

FIRE INVESTIGATOR

JOB DESCRIPTION

Classification Responsibilities: A Fire Investigator performs skilled, technical, professional work in conducting on-scene fire investigations, and responds to emergency alarms involving all types of fires (i.e., structure, vehicle, bush, dumpster), explosions, hazardous materials, civil disorders, special hazards posed by utilities, and hazardous conditions. Duties include: enforcing laws, codes, ordinances; conducting investigations; determining the origin and cause of fires; issuing summons and/or citations and warnings; writing investigation reports; preparing case material for prosecution; making arrests; interacting with chief officers and all ranks below, other governmental (local, state, federal) and private agencies, and the community; and using discretion to solve problems. A Fire Investigator is responsible for the protection of life and property through firefighting activities, provides technical investigation assistance to fire suppression personnel, and enters fire conditions and advises firefighters regarding preservation of evidence and salvage and overhaul operations. A Fire Investigator also provides technical assistance to prevention staff and fire cause data to aid public education efforts. Fire Investigators are certified as Peace Officers and have the authority to pursue, arrest, and book suspects in jail; search persons, places, and things; seize and impound evidence. A Fire Investigator may also conduct fire inspections. A Fire Investigator performs related work as required.

Distinguishing Features: A Fire Investigator is responsible for the protection of life and property through firefighting activities often performed under conditions that require strenuous physical exertion under adverse circumstances. Duties involve considerable public contact requiring good communication skills and judgment, and a high degree of courtesy, tact, and diplomacy. Supervision is received from the Deputy Chief assigned to Fire Prevention, who reviews work through feedback, written reports, conferences, and evaluation of investigation results. Employees in this class are subject to stand-by and call-out and required to work evenings or weekends for investigations. The Fire Investigator is in the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS). This class is FLSA nonexempt.

QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum Qualifications Required. Graduation from high school or GED. Any combination of training, education, and experience equivalent to 30 semester hours of major-related college coursework from an accredited college or university toward a Fire Science or Criminal Justice degree (such as coursework in fire suppression, fire prevention, fire investigation, building construction, and law enforcement) OR three years of firefighting experience, including some (6 months - 1 year) investigative or law enforcement experience.

Special Requirements. Must possess a valid Arizona Driver's License by hire or promotion date. Because of the confidential, sensitive nature of information handled, successful completion of a background investigation and polygraph is required. Must pass a pre-employment physical and drug screening. Must meet and maintain NFPA and Mesa Fire Department physical standards. Must meet the qualifications to wear a tight fitting respirator by passing a medical evaluation in accordance with CFR 1910.134 by hire or promotion date. Must become Firefighter I and II certified, and acquire Peace Officer certification from Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (AZ POST) (as available) within one year of hire or promotion date. Must possess State of Arizona Fire Inspector and International Code Council (ICC) Fire Inspector I certification within one year of hire or promotion, and maintain certification or annual training thereafter. Must live within fifteen-miles of the City of Mesa city limits within one year of hire or promotion date.

Substance Abuse Testing. Due to the safety and/or security sensitive nature of this classification, individuals shall be subject to pre-employment or pre-placement alcohol, drug and/or controlled substance testing as outlined in City policy and procedures.

Preferred/Desirable Qualifications. Completion of related National Fire Academy courses and Fire and/or Arson Investigator certifications are highly desirable.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Communication: Communicates verbally in person, by radio, and telephone. Explains fire codes, City ordinances, and regulations. Conducts interviews, records information, and prepares detailed reports of investigative findings. Communicates to supervisor and fire department personnel on investigation findings. Communicates via the computer to dispatch, fire operations personnel, and other agencies. Uses e-mail daily to review and send messages. Communicates effectively in meetings with the public, City of Mesa representatives, and other agencies. Testifies in court regarding investigation findings. Counsels juvenile firesetters. May teach classes in the Juvenile Firesetter Program. Provides technical instruction and training to new investigators, police officers, firefighter recruits, and other agency investigators regarding fire investigation procedures. Assists in public education efforts by informing department educators of information gained through the ordinance adoption process and by supplying soft stories to the public information officer. Acts as liaison between the Police Department and the county attorney's office for case filing and preparation. Communicates with City employees, courts systems, other fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and the public to collect investigative information, process evidence, and maintain effective working interagency relationships. Completes detailed, written investigative reports, chronological sheets, inspection forms, site surveys, summons and/or citations, warnings, and other various written documents. Enters, completes, and reviews computer incident and inspection data.

