

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES
CLASS SPECIFICATION

ARSON INVESTIGATOR I

POSITION CODE: 01481
Effective: 12-20-01

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF WORK:

Under general supervision, investigates incendiary/suspicious fire losses with the purpose of bringing criminal charges against any perpetrator of the crime of arson; investigates fires to determine the cause and origin; utilizes standard and specialized law enforcement techniques in making arson arrests and providing documentary evidence for prosecutable action; provides advice and direct assistance to local, other state and federal law enforcement agencies upon request; may provide on-the-job training to lower-level staff.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK:

1. Discusses with the fire department personnel or local representative as to why the fire is being regarded as suspicious; conducts a thorough search and investigation of the fire scene to determine the cause and origin of the fire.
2. Examines the exterior of the building(s) for signs of forcible entry; locates and questions witnesses/possible witnesses as to any unfamiliar faces, unidentified cars or unusual noises, e.g., explosions and alarms, prior to the fire; confers with fire fighters and questions them as to whether there was a single fire when they arrived, if doors were easily accessible, the color of the fire and if there was an identifiable odor.
3. Tours the interior of the burned building to ascertain the means of access and egress, patterns of fire spread, ventilation and the area of heaviest flame concentration; locates the main electric panels and gas meters; checks for ways in which the fighting of the fire may have been impeded, e.g. fire equipment disconnected.
4. Takes photographs of structural remains, debris and those watching the fire; sketches the room where the fire origin is identified; attempts to reconstruct the room, e.g., proper placement of furniture before the fire.
5. Searches for igniters, e.g., phosphorous, and accelerants, e.g., kerosene and gasoline; checks for multiple fire seats, holes drilled through walls or floors, and gas lines disconnected; searches for electrical, mechanical or chemical fire-setting devices used to ensure delayed ignition; notes the feasibility of the fire being set with materials on the scene, e.g., rags and newspapers.

ARSON INVESTIGATOR I (Continued)

6. Determines how the arson was committed, materials used, intent and motive, and who is responsible; looks for trends in arson cases, e.g., time of day, day of week, devices used, and area of fire origin to determine if one arsonist or an organized fire setting group, e.g., ring, is responsible.
7. Independently, or in conjunction with local law enforcement officials, serves arrest and search warrants, conducts searches of premises and persons, and interviews suspects and witnesses as prescribed by law; assists in the interrogation of suspects.
8. Prepares and obtains statements, exhibits, reports and other pertinent information of an evidential nature for use in formal adjudication of cases in a court of law as provided by statute; testifies in courts of law regarding evidence through official investigation.
9. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonably within the scope of the duties enumerated above.

DESIRABLE REQUIREMENTS:

Education and Experience

Requires knowledge, skill and mental development equivalent to the completion of four years of college with coursework in fire science, chemistry, law and/or criminology.

Requires successful completion of training as an Arson Investigator Trainee.

OR

Requires two years of professional law enforcement investigative experience and/or professional fire investigative experience, and requires evidence of successful completion of an approved course of arson investigation and an approved law enforcement course for arson investigators which includes firearms training.

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities

Requires working knowledge of state statutes which define criminal activities relative to arson crimes.

Requires working knowledge of the methods used in the interrogation of witnesses and suspects, and any collection and presentation of physical evidence.

Requires working knowledge of the functions and interrelationships of federal, state, county and municipal law enforcement and fire service agencies.

Requires working knowledge of the principles of ignition and combustion, including fire growth and its relation to fuels, ventilation and fire loading.

Requires working knowledge of fire-fighting operations and how they can influence burning and ultimately the burn pattern, debris and residue.

Requires proficiency in the use of firearms.

ARSON INVESTIGATOR I (Continued)

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities (continued)

Requires ability to plan, organize and conduct investigations, and adapt investigative methods, techniques and procedures to specific situations.

Requires ability to determine the circumstances relative to the cause of the fire.

Requires ability to be adaptable, unbiased, personable and a good listener in the interviewing and interrogating of witnesses and suspects.

Requires ability to recognize, develop and present evidence that reconstructs events, sequences and time elements.

Requires ability to present findings in clear, logical, impartial and properly documented reports.

Requires ability to anticipate and respond appropriately to violent actions.

Requires ability to conduct arson investigations: search the fire scene for clues, interview witnesses, follow leads, locate suspects, analyze and evaluate evidence, and make arrests.

Requires ability to properly use and maintain various types of tools and equipment, including two-way radio, camera, wrecking bar, shovel, fire ax, meter for detecting gas leaks, steel measuring tape, electrical tester and tape recorder.

Requires ability to travel, often keeping irregular hours in the course of investigation activities.

Individuals performing this type of work should be in good physical condition. The nature of the work may expose employees to external factors such as dense smoke, toxic gases and occasional inclement weather, along with the physical demands of lifting and moving debris in fire damaged buildings.

Some positions in this class may require an appropriate valid driver's license and/or an ability to travel.