

CRIME SCENE SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under supervision performs non-sworn police work and conducting crime scene investigations to identify, collect, analyze, record, process, and preserve physical evidence related to criminal investigations; assists investigators and provides technical support in the reconstruction and interpretation of crime scenes; performs other related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Incumbents of this class perform specific assignments in accordance with departmental policies and procedures. Initially, supervision and training are given in detail and as the incumbent becomes more capable, the incumbent will work with a higher degree of independence. Actual responsibilities may vary based on operational needs of the department. Work is performed in the field, including crime scenes and autopsies, and in the laboratory. Types of crimes include homicides, sexual assaults, shootings, stabbings, kidnapping, fatal collisions, and robberies.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

1. Identifies, collects, analyzes, records, processes, and preserves physical evidence from crime scenes, including biological evidence, latent fingerprints, tire prints, shoe prints, tool marks, and other physical evidence.
2. Manages evidence, ensuring appropriate documentation, proper packaging, and maintenance of proper chain of custody.
3. Takes photographs and video of crime scenes, major traffic accidents, and other police action scenes.
4. Attends autopsies to photograph injuries and fingerprint the deceased for identification purposes.
5. Assists investigators in reconstructing crime scene events, including bloodstain and shooting scenarios.
6. Processes latent fingerprints/imprints at crime scenes and in the laboratory; performs complex examinations of latent print and inked print impressions; testifies as an expert witness in latent print processing and identification.
7. Recovers impression evidence using a variety of casting materials.
8. Coordinates examination and presentation of specific evidence items by appropriate authorities.
9. Operates a variety of crime scene investigative equipment including, but not limited to, photographic equipment, laser/alternative light source equipment, laboratory equipment, and evidence collection devices.
10. Prepares scale diagrams and written reports on actions, observations, and conclusions at crime scenes and laboratory findings using modern computer software programs; performs video and image clarification tasks using computer software programs.
11. Prepares cases for court; provides professional testimony in court.
12. Maintains up-to-date knowledge of current methods, practices, systems, equipment and trends pertaining to crime scene investigation and evidence collection, including reading appropriate journals and literature and attending training as assigned.
13. Participates in a variety of Police Department activities, services, and functions.
14. Researches and prepares a variety of reports, statements and/or logs.
15. Establishes and maintains various records and complex record keeping systems, including specialized computer applications; inventories and maintains various supplies, materials and equipment.
16. May provide lead direction and training to assigned staff.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Education/Experience

Any combination equivalent to education and experience likely to provide the required knowledge and abilities. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Education: Possession of Associate's degree or certificate in forensic technology, science, police science, or a related field. Coursework in photography, criminalistics/forensic science, and natural science (biology, biochemistry or chemistry) is highly desirable.

Experience: Two years of responsible police department, law enforcement or medical technology experience.

Knowledge

Knowledge of organization and functions of a municipal law enforcement agency and a police forensics laboratory; modern methods, practices, and techniques of crime scene investigation, collection of evidence, latent fingerprinting, bloodstain patterns and trajectory determinations, and photography; laser and alternate light source use; applicable federal, state and local laws, codes and regulations; modern office practices and procedures; application of modern technology including designated operating programs and software; safe work practices and procedures; modern records maintenance practices and procedures; and safe work practices and procedures.

Ability

Ability to effectively coordinate, administer and perform non-sworn police work involved in and related to crime scene investigation functions; operate a variety of crime scene investigative; forensics laboratory, and photographic equipment; perform assigned work including clerical work and basic mathematical calculations with speed and accuracy; operate computer equipment, a variety of office equipment and specialized police department equipment including designated computer systems and software; read, interpret, apply and explain complex codes, regulations, and requirements including Penal code, Civil Code, and City and County ordinances and other laws governing crime scene investigation, public property, and handling and release of property and evidence; render accurate court testimony; maintain level of knowledge required for satisfactory job performance; use initiative and exercise independent judgment; set priorities, meet deadlines and make sound decisions; establish and maintain complex and sensitive records and recordkeeping systems; prepare reports; communicate effectively; act with resourcefulness, courtesy and initiative; establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, other agencies, and the public.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Keyboard Skill

Ability to perform computer data entry and routine typing with speed and accuracy.

Special Requirements

Willingness and/or ability to work rotating shifts, including nights, holidays and weekends; work irregular duty assignments; wear a uniform and safety equipment; work outside in inclement weather; work under undesirable and hazardous conditions which include decomposing bodies, strong odors, insects, hostility, emotionally charged situations, child and animal victims; conform to department grooming standards; successfully pass a background investigation; work alone; attend educational sessions as required; travel out of town for one day or more.

Physical and Mental Health

Candidates considered for appointment must pass a job related medical examination including a drug screening, have vision correctable to 20/30 and have normal color vision and hearing. Incumbents must demonstrate a state of physical and mental health consistent with the ability to perform assigned duties.

Other Requirements

Possession of a valid California Driver's License and satisfactory driving record as a condition of initial and continued employment.

Possession of or ability to obtain within one year of employment, a POST certified Basic Field Evidence Technician certificate.

Other Desirable Qualifications

Possession of a POST certified Advanced Field Evidence Technician certificate.

Possession of an International Association for Identification (IAI) Latent Print Examiner certificate or proof of proficiency testing, and acceptance as an expert witness in latent print examination.