Manual/Physical: Investigates fire-related crimes, including: performing responsible public safety work involving the protection of life and property; responding to emergency alarms; participating in combating, extinguishing, and preventing fires and investigating fire origin and cause using specialized, nonroutine, protective equipment; securing scene; confirming hazards; ensuring safety; performing systematic search; determining the presence of other crimes; recognizing incendiary devices; collecting evidence; preservation and laboratory analysis and court room presentation of evidence; witness interviews and/or statements; measuring, drawing diagrams; locating and arresting arson suspects;

booking suspects in jail and following through with court proceedings. May also conduct code inspections for public and private buildings for life safety and fire protection systems and processes. Operates motor vehicles requiring a standard Arizona Driver's License to travel to emergency and fire scenes. Moves heavy objects (up to 165 pounds or more) for up to 100 feet including salvage equipment and smoke ejectors, and uses a lifting aid as appropriate. Preserves evidence and performs salvage and overhaul operations. Uses specialized protective equipment while uncovering and gathering evidence. Operates power generators and smoke ejectors to provide portable lighting and positive pressure ventilation. Uses power saws and hand tools to dismantle building areas affected by fire to determine cause and origin. Sifts through fire debris and sets up scene reconstructions. Climbs ladders and works at elevated levels (up to 100 feet) assessing scene damage and taking photographs. Inspects underground storage tank removal, shoring and trenching activities, etc., to ensure compliance with established regulations and guidelines. Accesses information from, and enters incidents and investigation data into, a personal computer. Prepares and updates schedules and graphs to indicate arson trends, scene data, etc. Detects natural gas leaks, flammable liquids, and other chemicals. Identifies hazards in order to avoid potential injury situations. Uses firefighter full protective clothing or other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Meets scheduling and attendance requirements.

Mental: Coordinates investigation activities with other departments and agencies. Determines fire origins and causes. Interprets and determines violations of fire codes and regulations. Analyzes circumstances, estimates losses, and determines if a case should be filed for prosecution. Performs mathematical calculations and statistical computations. Understands blueprints, schematic drawings, and layouts to evaluate building features and construction. Assists in preparing the investigation section budget. Assists with developing investigation policies and procedures. Resolves operational problems. Researches investigative techniques and case law. Maintains training and expertise levels necessary for court testimony. Learns job-related material and methods through oral instructions, on-the-job observations, structured lecture in a classroom/seminar setting, and reading related material regarding fire incident case reviews, procedures, methods, case law, federal and state statutes, and departmental policies and procedures.

Knowledge and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- firefighting methods and tactics;
- the Mesa Fire Department Incident Management System;
- fire investigation sector responsibilities;
- NFPA 921, *Guide for Fire & Explosive Investigations*;
- NFPA 1033, *Professional Guidelines for Fire Investigations*;
- proper use of available safety equipment;
- personal safety guidelines to observe when conducting fire scene examination;
- methods of assessing and reinforcing structural stability or removing the hazard;
- chemical and other hazardous materials commonly found at the fire scene;
- carcinogen and potential toxins in post fire scene examination;
- special hazards posed by utilities, such as electricity, fuel, gases, and etc.;
- fire chemistry and effects of fire on various types of building construction;
- hazardous materials regarding response, actions, safety, and local, state, and federal regulations;

the laws and/or ordinances regarding fire prevention, arson, and City building codes;
the rules, regulations, procedures, and laws governing the arrest and processing of arson suspects; and
the principles and practices of fire investigation.

Ability to:

complete search and rescue and fire extinguishment activities;
coordinate fire investigation activities and investigate fire scenes;
deal persuasively and effectively with property owners and the general public;
express ideas clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing;
become acquainted with other governmental and private organizations that can assist in successfully
investigating and obtaining arson convictions;
use sufficient physical force to pursue and restrain arson suspects;
establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, fire departments, and law
enforcement agencies, and the general public;
maintain certifications and proficiency training through continuing education;
prioritize case loads by utilizing time management skills; and
promote safety by problem solving and decision making.

The duties listed above are intended only as general illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. Specific statements of duties not included does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position. Job descriptions are subject to change by the City as the needs of the City and requirements of the job change.

Revised to Update Pay Grade and Increments 6/15

CT/co/pa

CS4602.DOC

PAY GRADE: 50

EEO-Tech

NDOT SAFETY-Yes

SECURITY-Yes

NDOT RANDOM-No

DOT SAFETY-No

CDL-No

RESP-Yes

IND-7710

JOB FCTN-PUB

SWORN-Yes

INCREMENTS 81-200