



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Division of State Fire Marshal
Bureau of Fire Standards & Training

Arson Investigation

Title: Master Syllabus

Date: January 11, 2018

Course Title	Arson Investigation
Course Number	BFST407, ATCP407
Prerequisite(s)	None
Revision Date	August 2022
College Credit Recommendation	None.
Continuing Education Units (CEU's)	This course does not count for CEUs.
Class Days/Time	Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Supervisor	Name: Robert Coyne Email: FireCollegeTraining@myfloridacfo.com
Program Specialist Contact info	Name: Karl Morgan Email: Karl.Morgan@myfloridacfo.com
Class Location	Florida State Fire College
Course Description	<p>The curriculum in this course is a continuation of origin and cause investigations. The instruction is designed to provide the student with the basic foundations of arson investigations to include, but not limited to, the ethical basis of arson investigations, serial firesetters, juvenile firesetters, the different types of arson found in Florida, specific evidentiary issues, the impact of <i>Daubert</i> court decisions on testifying in arson cases, the proper manner of recording arson investigations, evidence collection, specific arson fire sets and safety at the arson scene. This course follows the requirements for qualifications as a fire investigator as set for in the <i>NFPA 1033 Standards for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigators</i>.</p> <p>To attend this course, students must be a certified firefighter, certified law enforcement personnel, law enforcement crime scene technicians, or certified fire safety inspector.</p>
Student Learning Outcomes	<p>After the successful completion of this course, the student will be able to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop a profound understanding of the crime of arson and its impact on Florida.2. Understand and utilize a systematic approach to investigating a fire.3. Describe legal and liability issues with regard to fire scene investigations.4. Understand the elements of a fire investigation that becomes a criminal

	<p>investigation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Demonstrate appropriate safety measures at a fire scene and during the course of an investigation. 6. Develop knowledge of arson indicators. 7. Identify the procedures and special considerations during the investigation of fires involving a fatality. 8. Develop a working familiarity with serial arson and its characteristics. 9. Discuss hate crimes and church fires. 10. Describe typical incendiary devices. 11. Discuss the crime of arson in Florida. 12. Understand the conditions and procedures used to conduct a vehicle fire investigation and understand the nature of vehicle arson. 13. Explain the process and background of wildland fire investigations. 14. Explain what an Accelerant Detection Canine Team is and its application to the investigation of fires. 15. Discuss sources of information available to the origin and cause investigator 16. Understand the requirements to document a fire scene. 17. Describe the importance of and techniques involved in fire scene photography. 18. Discuss the basic precepts of evidence, evidence collection and spoliation. 19. Utilize qualifying terminology in detailing an accurate written depiction of the fire scene. 20. Know and apply the concepts of professionalism associated with fire investigation 21. Apply the concepts of ethical conduct in the investigation of fires.
Required Textbook	<p><i>Florida Fire Investigation Manual (2017)</i>, Publisher: Department of Financial Services, Division of Investigative & Forensic Services.</p> <p><i>Fire Investigator Principles and Practice to NFPA 921 and 1033 (2016)</i>, Publisher: Jones & Bartlett Learning. Burlington, MA.</p>
Required Materials	Students are required to have a hard hat, protective boots and gloves.
Method of Instruction	Classroom
Grading	Passing 70%
Certification(s)	<p>Required course for Fire Investigator Program.</p> <p><u>ATPC407 or BFST407</u> ARSON INVESTIGATION</p> <p><u>FFP2630, ATPC2630 or BFST2630</u> LATENT INVESTIGATIONS</p> <p><u>FFP2670, ATPC2670 or BFST2670</u> LEGAL ISSUES FOR INVESTIGATORS</p> <p><u>ATPC406 or BFST406</u> POST BLAST INVESTIGATIONS</p>
Attendance Policy	You are required to attend all sessions of the course and complete all pre-course assignments. Failure to appear in class for a scheduled activity will be considered an

	absence. Students are allowed to miss 10% of the class and still receive credit. There are no makeup sessions.
Academic Integrity	Academic integrity is crucial to the learning community and indicates respect for the college, the instructor, the course, your classmates, and yourself. Any violation of this trust, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, or using or having any content of an un-administered test, will result in immediate dismissal from the course. Under Florida Statute 633, any student dismissed for academic dishonesty can be refused acceptance for any course administered by FSFC.
Students with Disabilities	Any student who has a permanent or temporary disability that may require a reasonable accommodation to participate in the course must present documentation of the disability and requested accommodation no later than the beginning of the course.
Emergency Evacuation Policy	Occupants of buildings on the Florida State Fire College campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. • Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building. • If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the instructor on the first day of class. • In the event of an evacuation, follow the guidance of the instructor. • Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by Florida State Fire College personnel to do so.
Requesting Emergency Care	Any request for emergency care should be initiated by calling “911” from any phone on campus of the Florida State Fire College. Phones are located in each classroom. Additionally, in the event of any emergency, immediately contact an instructor or staff member.
Critical Event Procedures	<p>Severe Weather – there is a lightning detection system on campus which has an audible 15 second blast of an air horn. If you are outside, please follow your instructor or move to the closest permanent building. Once the threat is over, there will be three 5 second blasts of the signal.</p> <p>Security – During the daytime, security is handled by full time faculty and staff. There are security guards on duty in the evenings and weekends. Please comply with the requests made of security officers. Failure to do so can result in removal from campus.</p> <p>Student Badges – You will be issued a badge to be worn anytime you are on campus.</p>
Terminal Learning Objectives	<p>Given information from discussion and reading materials, the student will perform the following objectives to a written test accuracy of at least 70% and meet the applicable job performance requirements of NFPA 1033 (2014).</p> <p><u>Unit 1 Lesson 2: The Crime of Arson and Arson in Florida</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student will develop a profound understanding of the crime of arson and its

impact on Florida.

