

## **FIRE INVESTIGATOR/CODE OFFICER**

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:** The incumbent in this position performs a dual function as Fire Investigator and Code Officer. A Fire Inspector Investigates fire or explosions to determine their cause and origin, identifies suspects and assists the District Attorney's Office and other Law Enforcement Agencies in prosecuting arson crimes. Under the general supervision of the Senior Fire Investigator, performs on scene fire investigation and interviews persons having knowledge of the fire. Works directly with the District Attorney's Office or other Law Enforcement agencies to perform criminal investigations regarding arson fires. A Code Officer performs fire safety inspections, reviews design plans, and completes inspections of construction and building use for compliance with applicable state and national codes. The Code Officer works under the direction of the Director of Emergency Services, with a moderate level of leeway allowed for the use of independent judgment in planning and carrying out the details of the work. Shall be sworn in as a Peace Officer under the laws of the State of New York. Does related duties as required.

### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

#### **Fire Investigator:**

Responds to fires and explosions at the request of fire departments, law enforcement agencies or other governmental agencies;

Performs an immediate investigation as to the causative factors surrounding the incident; Operates scientific instruments used to determine the presence of flammable liquids;

Identifies clues and collects physical evidence;

Interviews all persons known to be connected with the discovery or extinguishment of the incident;

Identifies possible motives and/or suspects;

Makes investigative notes and writes reports concerning all aspects of the incident and follow-up investigation;

Confers with the District Attorney's Office regarding case evaluation and prospects for prosecution, issuance of arrest and search warrants;

Prepares assigned cases for court, according to formalized procedures;

Testifies in criminal and civil courts as directed by proper authority;

Works with insurance companies, under direction of the Senior Fire Investigator, in civil cases involving incendiary fires;

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Provides technical assistance to other agencies;  
May be required to perform the duties of a Peace Officer as authorized by law;  
Participates in county-wide activities such as major investigations, including surveillance, neighborhood canvasses, etc.

**Code Officer:**

Examines building permit applications including reviewing design plans to determine compliance with applicable state and national codes;  
Inspects construction site compliance with building codes, submitted plans, and determines if contractor is practicing acceptable work standards;  
Performs fire safety inspections of public assembly areas, multiple residences and non-residential occupancies;  
Assists in explaining and interpreting applicable state and national codes to county staff and consultants;  
Prepares and maintains a variety of forms, records, and reports relevant to code enforcement activities;  
Prepares written notices to correct unsafe, illegal, or dangerous conditions in existing structures;  
Prepares recommendations for building permits and certificates of occupancy/compliance and violation notices;  
Coordinates inspections and review with the Commissioner of Public Works or their designee.

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

Good knowledge of basic investigative procedures and surveillance techniques;  
Working knowledge of historical and modern building construction practices, building materials and their effect on fire spread;  
Basic knowledge of human motivation and behavior patterns related to false alarms, fire, explosions and incendiarism;  
Working knowledge of fire's effect on buildings, vehicles and contents thereof;  
Basic knowledge of explosive and explosion characteristics;  
Working knowledge of laws governing search, seizure and evidence to include its admissibility and the suspects constitutional rights;  
Basic knowledge of legal prosecution, case preparation procedures associated with the performance of his duties;

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Basic knowledge of laboratory requirements for processing evidence;

Working knowledge of arrest procedures;

Skill in taking statements and confessions;

Ability to diagram and operate basic photography equipment with reasonable skill under various conditions;

Ability to recognize, protect and seize evidence and the proper identification procedures thereof; Ability to determine the perpetrator's method of entry;

Ability of how to determine the point of origin of a fire, its probable cause, interpreting char and burn patterns and ability to reconstruct the fire scene;

Basic knowledge of the purpose of various property documents such as leases, deeds, liens, garnishments, judgements, etc.; and their importance in arson investigation;

Knowledge of which agencies may provide assistance in fire investigation activities;

Knowledge of courtroom procedures and the judicial system;

Ability to work with other agencies and jurisdictions;

Working knowledge of general fire safety code requirements and regulations including but not limited to trash debris, smoking, open burning, maintaining fire department access, housekeeping procedures and limiting combustible decorations and furnishings;

Knowledge of fire hazards related to various types of heating and cooking equipment;

Working knowledge of building construction methods and building trades;

Good knowledge of the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code;

Ability to work effectively with building designers and contractors to achieve compliance with Code regulations;

Ability to communicate effectively across an array of technical disciplines.

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

A) Graduation from a regionally accreted or New York State registered college or university with an Associate's in Fire Science or Fire Technology and two years of service as a firefighter on a volunteer or paid basis in an organized fire department, which included one year in fire investigations and familiarity with municipal codes and ordinances; OR

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B) Four years of service as a firefighter on a volunteer or paid basis in an organized fire department, which included two years' in fire investigations and familiarity with municipal codes and ordinances.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: At time of appointment, incumbent shall have satisfactorily completed the Fire Investigation for Line Officer courses.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1) Possession of a valid NYS driver's license; AND

2) Shall possess or obtain within four months of appointment, and maintain throughout employment, a valid New York State Pistol Permit; AND

3) As per 19 CRR-NY 1208-3.2 (d): Certification of a New York State Code Enforcement Officer course within eighteen (18) months of appointment. Incumbents must attend and complete the continuing education requirements on an annual basis; AND

4) Within two years of appointment:

- Shall complete the Fire/Arson 120-hour course at the New York State Fire Academy; AND

- Shall complete the Peace Officers training course certified by the New York State Bureau for Municipal Police; AND

- Shall complete the Police/Peace Officers Firearms training course certified by the New York State Bureau for Municipal Police.