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CHAPTER 72 STAFFING, TRAINING, AND PERSONNEL ACTIONS

7201 MANAGING AND ORGANIZING THE LABORATORY SYSTEM

7201.1 Top Management.

Top management has system-wide or laboratory-wide authority and responsibility.

A. In the Office of Forensic Sciences (SF), top management consists of the Deputy Assistant Administrator; the Associate Deputy Assistant Administrators (Laboratory Operations (SFL) and Operations and Compliance (SFO)); Forensic Science Advisor (SFS); and the Section Chiefs for Administrative Support and Financial Management (SFA), Environmental Management (SFE), Laboratory Management and Operations (SFM), Quality Assurance (SFQ), and Forensic Sciences Instruction (SFT).

B. In the laboratory, top management consists of the Laboratory Director (LD) and the Associate Laboratory Director (ALD).

C. Unless otherwise noted, top management may delegate responsibilities.

NOTE: Exhibit 1/7201 lists acronyms used in this subchapter.

7201.2 Key Management.

Key Management has oversight responsibilities of processes or personnel in the laboratory.

A. In SF, key management consists of Unit Chiefs and Program Managers.

B. In the laboratory, Key Management consists of Supervisors and the Laboratory Administrative Officer (LAO).

C. Unless otherwise noted, Key Management may delegate responsibilities.

7201.3 Table of Organization.

A. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Table of Organization outlines laboratory staffing. Individual Position Descriptions define duties and responsibilities.

B. The LD may initiate changes to the table of organization.

7202 STAFFING LABORATORIES

7202.1 Laboratory Director.

The LD is the top manager in charge of operations and personnel at the laboratory. The LD reports to the Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator (SFL).

NOTE: Exhibit 1/7202 lists acronyms used in this subchapter.

7202.2 Associate Laboratory Director.

The ALD oversees the day-to-day operations of the laboratory and also serves as the Laboratory Quality Assurance Manager (LQAM). The ALD reports to the LD.

7202.3 Supervisor.

The Supervisor manages a group of forensic examiners in the areas of chemistry, latent print examination, or digital evidence examination and reports to the ALD.

7202.4 Laboratory Administrative Officer.

The Laboratory Administrative Officer (LAO) manages laboratory technical and administrative support staff and reports to the ALD.

7202.5 Quality Assurance Specialist.

The Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS) assists with managing all quality aspects of the laboratory and reports to the ALD.

7202.6 Forensic Chemist.

Non-supervisory forensic chemists examine drug evidence and report the results of examination. They may also perform the following duties:

A. Testify in court as an expert witness.

B. Train law enforcement personnel and other chemists.

C. Conduct research.

D. Provide technical and consultative services for Special Agents, Intelligence Analysts, Diversion Investigators, prosecutors, and other forensic analysts and law enforcement personnel.

E. Assist with field work.

7202.7 Digital Forensic Examiner.

Non-supervisory digital forensic examiners examine digital evidence and report the results of examination. They may also perform the following duties:

A. Testify in court as an expert witness.

B. Provide technical training in areas relative to handling and investigation of digital evidence.

C. Provide technical and consultative services for Special Agents, Intelligence Analysts, Diversion Investigators, prosecutors, and other forensic analysts and law enforcement personnel.

D. Assist with field work.

7202.8 Fingerprint Specialist.

Non-supervisory fingerprint specialists develop, preserve, and compare latent prints on various substrates and report their findings. They may also perform the following duties:

A. Testify in court as an expert witness.

B. Develop and conduct training to law enforcement personnel regarding photographing evidence and collecting, preserving, and processing evidence in the field.

C. Provide technical and consultative services for Special Agents, Intelligence Analysts, Diversion Investigators, prosecutors, and other forensic analysts and law enforcement personnel.

D. Assist with field work, including the processing of latent prints and photographs at crime scenes.

7202.9 Evidence Specialist.

Evidence specialists handle the evidence received by the laboratory. They may also perform the following duties:

A. Testify in court.

B. Provide training on correct procedures for handling evidence.

7202.10 Safety and Occupational Health Specialist.

Safety and occupational health specialists manage safety, occupational health, workers compensation, environmental management, and security programs for the laboratory.

7202.11 Other Support Staff.

Support staff is comprised of evidence specialists, safety and occupational health specialists, and additional technical or administrative personnel.

7203 ASSIGNING LABORATORY PERSONNEL

7203.1 Requesting Voluntary Reassignment.

A. For GS-1320 positions, follow the Forensic Chemist Career Progression Guide (CPG).

B. In accordance with Personnel Manual (PM) 2335.25, all non-chemist SF employees that request a voluntary reassignment will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will follow PRO-7203.1, Requesting a Voluntary Reassignment.

