

Forensic Science Technician (Casework Liaison)

CS-0401-09

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 is responsible for coordinating and consolidating all of the necessary information (e-mails, phone calls, paperwork submissions, etc.) related to the testing requests for physical evidence submitted to the DFS Forensic Biology Unit. The Liaison position will also be responsible for receiving and transporting the necessary physical evidence from the DFS Central Evidence Unit intake room and coordinating the exchange of the evidence to the Forensic Biology Unit. The position requires knowledge of basic evidence management techniques along with basic knowledge of the various Forensic Science Laboratory testing methods, and DFS evidence submission and testing request policies, procedures and protocols.

MAJOR DUTIES

Receives and reviews requests for analysis from DFS stakeholders for Forensic Biology Unit cases.

Transfers physical evidence submitted to the DFS from the Central Evidence Unit to the Forensic Biology Unit to prevent contamination; properly maintains and documents chain-of-custody.

Supports the coordination of evidence transfers to the caseworking units of the laboratory.

Communicates with internal and external stakeholders regarding Forensic Biology Unit cases.

Maintains Forensic Biology Unit case spreadsheets and case management logs.

Plans and carries out procedural and technical processes as required, seeks assistance as needed, and independently coordinates work efforts with others when necessary. Exercises initiative while developing solutions to common technical and procedural problems such as changes in priorities

Keeps abreast of current industry, scientific, and regulatory developments and issues; communicates strategies to accommodate change; and prepares clear, concise, technically competent, regulatory compliant reports and presentations.

Operates specialized software on multiple computer platforms.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Knowledge of quality assurance procedures and accreditation standards; proper procedures and standard laboratory rules and safety precautions regarding chemicals, toxins and biohazards and evidence collection and preservation procedures.

Knowledge of the rules of evidence and the methods used in presenting evidence in court; and policies and procedures for maintaining evidence chain-of-custody integrity.

Ability to prepare technical forms, and other correspondence; and excellent oral and written communication skills.

Ability to maintain effective working relationships with associates, consultants, regulatory agencies, and the general public; and ability to work safely without presenting a threat to self or others.

Ability to recognize and work with chemicals and biohazards in a safe manner; understands the variety of scientific tests and analyses utilized in the laboratory.

Skill and ability to apply various software applications; and skill and ability to use a personal computer to prepare, store, and retrieve data and knowledge of software affiliated with the assignment.

Ability to testify effectively in court.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Works under the supervision of the Lead Forensic Scientist (DNA). The supervisor discusses timeframes and the scope and nature of the assignment including the possible stages. The incumbent plans and carries out assignments and keeps supervisor informed of progress on assignments.

Completed assignments are reviewed for conformance to guidelines, feasibility, soundness of overall approach and the effectiveness of meeting objectives, deadlines, and expected results and adherence to requirements.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines consist of policies and procedures of DFS; governing laws and regulations of the District and Federal Government; methods, processes, techniques, procedures, protocols, testing regulations, previous/precedent cases, technical references, forensic techniques and literature, catalogs and handbooks, internal protocol and instructions, etc. These guides are normally applicable, but may require the incumbent to exercise judgment when applying them to specific work situations/cases that may not be covered.

COMPLEXITY

Based on work experience or training the work requires the incumbent to perform various technical duties which involve different and sometimes unrelated processes and methods that are also associated with quality assurance and quality control. May be required to switch frequently from one type of responsible technical assignment to other types which may be substantially different in terms of equipment, techniques, and methods used, specific data produced, and/or uses to which the data will

be put; or ongoing or long term responsibility and/or independently executes or assists with defining portions of more comprehensive long range projects/assignments. The incumbent is given responsibility to execute the work or is expected to utilize/exercise discretion in selecting the most advantageous methods to accomplish the work.

Judgment is required in applying a wide range of conventional, established approaches, methods, techniques and solutions to new situations. Identifies and recommends resolution of discrepancies in data based; adjusts work methods to accommodate unusual conditions; and/or recommends or determines what data to use, record or report.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

Conducts required case-management processes and assists team members when required. Ensures that all documentation is in the appropriate order for court cases and/or final discovery.

The work is limited to administrative aspects of laboratory casework only (case triage, schedule of analysis, Chain of Custody of evidence, maintenance of communication logs, etc.). There will be no analytical laboratory work associated with this position.

The results of the work affects the department's credibility, adequacy, accuracy and effectiveness in the field investigations, laboratory tests, and ensures its relevancy to the case to assist with closure. The results are also binding and affect the judicial proceedings.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts are with agency officials and employees, laboratory personnel, DFS stakeholders, consultants, attorneys, regulatory agencies, the general public, law enforcement, other scientists, and investigators.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTS:

Purpose of contacts is for exchanging, coordinating or resolving operational problems. Persons contacted are usually working toward a common goal and generally are reasonably cooperative. At this level, some technicians may be required to deliver information, such as how data was obtained and their opinion as to the accuracy of the data.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Work is sedentary, however, some work requires periods of walking, standing, bending, climbing, or driving a motor vehicle. Also, some work requires sufficient personal agility to collect and process evidence in a variety of environments (laboratory, evidence storage facility, etc.). Occasionally carry items weighing up to 50 pounds, such as bags and/or boxes of evidence, small instruments or samples, and other similar materials. Incumbent must possess sufficient manual dexterity to manipulate and operate laboratory equipment; must be able to visually distinguish color, shape, size, number and picture resolution quality; must be able to withstand exposure to disagreeable elements such as malodorous and/or decomposing samples, blood, bodily fluids, etc.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The work environment includes office setting, laboratory conditions, training facilities, and courtrooms. The incumbent may be exposed to hazardous materials, toxic substances, and blood borne pathogens and is required to follow safe laboratory practices and wear protective clothing, including facial masks, safety glasses, gloves, etc.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTORS:

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 technician's presence in forensic casework laboratories, 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.

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

A Bachelor of Science degree in a natural or forensic science from an accredited university; graduate of programs accredited by the Forensic Science Educational Program Accreditation Commission (FEPAC; www.aafps.org/fepac); preferred; at least two (2) years of professional experience working within a forensic laboratory, police agency, evidence warehouse, or legal setting is preferred.

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

None

FLSA Status: Non-exempt

Standards: US OPM Job Family Standard for Professional Work in the Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences, GS-0400, September 2005

Certification Date: 17 April 2015

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Smart Code: Not yet available