



RECOMMENDATION

The Illinois Forensic Science Commission¹ acknowledges the importance of providing consistent training on foundational topics to forensic scientists who conduct forensic testing in publicly funded laboratories in Illinois.

Following extensive study and discussion, the Training and Career Development Subcommittee of the Commission drafted the attached recommendations for the training of forensic scientists on the following topics:

- 1) General Knowledge of Forensic Science;
- 2) Ethics;
- 3) Criminal Law, Civil Law, and Testimony.

On June 18, 2024, the Illinois Forensic Science Commission approved the recommendations of the Subcommittee. The Illinois Forensic Science Commission further granted the Training and Career Development Subcommittee the authority to update the three training documents with corrected and/or additional references in accordance with future developments in best practices for the training of forensic scientists.

¹ The Illinois Forensic Science Commission was established in 2021 by the Illinois General Assembly under Public Act 102-253. Members of the Forensic Science Commission include crime lab directors, forensic scientists, law enforcement officials, attorneys with experience in the use of forensic evidence in criminal cases (judicial, prosecutorial, and defense), a member of academia with experience in forensic science, a medical examiner, and community representatives.

20 ILCS 2605/615(b) outlines the purpose and duties of the Forensic Science Commission and provides that the Commission shall, “[p]rovide guidance to ensure the efficient delivery of forensic science and the sound practice of forensic science” and “[t]ake a systems-based approach in reviewing all aspects of the delivery of forensic services and the sound practice of forensic science with the goal of reducing or eliminating the factors and inefficiencies that contribute to backlogs and errors, with a focus on education and training, funding, hiring, procurement, and other aspects identified by the Commission.” 20 ILCS 2605/615(b)(1), (b)(3).



Training Forensic Scientists in General Knowledge of Forensic Science

Introduction

The Illinois Forensic Science Commission acknowledges the importance of training forensic scientists conducting forensic testing in publicly funded forensic laboratories. A documented training program shall include training on General Forensic Science to minimally include the following topics and recommended readings. Topics may be covered in a single training module or spread among multiple modules.

Topics

- Administrative Policies
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Quality assurance & quality control
- Non-conformance remediation procedure
- Documentation & record control
- Accreditation standards & requirements
- Certification/licensure standards
- Regulatory compliance
- Security Issues
- Evidence handling
- Interdisciplinary issues (e.g., recognition collection, and preservation of evidence)
- Chain of Custody
- Introduction to All Sections/Disciplines - includes definitions/history

Recommended Readings

Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward, National Academy of Sciences Press: Washington, DC, 2009.

Report to the President: Forensic Science in Criminal Courts: Ensuring Scientific Validity of Feature-Comparison Method, Executive Office of the President, President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. September 2016.

References:

AR 3125, Accreditation Requirements for Forensic Testing and Calibration (2023), ANSI National Accreditation Board, LLC., 2023/02/01. www.anab.ansi.org.

ASTM E2917-24a, *Standard Practice for Forensic Science Practitioner Training, Continuing Education, and Professional Development Programs*. ASTM International. May 2024. www.astm.org.

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Training Forensic Scientists in Ethics

Introduction

The Illinois Forensic Science Commission acknowledges the importance of training forensic scientists conducting forensic testing in publicly funded forensic laboratories. A documented training program shall include training on Ethics to minimally include the following topics and recommended readings. Topics may be covered in a single training module or spread among multiple modules.

Topics

- Standards of Conduct / Professional Ethics
- Laboratory Data Integrity
- Accountability
- Misconduct/Negligence
- Impartiality
- Root Cause Analysis
- Ethics in Testimony
- Whistleblower Protection

SubTopics

- Human Factor Issues
 - Cognitive
 - Contextual
 - Confirmation

Recommended Readings

National Commission on Forensic Science, National Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility for the Forensic Sciences

References:

AR 3125, Accreditation Requirements for Forensic Testing and Calibration (2023), ANSI National Accreditation Board, LLC., 2023/02/01. www.anab.ansi.org.

ASTM E2917-24a, *Standard Practice for Forensic Science Practitioner Training, Continuing Education, and Professional Development Programs*. ASTM International. May 2024. www.astm.org.

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Training Forensic Scientists in Criminal Law, Civil Law, and Testimony

Introduction

The Illinois Forensic Science Commission acknowledges the importance of training forensic scientists conducting forensic testing in publicly funded forensic laboratories. A documented training program shall include training on Criminal Law, Civil Law, and Testimony to minimally include the following topics and recommended readings. Topics may be covered in a single training module or spread among multiple modules.

Topics

- Expert testimony
- Depositions
- Rules of evidence
- Criminal and civil law procedures
- Legal obligations to disclose information and to preserve evidence
- Evidence authentication (e.g., chain of custody)
- Written, oral, and nonverbal communication skills
- Report writing and interpretation
- Exhibit and pretrial preparation
- Trial presentation

Recommended Readings

Daubert v. Merrill Dow Pharmaceuticals, 509 U.S. 579 (1993)

Frye v. United States, 293 F. 1013 (D.C. Cir. 1923)

Brady v. Maryland, 373 U.S. 83 (1963)

Giglio v. United States, 405 U.S. 150 (1972)

References:

AR 3125, Accreditation Requirements for Forensic Testing and Calibration (2023), ANSI National Accreditation Board, LLC., 2023/02/01. www.anab.ansi.org.

ASTM E2917-24a, *Standard Practice for Forensic Science Practitioner Training, Continuing Education, and Professional Development Programs*. ASTM International. May 2024. www.astm.org.