

FIRE DEPARTMENT
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under the general supervision of the Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist, the Hazardous Materials Specialist performs routine to moderately difficult tasks in compliance of hazardous materials codes, ordinances, and regulations. The class is a journey-level position, and the incumbent has education and experience in the identification, storage, use, handling, and disposition of hazardous materials. The Hazardous Materials Specialist also investigates the origin and cause of fires.

The incumbent may provide limited work direction to other Department personnel as necessary and may work out of class in the capacity of a Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist.

This classification is a Fair Labor Standards Act non-exempt, represented position in the Classified Service.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This class is distinguished from the classification of Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist in that the latter is a supervisory position having overall responsibility to manage the hazardous materials program, and performs the more difficult and specialized tasks in compliance with hazardous materials codes, ordinances, and regulations. A Hazardous Materials Specialist is not trained in fire suppression and is primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with hazardous materials related codes and ordinances, and determines origin and cause during fire investigations.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Depending upon assignment, duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conduct routine to moderately difficult inspections and investigations of facilities storing or using hazardous materials to ensure compliance with hazardous material codes, ordinances, and regulations.
- Review, evaluate, and process permit applications in accordance with applicable hazardous materials regulatory requirements. When necessary, prepare correspondence or meet with permit applicants to explain comments and additional requirements.
- Assist in the development of and may present training sessions to Department personnel in conducting hazardous materials inspections which conform to established codes, ordinances, and regulations.
- Investigate complaints and violations regarding the storage, use, and handling of hazardous materials. Testify in court, as appropriate.
- May respond to emergencies involving hazardous materials and function as a technical expert in the investigation of hazardous materials spills or related incidents.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (continued)

- Conduct fire safety inspections of weekend events, fairs, festivals, public fireworks displays and/or special effects.
- Assist in the development of procedures and guidelines consistent with program goals and objectives.
- Enforce applicable federal, state, and local fire and safety codes to ensure that suspicious fires are investigated and resolved in compliance with legal mandates.
- May be responsible for investigating complex and difficult fire investigation cases.
- Confer with various local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to aid in the apprehension of suspects; compilation and preparation of evidence, and documentation of origin and causes of fires.
- Testify as an expert witness in court proceedings for arson-caused and accident-caused fires.
- Attend fire investigation conferences and obtain classroom instruction to ensure that the Department's fire investigation services are in compliance with County, state and federal regulations.
- May be assigned on-call duty on a rotational basis.
- Maintain education and training consistent with job requirements.
- Establish, organize, and maintain a variety of written and electronic record-keeping related to hazardous materials code compliance.
- Write correspondence to a variety of sources using a computer, relative to compliance with hazardous materials codes and regulations.
- Coordinate with other local, state, and federal agencies, as needed, regarding inspection, plan review, investigation, compliance, and regulatory consistency.
- May be required to assume the duties of the Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist in his/her absence.
- Maintain accurate records, conduct special studies, and generate reports regarding work performed.
- May be assigned duties in other Department programs at the discretion of the Fire Chief.
- Perform other related duties as assigned.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Education and Experience: A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in chemistry, environmental studies, biology, or other related science associated with the study of hazardous materials or environmental protection. Two years of responsible work experience which includes conducting inspections of facilities concerning the proper storage, use, and handling of hazardous materials.

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As a condition of employment, the incumbent will be required to have completed the following coursework within one year of employment (or as courses become available).

- Fire Inspector 1A Duties and Administration
- Fire Inspector 1B Fire and Life Safety
- Fire Inspector 1C Field Inspection
- Fire Inspector 1D Field Inspection – California Specific

Or

- Fire Prevention 1A Fire Inspection Practices
- Fire Prevention 1B Code Enforcement
- Fire Prevention 1C Flammable Liquids and Gas

Completion of California State Fire Training and Education Fire Investigator II coursework (Fire Investigation 2A and 2B) or the Fire Investigator (2017) coursework (Fire Investigation 1A, 1B and 1C) within one year of appointment.

International Code Council (ICC) California Underground Storage Tank System Operator certification and Underground Storage Tank Inspector certification must be obtained within six (6) months of employment and must be maintained, as required by state law, to perform assigned duties.

Must obtain and maintain certifications as required by state law to perform assigned duties.

Knowledge Of:

- Principles, practices, and techniques of hazardous materials inspection, fire prevention, and fire investigation.
- Basic chemical principles and their application in identifying and evaluating hazardous chemical situations and reactions.
- Federal, state, and local hazardous material codes and ordinances regarding the proper storage, use, and handling of hazardous materials and toxic gases, including the adopted fire and building codes.
- A variety of hazardous material compliance plans that address underground and aboveground storage facility installations, modifications, and closures.
- Building construction, including hazardous material, alarm systems, sprinkler systems, wet and dry standpipe systems and related systems.
- Written communication principles to prepare clear and concise documents.
- Department regulations and operational procedures.

Ability To:

- Accurately interpret regulations, codes, and ordinances relating to hazardous materials storage, handling, and use.

Ability To: (continued)

- Correctly identify potential hazards in the storage, handling, and use of hazardous materials, and recommend corrective action.
- Perform physical labor, and wear protective clothing and breathing apparatus as required to perform inspections and investigations.
- Understand and carry out verbal and written directions.
- Maintain accurate records, prepare clear and concise reports, speak and write effectively.
- Maintain a calm and professional demeanor in a confrontational or difficult situation.
- Establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Work irregular or protracted hours, and respond promptly to callbacks.

Working Conditions/Physical Demands: Work is performed both in an office setting and in the field including on fire grounds. There may be exposure to noise, dust, flammable, and combustible materials, and smoke. Work involves physical exertion, including standing, stooping, reaching, crawling and climbing. Manual dexterity, clear, understandable speech, visual and hearing acuity are also required.

Employment Condition: Must be flexible in work assignments. Program assignments and/or assignment to a specialized function may occur based on the needs of the division.

Required License: Possession of a valid state of California driver's license.

Pre-Employment Requirements: The candidate must complete and pass a background check, Live Scan fingerprint, psychological evaluation, and a medical examination.