UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

Position Description

TITLE: Criminalist II

DIVISION: Academic Affairs (Crime Laboratory)

REPORTS TO: Director/Professor; Criminalist III

GRADE: 11

SUPERVISES: Professional, technical and clerical staff

BASIC FUNCTION:

Using instrumental, physical and/or chemical techniques, examine a large variety of firearms, tool marks and other physical evidence submitted to the Crime Laboratory by municipal, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Interprets results of analyses, prepares written reports and provides expert testimony in court.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervises the following: uniformed and non-uniformed law enforcement officers in the proper collection and packaging of firearms and tool mark evidence; graduate and undergraduate students working the Crime Laboratory; secretarial staff in the preparation of reports pertinent to the firearms section of the Laboratory.

Receives physical evidence; reviews background materials submitted with evidence and pertinent agency regulations and other relevant material.

Studies the type of evidence received, time available for analysis, circumstances surrounding the crime, the requirements established by laboratory, by police policy and general law, and determines the general approach necessary for effective examination of the physical evidence.

Researches established methodologies and relevant literature to determine applicable methods to be used. Provides and/or seeks advice concerning methodology problems in the specialty area to/from examiners in other state, local or federal law enforcement agencies.
Performs complex examinations of firearms and tool mark evidence utilizing bullet recovery systems, comparison microscopes, scales, calipers, cameras and other lab equipment. (Such examinations shall include examination and test firing of all types of firearms, comparison of fired bullets and cartridge cases, trigger pull analysis, serial number restoration, tool mark identification and fracture match identifications.)

Interprets and evaluates examination results to determine their validity, scientific significance, and the evidentiary value that will provide the most information possible.

Maintains instrumentation and equipment used for the analysis of evidence; determines analytical equipment needs for the Laboratory; evaluates new instrumentation and changes in existing instrumentation; recommends repair or purchase of new instruments and/or equipment.

Prepares written reports stating the results of examinations; testifies, when required, as an expert in the area of firearm and tool mark analysis.

OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Participates in crime scene processing when requested; works with law enforcement and Laboratory personnel with regard to evidence procedures.

Communicates the importance of the examinations performed to law enforcement and Laboratory personnel, as well as to other interested individuals or groups.

Trains and supervises interns and other Laboratory personnel regarding analytical techniques used for the examination of evidence in the specialty area.

As requested, prepares and presents lectures and/or Laboratory tours demonstrating the functions of the Lab.

Maintains routine records pertaining to the firearms section of the Laboratory; prepares periodic statistics on firearms, tool mark and related casework.

LICENSES, TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT:

Must have a valid Rhode Island State Pistol Permit and be a member of an appropriate professional organization (e.g., AFTE).
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

This position is subject to inside and outside work; extreme cold and hot temperatures can be encountered. The potential exists where noise and vibrations may be encountered, and the wearing of protective ear and eye wear may be required. May be exposed to organic and inorganic chemicals related to the cleaning and operating of firearms and the restoration of metallic surfaces and low-level radioactive material. May come in contact with biological fluids and associated biological pathogens, such as hepatitis B and HIV viruses.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Bachelor's degree plus a minimum of five years of professional experience in a forensic science laboratory or an associate's degree with ten years of professional experience in a forensic science laboratory as a firearms and tool mark examiner required. Thorough knowledge of the following is required: the makes, models and characteristics of domestic and foreign firearms and ammunition, including the operation and handling of the material; the principles and practices of firearms and ammunition identification and comparison; the equipment used to test and identify firearms and ammunition. Considerable knowledge of federal, state and municipal laws governing rules of evidence, and courtroom procedures required. Must be capable of being court-qualified as a firearms and tool mark examiner in Rhode Island's court system. This position requires that the incumbent possess the ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, and be able to organize, coordinate and supervise support staff. Must be able to prepare and present detailed studies and reports, including recommendations concerning the substance of the studies and reports. Must be able to prepare and deliver oral presentations before small, medium and large groups of people.

ALL REQUIREMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE MODIFICATION TO REASONABLY ACCOMMODATE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.