

# Indiana Certifies Crime Scene Investigators

On June 21, 2004 the Indiana Law Enforcement Training Board approved the formation of the Crime Scene Certification committee. This is the first Crime Scene Certification process approved and supported by the Indiana Law Enforcement Training Board, and possibly the first approved by a governing law enforcement training body in the United States making Indiana a national leader in crime scene investigator training. This program will assure a minimum standard of training and experience has been attained through the qualification process. It assures competence levels in that training through a practical examination.

The field of Crime Scene Investigation is a dynamic and ever changing profession. Scientific methods have become increasingly more complicated, demanding and leave little room for error. The scientific community focuses on the identification, collection and preservation of evidence for examination. The legal system demands a higher standard of collection, preservation and presentation of evidence to meet the ever-changing rules of evidence. The public too has a higher expectation of crime scene investigation because of increasing awareness of the techniques for discovering physical evidence. These demands have produced the need to hold the Crime Scene Investigator to a higher standard. Only those Investigators willing to continue to advance their profession through continued study and growth will keep pace with society's demands. The Indiana Law Enforcement Training Board Crime Scene Certification committee is committed to meeting these changing demands.

## **Application**

A candidate for certification will be required to be an agent for an Indiana Law Enforcement agency whose primary duties entail those of a Crime Scene Investigator and whose general education requirements meet or exceed those of a law enforcement officer. Candidates are asked to submit an application, letter of confirmation from their department head and provide proof of having completed five specific types of crime scenes that are described in the application manual. Candidates are encouraged to work with other agencies to gain the required case experience if they have not been exposed to them through their own agency. Candidates must also provide a list of crime scene related training they have completed, totaling a minimum of 120 hours. This training must include study in the fields of crime scene security, crime scene management, crime scene documentation by sketching or drawing and forensic photography. These topics are required but any other crime scene topics may be used to complete the 120-hour requirement.

## **Proficiency Exam**

Once the applicant has met the qualification for certification a practical proficiency examination will be given. This examination will be from a variety of forensic science disciplines. Whenever possible the proficiency examination will evaluate both the Crime Scene Investigator's crime scene knowledge and their performance of specific tasks. The candidate will be asked to perform a specific task(s) within a crime scene scenario, complete necessary reports and discuss all aspects of successfully completing a crime scene. The proficiency test will be scored on a Proficiency Test Evaluation Form by an examiner. All candidates will receive written materials prior to the proficiency test which provide the minimum standards expected during testing. Examiners understand and expect variations in techniques and this is taken into consideration during the proficiency test. The Crime Scene Investigator's rationale for making a decision is an important aspect of the decision making process. The test is pass/fail.

## **Recertification**

Certified persons must re-certify every three (3) years. Re-certification requires proof of 24 hours of continuing education in crime scene related topics, proof of continued crime scene processing and completion of a proficiency examination. If a candidate fails the examination they will be notified with a copy of the examiners written evaluation form indicating the deficiency. The candidate may appeal, by certified mail, to the Crime Scene Certification Board or re-apply after 60 days of failure. The Indiana Law Enforcement Academy Records section will maintain all records.

### **Contact Information**

Applications for certification are now being accepted. At this time there is no cost to agencies or individuals and certification is not mandatory. Proficiency tests dates will be set based on the number of applicants to be tested. Persons interested in applying for certification should contact:

Crime Scene Investigator Certification Committee  
Attn. Lt. Rick Kiefer  
Indiana Law Enforcement Academy  
P.O. Box 313, Plainfield, Indiana, 46168  
Telephone: 317-837-3280  
[rkiefer@ilea.in.gov](mailto:rkiefer@ilea.in.gov)

### **Board Members**

The current Indiana Law Enforcement Training Board Crime Scene Investigator Certification Committee members are:

***Lt. Rick Kiefer***, Indiana Law Enforcement Academy-Chairman  
***F/Sgt. Dave Anderson***, Indiana State Police Laboratory Division  
***Lt. Rick Dowden***, Boone County Sheriff's Department  
***Lt. Alan Trisler***, Columbus Police Department  
***Lt. Mike Suth***, South Bend Police Department  
***Kathleen Burns***, Chief Deputy Prosecutor Bartholomew County

Please contact any committee member for further information and look for future postings on the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy training web site.