



# **FIRE INVESTIGATOR**

## **DEFINITION**

Performs difficult and complex fire investigations in a sworn capacity for the determination of origin and cause of all fires following NFPA guidelines and other professionally recognized standards. Conducts scene investigations and follow-up investigations of fires. Conducts criminal investigations related to arson, interviews witnesses and suspects, and makes arrests.

## **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

The classification of Fire Investigator is the journey-level class in the State Fire Investigator series. General supervision is provided by a Police Sergeant or other assigned supervisor.

## **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS**

- ▶ Documentation of fire scenes, which includes scene investigation reports, follow-up investigative reports and forms, photographs, videos and sketches.
- ▶ Provides assistance and documentation to the fire agency having jurisdiction, which includes scene investigation reports, follow-up investigative reports, photographs, videos and sketches.
- ▶ Provides documentation and assistance to private fire investigators and insurance industry representatives regarding civil fire investigations.
- ▶ Collection of evidence, book and maintain a chain of custody for evidence, complete evidence booking forms, and DOJ forms.
- ▶ Provides all investigative documentation to the District Attorney's Office upon the completion of processing a fire scene, when applicable.
- ▶ When a criminal suspect has been arrested and is in custody, provide documentation and assistance to the District Attorney's Office regarding the criminal fire investigation, which includes all scene investigation reports, follow-up investigative reports, videos, photographs, sketches, evidence booking forms, and DOJ forms.
- ▶ Develop, implement, validate and maintain records management of investigation documentation and activities, which includes maintaining the documentation at the completion of processing fire scenes, follow-up investigations, documentation, providing investigation case files to the fire agencies having jurisdiction, and to the District Attorney's Office, when applicable.
- ▶ Maintain the documentation of the number, type and determination of all investigations.
- ▶ Documentation of the number of investigative hours, which includes processing a fire scene, follow-up investigations, report writing, case preparation and clerical assistance.
- ▶ On a monthly basis provide an electronic report to the Chief of Police, reporting the number, type, determination and status of all fire investigations by the 12<sup>th</sup> day of each month.
- ▶ Develop, implement and maintain a records retention policy based on the policies and procedures of the City and State.

- ▶ Provide clerical support for the fire investigation unit, which includes typing and filing reports, organizing sketches, videos and photographs, establishing case files, maintaining correspondence and providing investigative documentation to the fire agencies having jurisdiction and to the District Attorney's Office.
- ▶ Conduct follow-up investigation of fires determined to be accidental, undetermined or natural.
- ▶ Provide expert opinion and/or testimony in civil trials when a subpoena compels an expert opinion and/or testimony.
- ▶ Conduct follow-up investigation of incendiary fires and provide documentation to the fire agencies having jurisdiction.
- ▶ Provide expert testimony in criminal trials.
- ▶ Develop, implement and maintain case management of investigations, which includes designating a case manager to oversee all fire scenes to ensure that appropriate resource needs are determined and received and that follow-up investigative activities, which include search warrants, surveillance, risk assessments, and incident action plans are consistent.
- ▶ Develop, implement and provide effective training programs for the Fire Chief and his fire personnel to conduct preliminary fire investigations for initial origin and cause determination, following NFPA 921 standards.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Knowledge of:**

- Basic fire science investigation
- Fire suppression methods
- Hazardous materials
- Federal, State and City codes pertaining to arson investigation
- Basic criminal investigation
- Rules of search and seizure
- The collection and preservation of fire scene evidence
- Laws of arrest
- NIMS & SIMS

### **Ability to:**

- Gather, assemble, analyze, evaluate, and use facts and evidence
- Analyze situations and adopt effective courses of action
- Interpret and apply laws and regulations
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing
- Correctly use grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary, as it pertains to the English language
- Use interpersonal skills using tact, patience, and courtesy
- Observe, record, and recall accurately information, direction, or complaints given to or received from supervisors, citizens, or suspects, even after long periods of time
- Use and care of safety equipment and departmental equipment, including office and business machines, computers, vehicles and firearms
- Administer First Aid and CPR
- Work irregular hours

**Education/Experience:**

- Must be a high school graduate or possess a GED equivalent
- Must possess a valid California Drivers License
- Must possess, or obtain within 90 days of appointment, a current First Aid and CPR card
- Must have five (5) or more years of fire investigation experience
- Must possess and maintain a Peace Officers Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) Basic Certificate or higher
- Must maintain the certifications, qualifications and continued training for participating fire investigators as specified under NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921 standards; along with Fire Investigation 1A, Fire Investigation IB, Fire Investigation 2A and Fire Investigation 2B
- Must maintain the certifications, qualifications and continued training of participating Fire Investigators, as specified in Government Code 1031

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

Work in an emergency environment and work in intense life-threatening conditions; work in inclement weather conditions; exposure to dangerous persons, firearms, bodily fluids and noise; running, walking, crawling, climbing, stooping, lifting and sitting for long periods of time. Work in burning or burned buildings, under hazardous conditions and extreme temperatures.

**PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Be free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition which might impact the exercise of the powers of a peace officer, or adversely affect the ability to perform essential job functions of a peace officer. Physical condition shall be evaluated by a licensed physician and the emotional and mental condition shall be evaluated by a licensed psychologist. The medical examination which includes the psychological examination will only be given after all other testing for the position has been successfully completed and a conditional offer of employment has been given to the applicant.