

FORENSIC BIOLOGY ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES		
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Staff Roles and Responsibilities

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE

Staff roles and responsibilities within the Department of Forensic Biology are defined and organized so that the services provided by the Department can be conducted to a high standard of professionalism, efficiency, and accuracy.

This document describes the responsibilities, authorities, and interrelationships of Forensic Biology staff.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Director of the Department of Forensic Biology reports directly to the Chief of Laboratories. See the OCME Organizational Chart. Some support services, such as Human Resources and Finance, are provided to the Department of Forensic Biology by other departments within the OCME.

The Department of Forensic Biology is a single operational unit organized into various Production Teams and supporting teams. Production Teams consist of casework analysts. Teams that provide supporting services include the Training Team, Research and Development Team and the Quality Assurance/ Quality Control Team. The Forensic Biology Organizational Chart reflects this structure.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Director

The Director is responsible for the overall scientific, quality, and administrative operations of the Department of Forensic Biology. The Director may perform administrative and technical reviews on selected cases. The Director prepares productivity, statistical reports, and audit reports, as required by the Chief of Laboratories, the Chief Medical Examiner and/or City, State, or Federal agencies. The Director may perform scientific analyses, train subordinates, testify in court, monitor testimony of subordinates, and prepare annual reviews of subordinates. The Director establishes guiding principles for the operation of the Department.

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Deputy Directors

Deputy Directors assume the responsibilities of the Director in the Director's absence. Deputy Directors supervise Assistant Directors and work with them to achieve Department goals. Deputy Directors may assist the Director to develop guiding principles for the operation of the Department, perform scientific analyses, perform technical reviews of cases, review proficiency tests performed by Assistant Directors or others, train subordinates, testify in court, monitor testimony of subordinates, prepare annual reviews of subordinates, and complete miscellaneous projects as assigned by the Director.

Assistant Directors

Each Assistant Director leads an operational team within the Department. They manage the work of the team in order to achieve Departmental goals; supervise one or more Criminalist IV's and their subordinates; perform technical reviews of cases supervised by and/or worked on by subordinates; assist with the training of new hires or promoted staff, police investigators, or attorneys; represent the Department of Forensic Biology in meetings with other NYC law enforcement and/or criminal justice agencies; communicate with stakeholder agencies regarding testing requests and results; and triage evidence. In the absence of the Director and Deputy Directors, a designated Assistant Director will be assigned the responsibility for overseeing the administrative operation of the Department of Forensic Biology. An Assistant Director may perform scientific analyses on casework and testify in court. Assistant Directors prepare annual performance evaluations of subordinate personnel.

LIMS Administrator

The Forensic Biology LIMS Administrator is responsible for the implementation, maintenance and future development of the laboratory's LIMS program. The LIMS Administrator acts as a liaison between Forensic Biology and the OCME Information Technology department in all aspects pertaining to LIMS and other computer applications.

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Technical Leaders

Technical Leaders are accountable for the technical operations of the laboratory. The Department has two DNA Technical Leaders (one for nuclear DNA operations and one for mitochondrial DNA operations) and one Serology Technical Leader. Each DNA technical leader has the authorities and responsibilities described in the FBI DNA Quality Assurance Standards. For specific information, see the DNA TECHNICAL LEADERS document in the Forensic Biology Administrative Manual.

Assistant Technical Leaders

Where necessary, Assistant Technical Leaders will be appointed to assist the DNA Technical Leader. Under the DNA Technical Leader's direction, an Assistant Technical Leader may be assigned additional duties (e.g., coordination of training, reviewing validations, organization of records, etc.). In addition, an Assistant Technical Leader may assist in solving technical problems involving analytical methods under the approval of the DNA Technical Leader.

CODIS Custodian/Supervisor

The CODIS Custodian/Supervisor is equivalent to the "Casework CODIS Administrator" position described in the "Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Typing Laboratories" and as such is the system administrator of the laboratory's CODIS network. For a specific list of duties and responsibilities see the Forensic Biology CODIS Manual.

Quality Assurance Manager

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for the overall implementation and maintenance of those aspects of the Department of Forensic Biology management system related to quality. The responsibilities are varied and meet ASCLD/LAB requirements and the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories. The Quality Assurance Manager supervises the Quality Assurance Unit, which is responsible for conducting numerous quality control activities within the Department.

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Criminalist, Level IV

The responsibilities of Criminalist IV's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title and in the Tasks and Standards documents. Generally, a Criminalist IV may supervise one or more Criminalist III's, II's, and/or I's, perform scientific analyses on evidence submitted to the laboratory, perform technical reviews of cases, prepare scientific reports, prepare annual performance evaluations as requested by OCME management, communicate with stakeholder agencies regarding testing requests and results, triage evidence, participate in the training of subordinates, testify in court, take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies, work on designated projects, and supervise analytical tests in the laboratory.

