

SENIOR FORENSIC SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Occupants of this classification are in the classified service. This non-sworn classification is responsible for leading the day-to-day activities within the Forensic unit. Responsibilities include coordinating and participating in the work activities associated with various tasks and procedures relating to crime scene investigation and the analysis and storing of physical evidence for investigative and law enforcement purposes.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Senior Forensic Specialist class is distinguished from the Forensic Specialist by the training and greater scope of duties and responsibilities. The Senior Forensic Specialist receives only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and is fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the Forensic unit. This level is fully qualified to work independent of supervision, even on the most complex cases. In addition, the Senior Forensic Specialist provides guidance and instruction to Forensic Specialists.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

This position reports to a Forensic Unit Supervisor or Police Lieutenant. Responsibilities include the direct supervision of Forensic Specialists.

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

The following tasks are essential for this position. Incumbents in this classification may not perform all of these tasks, or may perform similar related tasks not listed here.

1. Supervises and participates in the work activities associated with various tasks and procedures relating to crime scene investigation and the analysis and storing of physical evidence for investigative and law enforcement purposes.
2. Assists in enforcing City regulations and policies, and promoting work efficiency.
3. Trains, oversees, and evaluates the work performance of subordinate Forensic Specialists.
4. Assists supervisor and/or Lieutenant with the quality control of technical functions within the Forensic Unit and periodic audits.
5. Participates in the evaluation of the influx of new equipment, techniques and technological advances to determine viability for department.
6. Prepares comprehensive reports and/or proposals.
7. Assists supervisor with preparation of budget, maintains inventory, and purchases supplies.
8. Ensures compliance with and disseminates information regarding evidence policies, procedures and regulations as established by the Police Policies and Procedures Manual, Penal Code and applicable laws.

9. Reports the results of all analysis of fingerprints, photographs, and other evidence to the appropriate investigative personnel.
10. Testifies in court as an expert witness in the areas of evidence collection, fingerprint comparisons, and photography.
11. Reviews courtroom testimony, with special attention to appropriate technical responses and assists with implementing procedures that will ensure section expertise and viability.
12. Assists supervisor and/or Lieutenant with overseeing the classification of fingerprint data using the LAFIS (Los Angeles Automated Fingerprint Identification) System and other automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS). Organizes and facilitates the input and retrieval of latent fingerprints in the LAFIS and other AFIS's, for the City and other participating jurisdictions. Assist in the preparation of latent prints for LAFIS computer submission and determines and verifies any positive fingerprint identifications. Performs latent comparisons and other duties as fingerprint examiner.
13. Responds to crime scenes to collect and preserve evidence or provide technical assistance in these activities, this includes taking photographs, processing and lifting latent prints, and other processing procedures.
14. Performs analysis of evidence collected at crime scenes and performs subsequent chemical processes for the detection of trace evidence or latent prints, including laser application.
15. Operates and maintains computer graphic software, forensic databases and specialized digital imaging equipment.
16. Serves as a liaison between the Police Department and other law enforcement agencies as it relates to friction ridge identification, evidence recovery, analysis and training.
17. Performs related duties as required.

MINIMUM KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITY

Knowledge of:

- Principles of supervision and training techniques.
- Fingerprint analysis and identification systems.
- Various chemical processes used for latent print development including the administrative functions of the lab.
- Forensics photographic equipment and techniques.
- Operating computer graphics and/or digital imaging management systems pertaining to forensic applications.
- Crime and accident scene investigation principles and techniques.
- Legal methods of classifying, indexing, and preserving evidence.
- Applicable city, county, state, and federal statutes, rules ordinances, codes of regulations governing police property and evidence.

Skill and Ability to:

- Train subordinate personnel in identification and evidence techniques, methods and approaches.
- Collect, process and analyze evidence without contamination.
- Analyze, preserve, store and safely secure forensic evidence and property.
- Perform complex fingerprinting lifting and classification.
- Learn new law enforcement and identification methods, techniques and practices including preparing latent prints for AFIS submission.
- Communicate clearly and effectively through verbal and written expression.

- Present evidence and results of tests and analyses to other law enforcement personnel and in court.
- Comparison and identification of latent finger and palm prints.
- Effectively collect evidence using crime scene, close up, and laser photography.
- Write reports and maintain records.
- Read, comprehend and apply the Penal Code and all other applicable laws.

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATE

Possession of a valid California Class C driver license. Latent Print Examiner certification and Crime Scene Analyst certification from the International Association of Identification preferred, but not required.

TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Any combination equivalent to training and experience that could likely provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities would be qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities would be: a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in forensic science, criminal justice, biology, chemistry, or a related field and three (3) years experience in crime scene investigation, including one (1) year recent experience in the comparison and identification of latent print material and related matters.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

- Require vision (which may be corrected) to read small print and detect subtle shades of color, contrasts and spatial relationships.
- Require mobility of arms to reach and dexterity of hands to grasp and manipulate small objects.
- Require the ability to climb ladders that approximate six (6) feet in height.
- Require the ability to move his/her body by bending or stooping while keeping his/her balance.
- Require the ability to extensively crawl, reach and kneel.
- Perform lifting, pushing and/or pulling which continuously approximates 10 pounds, occasionally approximates 30 pounds, and may rarely weigh over 50 pounds.
- May be exposed to extreme noise, odors, chemicals, hazardous substances, blood, infectious diseases, blood borne pathogens and bodily fluids.
- May be in contact with complete and/or partial human corpses in various stages of decomposition.
- Is subject to office and outside environmental conditions.
- May be required to work in confined areas.
- May be required to work at a video display terminal for prolonged periods.
- May be required to work weekends, evenings, nights, holidays, and on an on-call basis.