knowledge of:

Washoe County policies and procedures.

Department/division policies and procedures related to area of assignment.

State and federal laws related to evidence, forensic science, and expert witness testimony.

Standard methods for documenting, preserving, collecting, and handling evidence, to include chain of custody.

Proper scientific and laboratory techniques related to forensic science.

Instrumentation, equipment, and supplies used to analyze evidence.

Ability to:

Follow standard laboratory test or calibration methods and procedures.

Perform chemical, instrumental and microscopic analysis as required.

Present scientific findings in written reports and through court testimony.

Work under pressure, exercise good judgement, and make sound and timely decisions.

Work in a variety of environmental conditions, including hazardous weather and remote locations.

Work with hazardous chemicals and biological samples.

Work independently on assignments after completion of assignment specific training programs and complete assignments within a timely manner.

Maintain confidentiality of case information.

Entry Level *(Applicants will be screened for possession of these through written, oral, performance, or other evaluation methods.)*

Knowledge of:

Scientific principles and practices used in forensic science.

Standard sources of information and of current literature in the field of forensic science.

Specialized forensic science fields as required.

Ability to:

Evaluate work priorities, procedures, and processes to determine their effectiveness and efficiency.

Interpret and apply regulations, policies, and procedures.

Communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.

Exercise emotional control, especially under stressful circumstances.

Accurately observe, record, and recall information.

Establish, maintain, and foster effective and positive working relationships with all those contacted in the course of work.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS *(Essential duties require the following physical skills and work environment.)*

Ability to work in standard office and laboratory environments, as well as various indoor and outdoor off-site locations. Ability to stand on slippery, uneven or unsteady surfaces for an extended period of time. Ability to frequently stand, walk, stoop, crouch, squat and kneel.

Ability to use scientific and standard office equipment. Ability to work under conditions involving exposure to noise, electrical energy and chemicals.

Ability to lift and move objects or assist with deceased individuals weighing up to 50 lbs.

May be required to have visual acuity to distinguish basic colors and shades of colors.

Ability to tolerate/work under conditions involving exposure to inclement weather conditions, infectious diseases, insects/parasites (maggots, bed bugs, fleas, etc.), decomposed remains and other strong odors, noise, fumes, gases, smoke, dust, solvents and chemicals, and blood and airborne pathogens.

Ability to drive to counties throughout Northern and Central Nevada and Central California, including remote areas, which may require overnight stay.

Staff is required to participate in the Forensic Science Division's proficiency testing program and successfully complete annual proficiency tests.

Must be willing to travel outside of Washoe County to perform crime/death scene investigations including rural and desert environments.

Must be willing to accept shift work, on-call assignments, and a non-standard workweek.

Selected candidates must complete and submit a Personal History Statement and pass an extensive background investigation, submit a set of fingerprints, pass a pre-employment medical examination, including a drug screen and complete a Computerized Voice Stress Analysis (CVSA) examination.

If assigned to the Biology/DNA or Breath Alcohol Section, the following additional minimum requirements must be met:

Biology/DNA Section:

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a natural, physical or forensic science with twelve (12) semester hours of coursework as required by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) in:

- biochemistry
- genetics
- molecular biology
- statistics or population genetics

Breath Alcohol Section:

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a natural, physical or forensic science with twenty-four (24) semester hours in the study of chemistry, or eighteen (18) semester hours in the study of chemistry and one year of full-time laboratory experience analyzing alcohol in a forensic setting as required by NRS to be certified as a Forensic Analyst of Alcohol (FAA).

This class specification is used for classification, recruitment and examination purposes. It is not to be considered a substitute for work performance standards.