

FIRE DEPARTMENT
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

SENIOR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under the direction of the Hazardous Materials Assistant Fire Marshal, the Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist manages the hazardous materials program, performs the more difficult and specialized tasks in compliance with the hazardous materials codes, ordinances and regulations, and supervises field staff assigned to the hazardous materials program. The incumbent also serves in an advisory capacity to Department staff on hazardous materials codes, ordinances and emergency response. The incumbent has substantial education and experience in the identification, storage, use, handling, and disposition of hazardous materials. The Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist also investigates the origin and cause of fires.

The incumbent may work out of class in a higher classification within the division providing that s/he meets the qualifications of the higher classification.

This classification is a Fair Labor Standards Act non-exempt, represented position in the Classified Service. In accordance with California Public Employee Retirement Law, Section 20434.5, this classification is designated as a California Public Retirement System safety classification.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is the supervisory level in the Hazardous Materials Specialist series. The Senior Hazardous Materials Specialist is distinguished from the lower classification of Hazardous Materials Specialist in that the latter is a non-supervisory position and performs routine to moderately complex tasks in compliance with hazardous materials codes, ordinances and regulations, and determines the origin and cause of fires during fire investigations. In addition to the many duties assigned to the Hazardous Materials Specialist, the incumbent in this position is responsible for reports the hazardous materials program must provide to partner agencies.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Supervise, plan, evaluate, motivate, direct and participate in the work assignments and activities of Hazardous Materials Specialists and other personnel assigned to the Fire Prevention Division.
- Conduct orientation and training of Hazardous Materials Specialists in all phases of hazardous material duties to develop and maintain the capabilities and required standards. Address personnel matters and apply progressive discipline as appropriate.
- Conduct specialized and complex inspections and investigations of facilities storing or using hazardous materials to ensure compliance with hazardous material codes, ordinances, and regulations.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (continued)

- Review, evaluate, and process compliance plans and 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.
- Develop and present training sessions for Department personnel in conducting hazardous materials inspections, which conform to established codes, ordinances, and regulations.
- Prepare reports such as the annual Participating Agency report to the Santa Clara County Unified Program Agency, the annual Urban Runoff Program report, and other quarterly and annual reports required by the Department and partner agencies.
- Evaluate program needs and recommend on appropriate courses of action that meet program goals and objectives to the Hazardous Materials Assistant Fire Marshal and/or the Deputy Chief or Director of Fire Prevention.
- Coordinate with other local, state, and federal agencies, as needed, regarding inspection, plan review, investigation, enforcement, and regulatory consistency.
- Provide technical assistance and direction to other Department personnel as assigned.
- Write procedures and guidelines consistent with program goals and objectives.
- May respond to emergencies involving hazardous materials and directly assist and function as a technical expert to the Incident Commander. May enter areas where hazardous and other materials are present to evaluate and determine degree of hazard.
- Establish, organize, and maintain a variety of written and electronic records related to hazardous materials code compliance.
- Write correspondence to a variety of sources relative to compliance with hazardous materials codes and regulations.
- Investigate complaints and violations regarding the storage, use, and handling of hazardous materials. Testify in court, as appropriate.
- Enforce applicable federal, state, and local fire and safety codes to ensure that 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.
- Provide for and/or train subordinate personnel in various elements of fire investigation.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (continued)

- Attend fire investigation conferences and obtains 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.
- May conduct fire safety inspections of weekend events, fairs, festivals, public fireworks displays and/or special effects.
- Conduct special studies and makes reports of 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: Equivalent to the completion of a Bachelor of Science 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. Five years of increasingly responsible work experience in a governmental regulatory agency conducting inspections and investigations, reviewing plans, and performing other code compliance functions relating to the storage, handling, and use of hazardous materials.

At time of application, the following coursework must be completed:

- 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

Must possess and maintain, as required by state law, the International Code Council (ICC) California Underground Storage Tank Inspector certification.

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

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.

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Knowledge Of:

- Principles of supervision and training to effectively organize and direct personnel assigned to the hazardous materials program.
- Principles, practices, and techniques of hazardous materials inspection and investigation, 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.
- 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 to effectively explain to others and incorporate them in day-to-day job activities.
- Hazardous materials compliance plans, which address underground and aboveground storage facility installations, modifications, and closures.

Ability To:

- Effectively communicate, lead, supervise, plan, evaluate, coordinate, train, and direct the activities of Hazardous Materials Specialists and other assigned personnel.
- Effectively plan, direct, coordinate, and complete assigned projects, activities, and specialized administrative duties.
- Accurately interpret and properly apply regulations, codes and ordinances relating to hazardous materials storage, handling, and use.
- Accurately interpret and properly apply building and fire codes.
- Review and interpret construction documents.
- 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.
- Effectively communicate fire prevention techniques to the public.
- Prepare clear and concise reports and speak and write effectively.
- Maintain a calm and professional demeanor in a confrontational or difficult situation.
- Establish and maintain effective 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.

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, and medical examination.