

Crime scene investigator

Crime scene investigators gather forensic evidence from crime scenes to help identify and prosecute criminals

As a crime scene investigator, you'll be involved in securing and protecting crime scenes, and collecting evidence from crime scenes, post-mortems and other incidents, such as fires and suspicious deaths. You'll also be responsible for processing and categorising evidence so that it can be used in criminal investigations. This might include gathering photographic evidence or physical samples from the scene, such as weapons, fingerprints, clothing or biological evidence.

Skills:

You'll need to have:

- a careful and methodical approach to your work and the ability to prioritise and take appropriate action
- good attention to detail and keen observational skills for finding and recording evidence
- strong analytical skills and an inquisitive approach
- the ability to work in a team and to coordinate with other professionals
- the patience to be able to correctly catalogue and store evidence
- good written and verbal communication for writing reports and communicating with victims, witnesses and investigators
- technical ability to use digital and scientific equipment
- the capacity to stay calm under pressure and to cope with sometimes distressing situations



Qualifications:

University - You could do a degree in forensic science, or in a scientific subject like biological science or chemistry. Other relevant subjects include: psychology or criminology. Some courses are accredited by The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences. Entry requirements: 2 to 3 A levels, or equivalent, for a degree.

Direct Application - Police services and law enforcement agencies set their own entry requirements for this type of work. In general, you'll need at least 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) or equivalent, including English, maths and a science subject. Some employers may prefer A levels or equivalent, including a science like chemistry or biology. Many employers ask for a degree and will expect you to have experience in police work or a related field. If you are already working for the Police, you may be able to do courses through the College of Policing to become a scenes of crime investigator.

Working hours:

Full-time working hours are around 30 to 40 hours per week. Hours of work are on a shift pattern, as you'll need to respond to calls from the police to attend scenes of crime 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year round.

Salary:

- Starting salaries for crime scene investigators are between £16,000 and £26,000, plus allowances, with graduates earning the top end of the scale.
- Experienced crime scene investigators or crime scene managers can earn between £24,000 and £35,000, plus allowances.
- Senior crime scene investigators take on greater responsibility and manage the work of others. They can earn higher salaries of £30,000 to £40,000 or more, plus allowances.

