

THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES



CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

## CLASS SPECIFICATION

06-25-99

FIREARMS EXAMINER, 2233

**Summary of Duties:** A Firearms Examiner examines and identifies firearms, weapons, cartridges, bullets, and similar evidence in criminal investigations; collects physical evidence at crime scenes; testifies in court concerning the results of examinations; provides expert testimony on general firearms capability and examination methodology; and does related work.

**Distinguishing Features:** Employees in this class are assigned to a specialized unit responsible for the examination and classification of firearms and ammunition in the Police Department's Scientific Investigation Division. A Firearms Examiner is distinguished from the class of Criminalist in that the latter may be assigned to any unit in the Criminalistics Laboratory, whereas, a Firearms Examiner is assigned only to the Firearms Analysis Unit. Employees may be required to work in a variety of environments that may be hazardous or unpleasant, such as crime scenes and confined spaces. Incumbents in the class of Firearms Examiner are required to be on-call, on a rotating basis, for immediate response to emergency situations.

**Example of Duties:** A Firearms Examiner:

- Examines and classifies firearms and ammunition connected with criminal investigations;
- Collects physical evidence at the scenes of violent crimes;
- Analyzes and reconstructs the events occurring at the scenes of violent crimes;
- Test fires weapons in cotton wadding, water tanks, and other recovery systems;
- Compares recovered bullets and fired cartridge cases with those contained in the crime laboratory's files or recovered at crime scenes;
- Utilizes the comparison microscope to make toolmark, bullet specimen, and cartridge case comparisons;
- Takes photographs of ammunition employing photomicrographic techniques;
- Conducts scientific tests and calculations for interior, exterior, terminal and forensic ballistics studies;
- Performs serial number restoration techniques on firearms related evidence;
- Performs render-safe procedures in the unloading of weapons which are compromised, unsafe, or unfamiliar to Department members;
- Utilizes computer programs, such as DRUGFIRE, to conduct searches and complete analysis of data, as well as to provide input to federal computer data banks concerning firearms evidence;
- Advises police officers and investigators in the collection and handling of ballistics and firearms at crime scenes;
- Prepares reports on all examinations of evidence which includes description of weapon and/or ammunition, and results of test firing and/or comparisons;
- Testifies in court as to the findings of tests performed in the laboratory and concerning general firearms examination science.

May occasionally be assigned to other duties for training purposes or to meet technological changes or emergencies.

**Qualifications** An employee of this class must have the following knowledges and abilities:

**Knowledges of:**

- The makes, models, and characteristics of domestic and foreign firearms and ammunition;
- Equipment used to test and identify firearms and ammunition;
- Principles and practices of toolmark identification;
- Principles and practices of firearm and ammunition identification and comparison;
- Operations and handling of firearms and ammunition;
- General principles of external and terminal ballistics;
- Laboratory techniques used in the performance of microscopic examinations as they pertain to firearms and ammunition;
- Federal, state, and local laws governing firearms;
- Rules of evidence and court room procedures;
- Procedures pertaining to chemical restoration;
- Principles, practices, and procedures of general laboratory safety.

**The ability to:**

- Use laboratory equipment, especially microscopes, scales, and other firearm testing devices;
- Make precise and accurate microscopic examinations and comparisons;
- Communicate effectively for the purpose of conducting training classes and explaining technical aspects of ballistics and firearms examination to non-technical people;
- Testify effectively in court regarding the findings of tests performed and concerning general firearms examination science;
- Deal tactfully and effectively with coworkers, including sworn law enforcement personnel, public officials, and the public;
- Maintain records, prepare documentation on the results of the collection and analysis of evidence, and prepare reports on analyzed evidence which may be used in court.

Persons with disabilities may be able to perform the essential duties of this class with reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation will be evaluated on an individual basis and depends, in part, on the specific requirements for the job, the limitations related to the disability, and the ability of the hiring department to reasonably accommodate the limitations.

**Minimum Requirements:**

1. Graduation from a recognized four-year college or university; and
2. Four years of full-time paid experience in examining and identifying firearms, weapons, ammunition and similar evidence, including court experience as an examiner of firearms evidence in a criminal proceeding.

A major in physical or natural science is desired, but not required.

License: A valid California driver's license may be required.

**As provided in Civil Service Commission Rule 2.5 and Section 4.55 of the Administrative Code, this specification is descriptive, explanatory and not restrictive. It is not intended to declare what all of the duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications of any position shall be.**