

LEAD FORENSIC SPECIALIST

Definition:

Under general supervision, coordinates, leads and participates in non-sworn crime scene investigation activities at a variety of crime scenes to include field, office and laboratory assignments; conducts physical crime scene investigations to identify, collect, preserve and process evidence and latent prints collected; and performs related work as required.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

The essential duties and responsibilities of the class include the following:

Assigns, coordinates and reviews the work of Crime Lab staff as assigned.

Trains staff and assists in determining job performance measures.

Completes time cards and performance evaluations of assigned personnel.

Represents the Police Department at a variety of meetings and performs Crime Lab liaison duties.

Oversees and monitors the Cal-ID computerized fingerprint operation.

Provides training to sworn personnel related to the collection and preservation of evidence.

Composes reports and correspondence, maintains comprehensive logs, files and statistical data and prepares detailed reports of crime scene and lab activity.

Responds to all major crime scenes and other crime scenes as needed and reviews and approves all crime scene reports, latent fingerprint reports and property forms.

Locates, identifies, collects, preserves and analyzes evidence discovered at crime scenes and traffic or other accidents.

Develops and lifts latent fingerprints and prepares and enters latent fingerprints into the Cal-ID computer system.

Operates a portable argon laser and a variety of photography equipment.

Photographs and diagrams crime scenes and photographs prisoners and others.

Performs various tests, involving but not limited to fingerprinting, hair combing and skin scraping, on witnesses, victims and suspects in custody.

Prepares evidence for courtroom presentation and testifies in court as an expert witness.

Inspects and is responsible for the condition and repair of all Crime Lab equipment.

Searches criminal records, court records and files.

Drives a vehicle on City business

Lifts and moves Crime Lab related equipment and files.

Assists in recommending changes to Crime Lab policy and procedures.

Assists in budget preparation and is responsible for the objectives and budgetary goals of the Crime Lab.

Other Duties and Responsibilities:

Prepares photographic solutions and other chemical solutions.

Performs other projects/tasks as assigned.

Assists in film processing and development and takes other departmental photographs as required.

Orders supplies.

Class Characteristics:

The Lead Forensic Specialist is a single-incumbent class and is distinguished from Forensic Specialist I/II by the Lead's coordination and leadership responsibilities, advanced technical knowledge and problem solving abilities.

Contacts and Relationships:

The Lead Forensic Specialist directs support staff as assigned and has contact with other Police Department staff, suspects in custody, victims and witnesses. Contact will also occur with persons in the court system, other City employees and the public.

Qualification Guidelines:

The knowledge and abilities which are required to perform the duties and responsibilities of this class are as follows:

Knowledge of:

English usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Supervisory techniques.

Recognition, collection and preservation of all types of evidence.

Laboratory and general safety procedures.

Photographic techniques needed to record or visualize physical evidence.

Video, digital and 35 mm camera operation.

Recent technology in identifying and collecting latent prints, firearms, tool marks, physical matches and imprinted evidence.

Criminal law relating to rules of evidence.

Fingerprint pattern recognition, classification and search processes.

Operation, use and care of laboratory equipment as related to the area assigned.

Basic darkroom procedures for processing color and black and white photographs, emulsion chemistry and the use of automatic film and paper color processors.

Computer applications as they relate to area assigned to include computer designed diagrams, the Computer Imaging Fingerprinting Program and the Cal-ID Fingerprint System.

Ability to:

Understand and carry out oral and written directions independently.

Communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Perform accurate mathematical calculations.

Make effective oral presentations.

Establish and maintain effective relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Apply operating policies, methods, rules and regulations.

Use good judgment and make sound decisions in accordance with established policies and procedures.

Qualify as an expert witness in a variety of disciplines as they relate to crime scene investigation.

Use equipment as assigned for the identification, collection, preservation and processing of physical evidence to include laser and light source equipment for latent fingerprint detection.

Apply or modify existing techniques to develop normal, contaminated or indented latent fingerprints.

Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive law enforcement related information.

Train, lead and evaluate staff as assigned.

Read and write at the level required for successful job performance.

Work in and around complex crime scenes to include homicides and remain calm in stressful situations.

A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities is as follows:

Education:

Associate of Arts Degree in police science or a related field from an accredited college with some coursework in photography and forensic science.

AND

Experience:

Four years of experience as a forensic specialist, crime scene investigator or identification technician with a police agency to include some lead experience.

Physical Tasks and Working Conditions Include the Following:

Work is performed in a laboratory environment, in an office and at crime scenes requiring both indoor and outdoor work. When work is performed outdoors, there is exposure to the elements. The incumbent performs evidence identification which may include exposure to chemicals, contact with blood and other body fluids/products. The incumbent drives a vehicle on City business, uses a computer and may sit or stand for long periods of time. The incumbent grasps, sits, stoops, crouches, crawls, stands, walks, bends, kneels, pulls, pushes, climbs stairs, ladders and inclines, twists and may lift and carry items weighing up to 50 pounds. The incumbent may participate in aerial photography assignments which requires being a passenger in a helicopter or light, fixed wing aircraft. The Lead Forensic Specialist must be able to meet the physical requirements of the class and have mobility, vision, hearing and dexterity levels appropriate to the duties to be performed.

Fair Labor Standards Act Designation: Non-exempt.

Revised January 2001 and Title Changed to Lead Forensic Specialist
Lead Crime Scene Investigator Revised September 1990