



**Cayuga County Department of Human Resources  
and Civil Service Commission**

**JOB SPECIFICATION**

Civil Service Title: **Fire Investigator**  
Jurisdictional Class: Non-Competitive (Part-Time)  
Civil Division: County  
Adoption: CSM 1/21/91  
Revised: CSM 6/11/08

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**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:**

This position exists in the county service and involves responsibility for serving as a member of the Fire Investigation Team to provide fire and police agencies with assistance in determination of cause and origins of fire and explosions. The work requires close attention to detail since errors in judgment might result in incorrect liability or arrest. The work is performed under general direction of the Director of Emergency Services, Deputy Director of Emergency Services, and Deputy Director of Fire Services with leeway allowed for exercise of independent judgment in planning and carrying out details of the work. Supervision may be exercised over the work of lower level investigators. The incumbent does related work as required.

**TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Illustrative Only)**

Documents findings with reports and submits documented findings to supervisor for review and submission to law enforcement, fire chiefs, insurance adjusters, and the District Attorney as necessary;

Investigates the origin, cause and circumstances of fires and/or explosions in response to requests from fire service agencies, law enforcement officials and/or prosecuting attorneys within Cayuga County;

Processes fire scenes by examining and/or removing debris, identifying burn patterns and diagramming and photographing the scene;

Collects, identifies and preserves evidence following chain of custody procedures;

Uses a variety of equipment and techniques to investigate if accelerants or explosive devices were used at fire or crime scenes;

Interviews property owners/proprietors, occupants, witnesses, neighbors, and firefighters regarding the investigation;

Testifies and/or gives depositions as an expert witness in legal proceedings regarding fire scene investigations;

Participates in periodic evaluation and retraining sessions in fire investigation techniques to maintain required certifications;

Acts as a member of the Cayuga County Fire Investigation Team to assist local fire and police agencies in furthering fire prevention programs and juvenile fire setter programs in Cayuga County;

Prepares and submits monthly work logs, mileage logs and related forms;

Responds to requests for specialized assistance from other investigators, fire service agencies, and law enforcement officials;

Performs other related work as assigned.

**FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES, PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Good knowledge of local and State fire prevention laws, codes, and ordinances;  
Good knowledge of cause and origin of fires/explosions;  
Good knowledge of State and local building codes;  
Good knowledge of programs, policies, and procedures;  
Good knowledge of the geography of the county;  
Ability to recognize fire accelerants and explosive devices;  
Ability to work in an environment that may include foul air, unstable structures, flammable or explosive materials, hazardous chemicals, inclement weather and other factors encountered at fire scenes.  
Ability to investigate arson/explosion sites and determine cause;  
Ability to draw accurate conclusions regarding cause and origin of fire/explosions;  
Arson awareness;  
Ability to communicate clearly and prepare detailed reports;  
Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

International certification as a Fire Investigator or New York State certification as Fire Investigator I or Fire Investigator II; AND

EITHER:

- (A) Five years of active membership in a volunteer fire company, three years of which shall have involved the investigation of fires/explosions for arson; OR
- (B) Three years of experience as a Fire Investigator for a paid or volunteer fire department or company; OR
- (C) An equivalent combination of experience and training as outlined by the limits of (A) and (B) above.

(Approved by NYSCSC 9/21/11 – with salary limit)