



## Fire Investigation Student Check List

### SCENE EXAMINATION

1. Locate general origin area and items of potential evidence
2. Place ribbon or rope around the origin area and/or potential evidence items
3. Post signs and/or a guard outside the ribboned or roped area
4. Prevent unauthorized entry
5. Enter on the photo log where photos would be taken
6. Mark/identify potential evidence items
7. Mark/identify entry/exit points
8. Document observations
9. Proceed 360 degrees around the scene
10. Enter on the photo log where photos would be taken
11. Ribbon potential evidence items
12. Ribbon or mark entry/exit points
13. Document observations
14. Locate equipment needed
15. Obtain fire suppression briefing
16. Observe and document burn patterns
17. Observe and document burn characteristics any material(s) involved
18. Using burn patterns and fire development indicators, sketch the fire scene
19. Indicate area(s) of origin on the sketch
20. Indicate fire development patterns on the sketch
21. Observe and document effects of suppression activities
22. Locate area of origin
23. Locate, identify, and protect items of evidence
24. Remove fire debris and locate ignition source
25. Evidence preserved without investigator-inflicted damage or contamination
26. Obtain fire suppression briefing
27. Locate tools and/or equipment
28. Brief assistant
29. Locate protected areas
30. Locate removed burned items
31. Replace burned items
32. Document reconstruction on the photo log
33. Identify and inspect utilities
34. Locate and inspect detection systems
35. Locate and inspect HV AC systems
36. Locate and inspect suppression systems
37. Report which, if any, expert resources would be needed

38. Report which, if any, and how systems inspected were defective and/or defeated
39. Identify the type of explosion
40. Identify the possible cause of the explosion
41. Identify any explosive effects on glass, walls, foundations, and other building materials
42. Distinguish between low and high order explosion effects
43. Analyze damage to document the blast zone and origin

### **DOCUMENTING THE SCENE**

1. Diagram the fire scene to include each of the following:
  - Relative locations, dimensions, rooms, stairs, doors, and windows
  - At least one item of evidence with location dimensions indicated
  - At least one item of pertinent contents with location and dimensions indicated
  - At least one burn pattern with location identified
  - At least one area or point of origin with size indicated
  - The candidate's name, date, and scene number or location
2. Photograph from the outside of the room to the inside
3. Photograph items of evidence without size references
4. Photograph items of evidence with size reference
5. Document photos taken on a photo rough sketch and photo log
6. Reviews file documents for completeness and accuracy of findings
7. Identify conflicting information
8. Determine and/or recommend needed follow-up information to corroborate or dispute
9. investigative findings

### **EVIDENCE COLLECTION/PRESERVATION**

1. Identify two different types of evidence
2. Select and collect one of each of the two types of evidence
3. Package selected/collected items
4. Document the process in field notes
5. Identify what type of evidence testing would be requested (if any)
6. Review the investigation report
7. Select one appropriate item of evidence
8. Indicate the specific analysis requested
9. Obtain an incident briefing and take notes
10. Locate and select evidence items
11. Mark and/or tag and package two pieces of evidence
12. Maintain chain of custody by correctly utilizing logs and/or forms during the transfer of evidence
13. Review provided information
14. Identify evidence subject to disposal

15. Dispose of evidence according to the model evidence policy
16. Document the disposal using the provided forms

## **INTERVIEW**

1. Review provided information
2. Request additional information, if needed
3. Develop an interview plan strategy for one person of interest
4. Document the interview strategies by listing relevant questions
5. Obtain incident briefing and take notes
6. Identify the witness
7. Conduct the interview
8. Document the interview
9. Identify the suspect
10. Review provided information
11. Correlate information into corroborative or conflicting groups
12. Document new investigative leads
13. List follow-up names and contact numbers

## **POST INCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

1. Review provided materials
2. Request and document request for needed materials
3. Select documentation acceptable to the courts
4. Document steps to maintain chain of custody of requested documents
5. Evaluate the investigative file and identify areas for further investigation
6. Correctly interpret the relationship between the gathered documents and available information
7. Determine appropriate corroborative evidence
8. Appropriately document any discrepancies found in the investigative file
9. Review provided materials
10. Document need for specific experts
11. Justify costs for each expert witness selected
12. Document how the selected expert witnesses will assist in the determination of causation or affixing responsibility
13. Review provided materials
14. Determine and document the motive and/or opportunity of the incendiary fire.
15. List supporting documents that establish motive finding
16. Document evidence used to determine motive
17. Document legal value of evidence provided
18. Review provided materials
19. Formulate and document an opinion as to the person and/or product responsibility

## **POST PRESENTATIONS**

1. Review provided investigation information and incident reports
2. Ask the assistant investigator follow-up questions, if necessary
3. Write initial investigation report using provided materials
4. Include opinion of fire cause, properly marked as opinion
5. Review the report for grammar and accuracy
6. Submit the report to the intended audience
7. Obtain and review the investigation report and other provided information
8. Identify the audience member(s)
9. Verbally present the report information and/or findings
10. Answer follow-up questions from the audience without error
11. Review provided information within 30 minutes
12. Ask questions of the prosecutor before testifying
13. Answer questions from the prosecutor before testifying
14. Testify in court to prosecutor's questions without error
15. Testify in court to cross-examination by defence counsel without error
16. Demonstrate appropriate court room demeanour:
  - Posture
  - Mannerisms
  - Composure
  - Confidence
17. Demonstrate appropriate communication skills:
  - Respond to questions appropriately
  - Maintain objectivity
  - Use appropriate professional language
  - Avoid using jargon/idiomatic expressions and profanity
  - Accurately convey facts
  - Testimony is consistent with documented facts
18. Review the investigation report
19. Obtain a briefing from the Incident Commander
20. Conduct a 5-minute presentation
21. Answer questions from the audience
22. Advise the Incident Commander of the presentation and questions