

Part Time Fire Investigator Job Announcement



The Onondaga County Fire Investigation Unit is currently seeking qualified individuals to fill part time fire investigator positions.

Interested persons should:

- Reside in Onondaga County
- Preference will be given to applicants who have participated or currently are participating in the Onondaga County fire investigation apprentice program
- Currently hold a NYS Fire Investigator Certification
Note: Applicants who do not have a NYS Fire Investigator Certification but are working toward the certification will be considered.
- Meet the knowledge, skills and abilities outlined on the attached job specification sheet

To apply for this position, mail or e-mail a complete application packet to:

Gerald Payne, Director of Fire
Onondaga County Department of Emergency Management
421 Montgomery Street– Sub Basement
Syracuse, NY 13202
geraldpayne@ongov.net

Application packet should include:

- Onondaga County Competitive Application (can be found on the county website: www.ongov.net)
- Cover Letter
- Resume (CV)
- Copy of NYS Fire Investigator Certificate

A complete application packet must be submitted by March 20,2020.

Criminal background checks and polygraph examinations are conditions of employment.

Onondaga County is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.



FIRE INVESTIGATOR

42180

(Competitive)

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS

The work involves responsibility for investigating fires to determine their cause and origin and assisting in the collection of evidence for prosecution in cases of known or suspected arson. Under the general supervision of the Director of Emergency Management (Fire), an employee in this class performs on the scene fire investigation including examination of physical evidence and interviewing persons having knowledge of the fire. Responsibilities also include working directly with a Sheriff's or other police agency's criminal investigator on arson fires and assisting the District Attorney's Office in the prosecution of arson cases. An employee in this class also assists in teaching fire investigation classes. This position is distinguished from other Investigator positions in that a specialized field of knowledge is required in the performance of the duties. Assignments may come from any local Fire Chief or other government official requiring the Fire Investigator's expertise in determining the cause or origin of a fire. Direction may be provided by an Assistant District Attorney in the investigation or collection of evidence for legal prosecution. Work is reviewed by the Director of Emergency Management (Fire) thorough conference and submission of fire investigation reports. An employee in this class exercises no supervision. Does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES

Responds to fires at the request of a Fire Department to investigate the cause and origin of the fire through investigative techniques and procedures.

Performs physical examinations of the remains of a fire to determine the cause and origin of the fire by operating scientific instruments to determine the presence of flammable liquids, taking appropriate photographs of the fire scenes, making appropriate sketches or diagrams, examining char and burn patterns and using his or her knowledge of factors affecting fire spread and the heat characteristics of various materials.

Secures samples of fire remains and any other evidence from fire scene, maintains chain of evidence and delivers materials to proper police agency for preservation or laboratory analysis.

Interviews people who may have witnessed the fire, firefighters involved with suppression activities, owners and/or occupants of fire property and others who may have information that will assist in determining the cause and origin of the fire, such as location, quantity and color of flame and smoke when first discovered, obstacles to extinguishment, and the presence of strangers at the scene prior to the fire.

Works directly with a Sheriff's or other police agency's criminal investigator in cases of known or suspected incendiary fire in order to provide expertise in areas of fire investigations.

Investigates documents and contracts such as deeds, leases, liens, judgments, mortgages and insurance policies to ascertain the facts and discern possible motives for arson.

Testifies at Grand Juries or court trials as to evidence obtained in fire investigations.

Teaches fire investigation techniques to other Fire, Police and insurance claims personnel to provide basic knowledge in the area of fire investigations through seminars, classroom sessions and on the job training.

Prepares fire investigation reports covering all aspects of each investigation using the information, physical evidence and statements collected during the investigation and submits reports to the Fire Coordinator, the local Fire Chief, police agency having jurisdiction, the District Attorney and, when approved to the insurance company.

Initiates follow up investigations by proper authorities when the cause of the fire involved faulty equipment or when there was a delay in the detection of the fire or in the transmission of the alarm because of faulty fire protection equipment.

Assists insurance companies in civil cases involving incendiary fires by providing fire investigation report and, if requested, testifying as to evidence obtained in the fire investigation.

Operates county vehicle to transport equipment, materials, evidence, etc. used in the investigation of fires.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Good knowledge of the procedures and techniques used in determining the point of origin of a fire and its probable cause.

Good knowledge of interpreting char and burn patterns, the reaction of materials to fire and heat including household products and furnishings, and the ability to reconstruct the fire scene.

Good knowledge of fire's effect on buildings, vehicles and content thereof.

Good knowledge of building construction, building materials and their effect on fire and fire spread.

Good knowledge of fixed fire protection and detection equipment.

Good knowledge of the laws governing search, seizure and evidence including its admissibility and the individual's constitutional rights.

Good knowledge of how photographs may be used during prosecution of a case and the admissibility of same as evidence.

Working knowledge of the procedures and techniques of interviewing and taking statements and

confessions.

Working knowledge of explosives and explosion characteristics.

Working knowledge of the human motivation and behavior patterns related to false alarms, fire, explosions and incendiarism.

Working knowledge of documents and contracts, including insurance policies, deeds, leases, liens, judgments and mortgages and the procedures or requirements for obtaining or reviewing such material and information.

Working knowledge of legal prosecution case preparation procedures and courtroom procedures associated with the performance of the duties of the position.

Ability to operate various types of investigative and detection equipment including cameras and flammable vapor detectors.

Ability to recognize, protect and secure evidence, including proper identification procedures for such evidence.

Ability in note taking, sketching and preparing reports.

Ability to communicate clearly and concisely both orally and in writing.

Ability to work well with others.

Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Active participation in the Onondaga County Department of Emergency Managements Fire Investigation Apprentice Program, or two (2) years of documented, equivalent volunteer/paid cause and origin investigation experience, in which the major responsibility of the job was to determine the cause and origin of fires or as an investigator of incendiary incidents involving explosives, chemicals or radiological materials, and either:

A. Three (3) years* as a volunteer firefighter in an organized volunteer fire department, which must have included successful completion of basic formal fire service training inclusive of fire suppression; or,

B. Two (2) years** of paid work experience as a Firefighter or Air Crash Rescue Worker, which must have included successful completion of basic formal fire service training inclusive of fire suppression; or,

C. Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State Board of Regents to grant degrees with an associates degree in fire science or emergency management and either two (2) years of experience as described in (A) above or one (1) year of experience as described in (B) above; or,

D. Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State Board of Regents to grant degrees with a baccalaureate degree in engineering, fire science, emergency management or forensic or physical sciences.

* Three (3) years as a volunteer firefighter means length in time in calendar years as an active member in good standing of a volunteer fire department. This does not have to be full time experience.

** Work experience of less than one (1) year or less than full time may be credited on a pro rata basis. In all cases, candidates must have the appropriate number of years of experience as described above.

SPECIAL NECESSARY REQUIREMENT

When required to operate a motor vehicle, possession of a valid New York State Non-CDL or CDL, including any special endorsements, as required for the type of vehicle being operated.

2/2020 Revised