



CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Code: 2259
Date Est: 10/2001
Last Rev: 08/2017
Last Title Chg:
FLSA: non-exempt
Probation: 12 months

CRIMINALIST I

DEFINITION

Under supervision, performs a broad range of professional laboratory analysis of physical evidence in a general or specialized field of Criminalistics; interprets results of chemical and biological tests; 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, physical or forensic science or a closely related field AND one year of full-time experience in applying scientific techniques in a laboratory setting and/or major crime scene investigation; OR one year of experience equivalent to a Criminalist Trainee with Washoe County. A master's or higher level degree in one of the relevant fields may substitute for six months of the required experience.

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 second 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 appointment authority. It is distinguished from the Criminalist Trainee in that incumbents are expected to perform a wider range of professional laboratory analysis of physical evidence in a general or specialized field of Criminalistics under less supervision. It is distinguished from the Criminalist II by the fact that incumbents in the Criminalist I class are not performing full journey level assignments.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

Exercises no supervision.

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

Perform detailed investigations in conjunction with law enforcement agencies regarding a wide variety of crime/death scenes 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.

Photograph crime/death scenes, victims, autopsies and arrestees in accordance with prescribed procedures.

Collect and preserve evidence using clean collection techniques. Maintain the integrity and the chain of custody of all evidence from collection, logging into the computer system, and distribution to the appropriate law enforcement or judicial agency.

Attend autopsies to document, collect and preserve evidence involved in a death investigation. Complete measurements, rough sketches and computer aided diagrams of crime/death scenes that may be used for investigation and court purposes.

Assess information received from investigators to analyze physical evidence, determining the appropriate testing to be performed, and providing further feedback as required.

Examine and process items of evidence, both at crime/death scenes and in the laboratory, for the presence of latent prints. In accordance with prescribed processes, lift and preserve prints for use in comparisons/eliminations.

Evaluate developed latent prints and compare them to inked prints from known subjects. Fingerprint suspects and deceased subjects.

Perform standard and non-standard laboratory protocols in the areas of alcohol/toxicology, DNA, primary examination, CODIS, controlled substances, firearms/toolmarks, NIBIN, breath alcohol calibration, impression (shoe/tire), crime scene investigation, latent print processing, latent print comparison and ABIS using sophisticated instrumentation and laboratory techniques.

Operate and maintain sophisticated scientific instrumentation.

Write reports including evidence collected, tested, type of tests conducted and results of analysis for submission to the submitting agency and local prosecutors office.

Assist with preparing attorneys, investigators or other professionals for the presentation of observations and information obtained through the course of attending crime/death scenes, autopsies, latent print processing and analyses and findings, and provide expert witness testimony.

Maintain the automated Digital Image Management System (DIMS), all incoming photo images and digital archives for appropriate access by investigative staff.

Complete requests submitted to the Photo Lab from law enforcement agencies, the courts and private citizens.

Provide information to supervisor to assist with budget development and equipment and supplies purchasing, including the monitoring of laboratory supplies usage.

Provide POST certified training to Washoe County Sheriff's Office staff and requesting customer agencies in respect to crime scene investigation, evidence collection and preservation, photography, latent print processing and crime laboratory capabilities and other related matters.

Participate in the Divisions Quality Assurance program to ensure the laboratory work meets accreditation standards set by professional forensic science laboratory associations and accrediting bodies.

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 and Washoe County Sheriff's Office policies and procedures as they relate to duties performed as a Criminalist and civilian employee.

Rules of forensic evidence, evidence procedure, chain of custody and integrity of evidence.

Courtroom procedure, witness, and expert witness testimony, demeanor and appearance.

Quality assurance/quality control methods and principles.

Federal, state and local laws regarding collection and preservation of evidence for use in court and its legal admissibility (i.e., rules of evidence, search and seizure law, etc.).

Nevada legal system as it pertains to testifying in court as an expert witness.

Ability to:

Present accurate and detailed information in court.

Operate the Forensic Science Division's computer hardware and software.

Operate and maintain specialized equipment.

Operate emergency dispatch equipment including multi-channel radio system.

Maintain effective working relationships, good rapport and instill confidence in individuals contacted during the course of work including various law enforcement personnel and the general public.

Exercise sound judgment and make appropriate decisions under adverse circumstances and project consequences of actions.

Interact considerately with victims, suspects, witnesses, hospital staff and others involved in the crime/death scene investigation.

React quickly, calmly and appropriately in hostile and/or dangerous situations.

Witness catastrophic death scenes and autopsies.

Exercise emotional control, especially under stressful circumstances.

Accurately observe, record and recall information.

Provide training to user agencies as it relates to crime scene investigation support.

Analyze information, apply scientific principles and reach logical conclusions.

Perform comprehensive criminalistics laboratory testing and analysis of physical evidence.

Plan, develop and implement new testing methods and procedures.

Maintain confidential data and information.

Use a personal computer and a variety of software packages

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

Knowledge of:

Principles and methods of collecting, packaging, receiving and storing property and evidence.

Safe work methods and safety regulations pertaining to the work, including the handling of biological and hazardous materials and firearms.

Record keeping methods and procedures.

Principles and practices of analytical chemistry, including organic and inorganic.

Modern methods of classifying, indexing, filing and preserving laboratory records and evidence.

Forensic laboratory procedures, techniques, terminology, equipment and materials.

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

Ability to:

Perform complex chemical, instrumental and microscopic analysis and other complex examinations as required.

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

Analyze and present scientific information both orally and in writing, in a clear and concise manner.

Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

Maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work, including various law enforcement personnel, suspects, victims and the general public.

Exercise sound judgment and make appropriate decisions under adverse circumstances and project consequences of actions.

Witness catastrophic death scenes and autopsies.

Exercise emotional control, especially under stressful circumstances.

Accurately observe, record, and recall information.

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 deceased individuals weighing up to 100 lbs. 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.

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).

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.

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