

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND  
CLASS SPECIFICATION**

**Code No. 003521  
Grade 20**

**FORENSICS SPECIALIST I**

**DEFINITION OF CLASS:**

This is professional work applying forensic science (1) in the detection, collection, handling, testing, and preservation of crime scene physical evidence and latent prints or (2) providing laboratory support as a specialist in case preparation for evidence that has been collected. Items are examined and analyzed through the employment of standardized and accepted testing methods and procedures for the purpose of identifying all possible relationships that may exist between persons, the items, and other recovered trace evidence; and how those items relate to a targeted sequence of events or persons. The majority of contacts for an employee in this class are with Montgomery County Police Officers, both at and away from crime scenes; and police officers and representatives of other law enforcement and regulatory agencies, and the courts. The purpose of these contacts is to provide, receive and discuss information concerning evidence collected at crime scenes; to provide classroom instruction to Police Officer Candidates; make presentations to students in schools, to citizen groups, and to volunteers; and to provide expert testimony in court. Performance of the work of the class involves limited public service and assistance to the public.

An employee in this class is responsible for reporting to crime scenes for the purpose of detecting, collecting and preserving evidence, and photographing the scene and the collected evidence. The employee reviews the crime scene; gathers information from witnesses, when available, which may provide insight into the sequence and location of events and possible evidence; determines what evidence there may be, and then begins to detect, collect and preserve it. Responsibilities include determining the best methods and procedures to detect, to collect, and to preserve the evidence, performing chemical and other tests, preparing detailed crime scene diagrams, and testifying in courts of law about collected evidence. While a Police Officer provides crime scene security from the crime scene perimeter outward, it is the Forensics Specialist who is generally responsible for actual crime scene management. The employee frequently performs the work of the class unsupervised, and has significant control over how the work is performed. Completed work is evaluated for technical soundness, and conformity with Department policy and standard operating procedures. Guidelines and procedures for performing the work have been established and are available. The employee uses judgment in selecting and applying the appropriate guidelines. It is important to note that these guidelines and procedures must be rigorously adhered to in order that evidence to be considered by the court to have been obtained in accordance with acceptable standards. The complexity of this class of work is derived from the variety of processes which are employed; and which are occasionally carried out in adverse weather conditions which compound the difficulties associated with evidence detection, collection and preservation. It is significant that normally there is only one opportunity to detect and collect evidence at each crime scene. Work must also be performed quickly and efficiently in order to prevent the loss of perishable evidence and to "release" the crime scene as quickly as possible to proper authorities. The impact of properly performed work is significant, for the evidence detected, collected,

tested, and secured as part of a continuous chain of custody, is often a key factor in a successful criminal prosecution. Working conditions are frequently unpleasant, as employees often work outside in all weather conditions, and must work with bodies which have been either brutalized or are decomposed. The employee takes photographs of and prepares records of stab and bullet wounds and other injuries, takes skin peeling and body fluid samples, and takes deceased body temperatures at the crime scene. The hazards of this class of work are significant, both at and away from crime scenes, and involve working with dangerous chemicals and substances as well as exposing employees to infectious diseases and unknown crime scene hazards. Employees regularly use face masks, protective clothing, plastic gloves and bags when collecting such evidence as blood, needles, semen, urine, etc. The work is physically demanding, for it often requires employees to work for several hours or more in kneeling, bending, standing and crouching positions, and to occasionally climb ladders. Employees work rotating shifts around the clock, and are subject to unscheduled work call back.

#### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES: (Illustrative Only)**

- Conducts crime scene investigations, determines the existence and type of evidence present, and how evidence relates to a sequence of events or involved persons; determines the best method for capturing and preserving the evidence, and either conducts field tests (e.g., various latent enhancing powders and liquids, cyanoacrylate fuming, and the use of alternate light source equipment to determine whether a stain is blood or some other body fluid, or in a search for same) or brings evidence to the laboratory for conclusive testing by Forensic Scientists for later referral in suspect identification and/or courtroom proceedings.
- Enhances latent fingerprints through various accepted procedures including, but not limited to dusting, lifting, photographing, and utilization of computer software programs. Documents all enhancement procedures completely, and works closely with Latent Print Examiners in the identification and tracking of latent print evidence.
- Maintains the chain of custody.
- Photographs crime scenes and fatal/serious personal injury accidents, wounds on victims and bodies of the deceased, latent prints and physical evidence collected.
- Photographs tire tracks and foot/shoe prints to scale before lifting by preparing silicone rubber or plaster casts.
- Prepares and maintains detailed notes/reports describing forensic procedures performed, measures and diagrams crime scenes, and completes and submits accepted Departmental forms and logs.
- Operates film processing and printing equipment, prints photographs taken with digital camera equipment, and transmits photographs to appropriate criminal justice, legal and court representatives.
- Exchanges information with law enforcement personnel regarding evidence collected at crime scenes, provides classroom instruction to Police Officer Candidates, and provides guidance and assistance at crime scenes to law enforcement staff from other jurisdictions.
- Testifies in courts of law as to the procedures used to detect, collect, analyze and maintain security of crime scene evidence.
- Performs related duties as required.

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

- Knowledge of the various types of evidence found at crime scenes, and skill in detecting, collecting, and preserving it.
- Knowledge of County, State and Federal laws, court decisions, and Departmental Directives affecting the collection, preservation, testing and storage of evidence.

- Knowledge of and skill in utilizing and applying the principles, tools, materials, techniques and procedures of forensic science to detect and obtain physical evidence.
- Knowledge of and skill in applying crime scene measurement techniques, and in sketching/reproducing crime scenes using drafting tools and computer applications.
- Knowledge of the fingerprint and its identification characteristics, and the techniques involved in fingerprint field enhancement and lifting, as well as laboratory enhancement.
- Knowledge of the principles involved in foot/shoe and tire print impressions and their field application.
- Knowledge of forensic photography and its methodology in capturing images of victims or evidence.
- Knowledge of and skill in using single lens reflex and digital photographic equipment to accomplish photographic assignments.
- Knowledge of courtroom procedures regarding testimony, scheduling, and attorney conferencing.
- Knowledge of the value of laser trajectory, and the procedures involved in utilizing this equipment.
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in discussing evidence and its collection, testing, and secure storage with Police Officers conducting investigations, in providing classroom instruction, in testifying in court, and in the preparation of records and reports.
- Ability to lift and carry equipment weighing up to fifty (50) pounds.
- Ability to perform work requiring kneeling, bending, standing and crouching for extended periods of time.
- Ability to conduct business, to attend meetings, or to perform other assignments at locations outside the office.

#### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Experience:** One (1) year of full-time experience involving the detection, collection, testing/analysis, and maintenance of the chain of custody and either security of crime scene physical evidence and latent prints or experience in laboratory support.

**Education:** Possession of a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, Criminology, Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, or a related field from an accredited college or university.

**Equivalency:** An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted.

#### **LICENSE:**

- Possession and maintenance at all times of a valid Class "C" (or equivalent) driver's license from the applicant's state of residence.

#### **PROBATIONARY PERIOD:**

Employees appointed or promoted to this class will be required to serve a probationary period of six (6) months, during which time performance will be carefully evaluated. Continuation in this class will be contingent upon successful completion of the probationary period.

**MEDICAL EXAM PROTOCOL:** Core II Exam with Urine Drug Screen.

**Class Established:** February, 1990

**Revised:** August, 2002 (M)

August, 2012

August, 2013

**Revised:** Medical Protocol per OMS Review: July, 2022

**Formerly Titled:** “Evidence Technician I”