Unit 1 Lesson 3: Basic Fire Methodology

1. The student will describe the scientific method.
2. The student will discuss the scientific method as it relates to fire investigation.
3. The student will identify the basic steps of the scientific method in the context of a fire investigation.

Unit 1 Lesson 4: Legal Considerations During Investigation

1. The student will identify legal considerations for fire and explosion investigations.
2. The student will describe the role of an investigator as a trial witness.
3. The student will identify and describe the types of evidence in an investigation.
4. The student will discuss arson, its forms, and its legal repercussions.
5. The student will identify fire-related criminal acts.
6. The student will describe the role of civil litigation in fire investigation cases.

Unit 1 Lesson 5: FAC Rule 69D

1. The student will develop an understanding of legal and liability issues with regard to fire scene investigations.

Unit 1 Lesson 6: Safety

1. The student will demonstrate appropriate safety measures at a fire scene.

Unit 2 Lesson 1: Incendiary Fires

1. The student will identify and describe incendiary fire indicators.
2. The student will describe the assessment of fire growth and damage in incendiary fires.
3. The student will identify and describe potential incendiary fire indicators not directly related to combustion.
4. The student will record and examine other evidentiary factors.

Unit 2 Lesson 2: Fire and Explosion Deaths and Injuries

1. The student will describe the investigative considerations necessary at a fatal fire scene.
2. The student will describe the death-related pathological and toxicological examination of fire and explosion victims.
3. The student will identify and describe the fundamental issues of death investigation.
4. The student will describe how to determine the cause and manner of death.
5. The student will identify and describe postmortem tests and documentation.
6. The student will describe the investigative considerations necessary for a fire that caused injury.

Unit 2 Lesson 3: Criminal Crimes and Crusaders

1. The student will understand the nature of arson committed by persons.

Unit 2 Lesson 4: Serial Arsonist

1. The student will develop a working familiarity with serial arson and its characteristics.

Unit 3 Lesson 1: Hate Crimes and Church Fires

1. The student will become familiar with hate crimes and church fires.

Unit 3 Lesson 2: Delayed Devices

1. The Student will develop an awareness of typical incendiary devices.

Unit 3 Lesson 3: The Crime of Arson and Arson Indicators

1. The student will know and apply the different categories of arson.
2. The student will develop knowledge of arson indicators.

Unit 3 Lesson 4: Structure Fires

1. The student will be able to apply origin and cause concepts to the investigation of structure fires.
2. The student will be aware of the special circumstances with regard to manufactured homes and its relationship to fires.

Unit 3 Lesson 5: Vehicle Arsons

1. The student will have a basic understanding of the conditions and procedures used to conduct a vehicle fire investigation.
2. The student will develop an understanding of the nature of vehicle arson.

Unit 3 Lesson 6: Wildland Arson Fires

1. The student will become familiar with the process and background of wildland fire investigations.

Unit 4 Lesson 1: Accelerant Detection K9

1. The student will describe the Accelerant Detection K-9 Team and its application to the investigation of fires.

Unit 4 Lesson 2: Sources of Information

1. The student will discuss the reliability of information.
2. The student will identify legal consideration when finding sources of information.
3. The student will identify and describe different forms of information.
4. The student will describe how to prepare for and conduct interviews in an investigation.
5. The student will identify government sources of information.
6. The student will identify private sources of information.

Unit 4 Lesson 3: Documentation of the Investigation

1. The student will describe the use of photography in fire investigation.
2. The student will describe the use of diagrams and drawings in fire investigation.
3. The student will describe the use of note taking in fire investigation.
4. The student will describe the use of reports in fire investigation.

Unit 4 Lesson 4: Physical Evidence

1. The student will identify types of physical evidence found at a fire investigation scene.
2. The student will describe how to preserve the fire scene and physical evidence.
3. The student will describe how to avoid contaminating physical evidence.
4. The student will describe how to collect physical evidence.
5. The student will describe how to identify collected physical evidence.
6. The student will describe how to transport and store physical evidence.
7. The student will describe the examination and testing process for physical evidence.
8. The student will describe how and when physical evidence should be disposed of.

Unit 4 Lesson 5: Report Writing

1. The student will have an understanding of the requirements to document a fire scene.
2. The student will be able to use qualifying terminology in detailing an accurate written depiction of the fire scene.
3. The student will develop a basic understanding of the importance and techniques involved in fire scene photography.
4. The student will know and understand the basic tenets and objectives of a fire scene sketch.

Unit 5 Lesson 1: The Role of the Fire Investigator

1. The student will know and apply the concepts of professionalism associated with fire investigation.

Unit 5 Lesson 2: Ethics in Criminal Fire Investigations

1. The student will apply the concepts of ethical conduct in the investigation of fires.