NOTE: Exhibit 1/7203 lists acronyms used in this subchapter.

7203.2 Tour of Duty at the DEA Training Academy.

A. GS-13 chemists assigned to the DEA Academy as Course Developer/Instructor will serve a standard tour of duty of 3-5 years absent a promotion, reassignment, or a change in the needs of the agency as determined by SF.

B. Permanent Change of Station (PCS) is authorized for reassignments, pending available funding. See PRO-7203.2, Requesting a Permanent Reassignment from the DEA Academy.

7204 TRAINING AND DEVELOPING LABORATORY PERSONNEL

7204.1 General.

A. Basic technical training is accomplished through the Basic Forensic Chemist Course (BFCC), Fingerprint Specialist Orientation, and the Basic Digital Forensics Training Program.

B. Additional courses may be developed in specialized topics, in cooperation with the Office of Training (TR).

C. SF coordinates periodic conferences of personnel (e.g., LDs, working groups, supervisors, etc.) to discuss topics relevant to the attendees and may include training and/or professional development.

NOTE: Exhibit 1/7204 lists acronyms used in this subchapter.

7204.11 Responsibility for Training.

A. LD:

1. Designates a training officer (and an alternate) with responsibility for technical training for each laboratory discipline.
2. Ensures the training officers have technical competence and experience in the discipline.

B. Laboratory Management:

1. Provides oversight to subordinates' professional development.
2. Assigns training to employees, based on the need.
3. Ensures that sufficient time is allocated during work hours for approved training.
4. Ensures that all training is documented properly.
5. Ensures that individuals assigned to ancillary duties are trained.

7204.12 Funding Training.

A. LDs authorize funding for technical and non-technical training from the laboratory's operating funds.

B. LDs may request funding for non-technical training from TR.

7204.13 Documenting Training.

The LD:

A. Ensures documentation of training in the DEA Learning System (DEALS).

B. Documents successful completion of basic technical training by issuing a certificate and course transcript to the trainee and by entering into DEALS within 15 days of completion.

C. Ensures internal and external continuing education is documented in DEALS within 15 days of completion.

7204.14 Evaluating Training.

A. Employees and their supervisors will evaluate completed training.

B. For external requests, supervisors will document their training evaluations during the verification step in DEALS.

7204.2 Meeting Training Requirements.

7204.21 On-Boarding New Employees.

Laboratory management conducts orientation briefings for all new employees, in accordance with PM 2410.1.

7204.22 Basic Training of Forensic Analysts.

A. The LD reviews the background and experience of each forensic chemist, fingerprint specialist, and digital forensic examiner to determine suitability for supplemental training.

B. The training programs for forensic chemists, fingerprint specialists, and digital forensic examiners must include: technical knowledge required for evidence analysis, applications of ethical practices in forensic sciences (see 7205), a general knowledge of DEA forensic disciplines, court testimony, and applicable criminal law and procedures.

C. New forensic chemists, including Student Career Experience Program students hired as forensic analysts, must attend the BFCC conducted at the DEA Academy.

EXCEPTION: Reinstatement-eligible applicants do not attend BFCC.

D. The hiring laboratory provides on-the-job technical training for all other analysts. Background and experience determines the complexity of training necessary to enable the employee to perform the duties assigned.

7204.23 Establishing Competency of Forensic Analysts.

A. All laboratory analysts must demonstrate competency (as determined by their respective LD) in consultation with laboratory training officers, prior to analyzing evidentiary material. They accomplish this through:

1. Successful completion of basic training and post-basic training. Forensic chemists follow PRO-7204.23, Post-BFCC Training.

NOTE: The laboratory may assign additional tasks or studies in post-basic training to establish competency.

2. Demonstrated knowledge of instruments, equipment, and techniques used to perform analyses.

3. Review of the individual's education, training, and experience.

B. The LD ensures documentation of successful completion of laboratory training assignments and final competency in DEALS.

7204.24 Authorizing Forensic Analysts to Perform Work.

A. Upon establishing competency, the LD issues a memorandum notifying the employee and SF that, "The employee is competent and authorized to operate necessary instruments and equipment to conduct evidence analysis and is authorized to give opinions and interpretations of their work."

B. Upon receipt of the memorandum, the employee is authorized to handle evidence, perform sampling, operate all laboratory instrumentation and equipment, conduct testing, provide opinions and interpretations, and issue laboratory reports in the discipline trained.

