

CENTRAL EVIDENCE SPECIALIST
CS-301-09

INTRODUCTION

This position is located in the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS). The mission of the DFS is to provide high-quality, timely, accurate, and reliable forensic science services using best practices and best available technology, focusing on unbiased science and transparency, to enhance public safety and health.

The position serves in the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS), Central Evidence Unit which is responsible for accepting, preserving, and returning physical evidence and test samples submitted to the DFS. In addition the Unit is responsible for laboratory distribution of evidence for the purpose of forensic testing. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, biological evidence, latent fingerprints, tire and shoe impressions, drugs, firearms and toolmark impressions.

MAJOR DUTIES

Performs the full range of functions that relate to the receipt, storage, preservation and distribution of evidence for the Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS), Central Evidence Unit (CEU) as well as the recording and management of case information.

Provides authoritative direction regarding evidence handling matters and provides extensive knowledge and direction to internal and external DFS stakeholders regarding the proper handling of evidence.

Receives and administers submitted/returned evidence from internal and external DFS stakeholders, initiates chain-of-custody, enters all required information into the DFS case management systems and/or systems databases for case related information.

Serves on a team of evidence technicians, laboratory personnel and other members of the DFS to perform all administrative functions associated with the centralized management of cases.

Performs evidence inventories, prepares necessary forms, notes and documentation packages for administrative and legal purposes. Directs and assists as needed when acquiring necessary files from the agency file storage areas to resolve discrepancies and to complete assignments.

Administers evidence from Evidence Technicians and other assigned personnel to ensure proper and complete disposition of items such as weapons; drugs, money and other valuables.

Cross-checks property and evidence records with packaged evidence and verifies information through comparison with actual evidence. Documents evidence transfers in appropriate property and evidence management systems.

Performs evidence transfers to DFS laboratory units as well as external public and private forensic laboratories. Also transfers evidence to detectives, attorneys and others as required.

Receives results of laboratory analyses, distributes copies to designated personnel and files

original reports in appropriate DFS files. Performs audits and necessary updates for case management systems.

Monitors and assists with necessary maintenance for evidence storage and packaging areas, including monitoring of refrigerators and freezers and other equipment to ensure proper functioning.

Responds to requests for files, reports, photos and other information from internal and external DFS stakeholders.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Extensive knowledge of the rules, regulations, laws, and standard practices regarding the administration and maintenance aspects of various types of evidence, e.g. weapons, drugs, jewelry, valuables, money, bio-hazards including blood and body fluids, computers and documentary exhibits, in order to ensure full compliance with current requirements which govern evidence operations including security and chain of custody.

Skilled in the knowledge of handling, storage, wrapping, packaging, and shipping of different types of evidence including all types of hazardous materials.

Skilled in the collection, documentation and packaging of evidence collected from crime scenes.

Skilled in the content and use of automated electronic documentation and tracking equipment and the skill to perform the related data searching and analysis to ensure the proper entry and use of evidence information.

Ability to testify effectively in court as a witness in legal proceedings; e.g., skilled in courtroom procedures in order to offer proper testimony concerning the integrity of the evidence while in the possession of the incumbent.

Thorough and detailed knowledge of safety procedures to ensure that the handling of narcotics, hazardous materials and bodily fluids is accomplished in a manner that is safe and will preserve the evidentiary value of the materials.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Works under general supervision from the supervisor who defines objectives, priorities and deadlines and assists the incumbent with unusual situations that do not have clear precedents. Independently carries out assignments, resolving problems or unusual situations on own initiative in accordance with experience, instructions, regulations and training. Exercises knowledge and judgment in determining which method and techniques are to be used and issues that appear controversial are brought to the attention of the supervisor.

Completed assignments are usually evaluated for technical soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to protocol and experience in fulfilling requirements.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines include DFS policies and procedures, ISO 17025 and Accreditation Provider supplemental requirements; and adheres to strict confidentiality of the work and its information. Must be able to discern from a multitude of regulations which specific guidelines applies and ensures proper legal procedures to be followed varies with the type of evidence received.

Judgment requires evaluating unusual circumstances and modifying existing procedures or recommending new procedures to accommodate same.

COMPLEXITY

Work involves performing the full range of duties associated with the handling, storage and distribution of all types of evidence, such as security material with complicated characteristics, contaminated material, explosives (rendered safe), narcotics, firearms, jewelry, currency and other valuables. The appropriate legal procedures to be followed varies with the type of evidence received and must be determined from a variety of alternatives. Incumbent must be able to identify unusual circumstances and seek guidance to modify existing procedures or to recommend new procedures to accommodate same. Failure to fully comply with the rules for evidence handling, safety measures and other legal procedures could result in the compromise of the integrity of evidence, result in the examination results being negated and not eligible for legal proceeding or create significant security and safety failures.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

The purpose of the work is to ensure the integrity and security of all evidence received within the DFS and to provide an accurate account of the handling and distribution of same. The integrity of the evidence must be maintained at all times and full and complete documentation of all activities are essential to ensure no discrepancies arise through the legal proceedings. Must ensure compliance with all safety precautions that could affect the entire agency as the initial receipt of evidence and opening packages can result in dangerous situations and proper training and reaction is essential.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts include personnel throughout the Department of Forensic Sciences, Metropolitan Police Department, the United States Attorney's Office, other criminal justice agencies within the District of Columbia, external forensic laboratories, the DC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and other individuals and agencies involved with evidence handling responsibilities. Outside contacts include contractors involved in delivering and shipping evidence.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

Contacts are for the purpose of receiving, planning, coordinating and advising of work efforts and resolving problems regarding the handling of evidence, maintaining the integrity and chain-

of-custody of evidence, and influence others in proper handling of evidence and to furnish evidence to individuals authorized to receive the evidence.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Work requires considerable walking, standing, stooping, reaching and the lifting of packages and/or objects occasionally weighing in excess of 50 pounds. Work also requires the handling of items that have the potential to be explosive, contaminated and possibly life threatening.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work is performed in an office environment, in a laboratory setting or in a warehouse/storage facility. As the first entry of evidence into the DFS, the incumbent must handle many potentially dangerous materials. This type of evidence requires the incumbent to take safety precautions, including the wearing of protective equipment such as safety glasses, gloves, masks, etc.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

GED or high school equivalent with six (6) years of experience; or a four (4) year course or bachelor's degree and two (2) years of specialized experience or two (2) full years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to such a degree with one (1) year equivalent at the CS-07 grade level.

The work is subject to rotating shift, split shift, weekends, and holidays.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

This position's duty station will be housed within the Consolidated Forensic Laboratory (CFL) which is a protection-sensitive facility. As such, incumbents of this position shall be subject to criminal background checks, background investigations, and mandatory drug and alcohol testing, as applicable. Due to the handling of primary evidence, the applicant will be required to submit a buccal swab for the purposes of the DNA Quality Control database for the DFS.

The nature of the DFS mission necessarily involves the potential risks associated with biological or chemical hazards, including morgue functions. Although contact with these functions is intended to be minimal, the risks are nevertheless possible; training to recognize, address, and mitigate these risks is required as is dealing with potentially personally difficult topics, such as crime, death, and disease.