Criminalist, Level III

The responsibilities of Criminalist III's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title and in the Tasks and Standards documents. Generally, Criminalist III's may perform testing and/or review of DNA extraction, DNA quantitation, STR analysis, perform scientific analyses on evidence submitted to the laboratory, prepare written scientific reports, perform technical reviews of simple cases, perform administrative reviews on DNA cases, train new Laboratory Associates and Criminalists, take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies, and testify to results. In the absence of a Criminalist IV, a Criminalist III may assume those responsibilities on an interim basis.

Criminalist, Level II

The responsibilities of Criminalist II's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title. Generally, Criminalist II's are responsible for the daily examination and scientific work performed on evidence in casework. They may perform testing and/or review of DNA extraction, DNA quantitation, and STR analysis, as well as train new Criminalists, take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies, prepare written scientific reports which reflect testing, and testify to results. These scientists are examiner/analysts as defined by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

Criminalist, Level IA & IB

The responsibilities of Criminalist I's are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title.

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Generally, Criminalist I's are responsible for bench work in the laboratory and, after appropriate training, may examine rape kits and other items of evidence, prepare written scientific reports on "negative" serology cases, and may testify in court, if required by an Assistant District Attorney. Criminalist I's who are performing casework must take proficiency tests as required by regulating and accrediting bodies. These scientists are DNA technicians as defined by the FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

City Research Scientist

The responsibilities of City Research Scientists are described in the Civil Service specifications for that title and in the Tasks and Standards documents. City Research Scientists conduct research and develop new scientific methods for the Department of Forensic Biology. Some City Research Scientists may be trained in DNA analysis, and those levels that are tasked to supervise may do so for other City Research Scientists or those in the Criminalist title. Generally, for those trained in DNA analysis, the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level IV-A or Level IV-B are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level IV; the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level III are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level III; the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level II are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level II; and the responsibilities of a City Research Scientist, Level I are equivalent to the responsibilities of a Criminalist, Level IA & IB.

Training Coordinator

The Training Coordinator is responsible for the scheduling and training of all scientists in the laboratory. The Training Coordinator reports to an Assistant Director. The Training Coordinator is responsible for maintaining training records and ensuring that the Department meets NYS and accreditation standards.

Forensic Biology Health and Safety Coordinator

The NYC Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Health and Safety Unit has an Agency-appointed Safety Officer for the Department of Forensic Biology. The Department of Forensic Biology appoints a Health and Safety Coordinator to assist with safety and compliance efforts in the laboratory, as necessary. The duties of the Safety Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting the Agency-appointed Safety Officer in developing and implementing appropriate laboratory safety policies, practices, and procedures.

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- Conducting an annual review of the Safety-related Manuals to ensure that all documents are up-to-date and to inform the Agency-appointed Safety Officer of any suggested revisions.
- Ensuring that the OCME Health and Safety Manuals (including the OCME Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, OCME Chemical Hygiene Plan, and the OCME Respiratory Protection Plan) is readily accessible to all employees, either as a paper copy, electronic copy online, or by other applicable means.
- Communicating to Forensic Biology staff any relevant safety information or concerns.
- Inspecting laboratories for compliance with the OCME Health and Safety Manuals.
- Assisting Laboratory Supervisors with maintaining laboratory compliance.
- Acting as a liaison to the Health and Safety Unit by assisting with laboratory safety inspections, coordinating safety training, and maintaining overall lab compliance, including hazardous waste management.

Administrative Supervisor(s)

Administrative Supervisors are in charge of the administrative support functions of the Department. Administrative Supervisors supervise a team of administrative professionals and ensures the proper handling of phone coverage; administrative review of casework files and distribution of reports; generation of certified copies of casework files for attorneys; and maintenance of casework files in archive, timecard and payroll handling. Administrative Supervisors may also oversee the management of all Departmental procurement matters and Departmental human resource functions including recruitment, retention, employee relations, and performance evaluations.

Administrative Staff

Administrative staff assists in the proper handling of phone coverage; administrative review of casework files and distribution of reports; generation of certified copies of casework files for attorneys; and maintenance of casework files.

Evidence and Property Control Specialists

The EPCS staff is responsible for creating Forensic Biology cases for evidence that has been submitted to the OCME Evidence Unit. They evaluate the submitted evidence and its associated administrative documentation; create the initial "Schedule of Analysis"; and follow-up with the submitting agency for additional information as needed.

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