C. The LD ensures filing of the memorandum and the training certificate in the corresponding DEA Records Information System (DEARIS) file.

7204.25 Continuing Education/Training and Developing Leaders.

A. Laboratory analysts must complete a minimum of 20 hours of training/professional development per year on official duty hours.

1. Analysts may receive instruction or training from other DEA personnel.
2. Instructors/trainers must provide professional development which is relevant to the laboratory's mission.

3. Analysts may apply time spent at training events needed to ensure recertification eligibility (e.g., International Association of Identification, American Board of Criminalistics, Clandestine Laboratory Recertification, etc.) to this requirement.

B. Laboratory personnel trained for hazardous waste operations and emergency response (e.g., clandestine laboratory or Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER)) attend required annual refresher training.

C. All forensic chemists assigned to or selected for quality assurance specialist duties will complete training on laboratory accreditation within six months of assignment.

D. All supervisors and managers must complete a minimum of 16 hours of training relevant to the laboratory's mission per year, of which at least 8 hours must be leadership training.

NOTE: Other mandatory training (e.g., safety, security, travel, etc.) does not satisfy this requirement.

7204.3 Participating In Private Organizations.

Refer to document entitled *Interacting with Private Organizations* for guidance related to joining private organizations.

7204.31 Actively Participating in a Private Organization

A. Employees wishing to actively participate in private organizations in their unofficial capacity must first obtain an ethics opinion from the Ethics and Standards of Conduct Unit (CCE). Active participation includes, but is not limited to, holding office, serving on committee, or organizing meetings.

B. Employees must determine whether DEA Outside Employment approval is required prior to actively participating in an organization. (See Interacting with Private Organizations). If an employee is unsure whether they must submit an outside employment request, he or she should contact CCE (See NOTE below).

C. Employees must seek an ethics opinion before interacting in their official capacity with an organization in which they actively participate in an unofficial capacity.

NOTE: Additional ethics guidance is available from CCE, and requests for written opinions may be emailed to REDACTED.

7204.32 Attending Meetings and Conferences

A. LDs may permit attendance at domestic conferences or scientific meetings, if previously approved in their financial plan.

NOTE 1: See Laboratory Operations Manual (LOM) Chapter 75 for laboratory planning and authorizing travel.

NOTE 2: When laboratory personnel attend meetings or conferences outside their jurisdiction, the LD of the traveler should notify the LD who has jurisdiction of the name and date(s) of the scientific meeting or organization involved.

NOTE 3: The LD of the Special Testing and Research Laboratory may send individuals as presenters to any domestic location and should notify the appropriate LD of the name and date(s) of the scientific meeting or organization involved.

B. Approval to attend domestic scientific meetings or conferences requires involvement in the meeting/conference to be attended (e.g., oral or poster presentation of information pertaining to the analyst's forensic discipline, serving as a moderator of a scientific session, etc.).

NOTE 1: The LD must determine if the employee actively participates in the private organization hosting the scientific meeting or conference. If so, the LD must seek an ethics opinion before approving the employee's attendance.

NOTE 2: LOM subchapter 7603 contains requirements regarding reporting technical/scientific findings to include abstract, presentation and publication submissions.

EXCEPTION 1: Forensic analysts may attend two meetings within their first three years of employment, without meeting the above requirement.

EXCEPTION 2: Fingerprint specialists certified through the International Association of Identification (IAI) may attend annual meetings to maintain certification without meeting the above requirement.

C. SF approves requests to attend international meetings or specialized meetings requiring specific subject matter expertise.

D. LDs may authorize administrative leave if the participant attends at personal expense in accordance with PM 2630.19-3.G.

E. Conference participants provide a trip report to the LD within 30 days of return. This report will be included in the next monthly report. See LOM 7001.

NOTE: Attendees from a single laboratory may submit a consolidated report.

7205 PROMOTING LABORATORY PERSONNEL

7205.1 Initiating Personnel Actions.

A. Laboratory personnel adhere to Chapters 22 and 23 of the PM for further information.

B. Chemists follow the Forensic Chemist CPG.

NOTE: Exhibit 1/7205 lists acronyms used in this subchapter.

7205.11 Promoting Laboratory Employees through GS-12 Grade Levels.

See Chapters 22 and 23 of the PM for further information.

7205.12 Promoting Non-Supervisory Positions to GS-13.

NOTE: This section does not apply to forensic chemists. See the Forensic Chemist CPG.

A. Career Ladder GS-13 Promotions.

1. GS-12 digital forensic examiners, fingerprint specialists, and safety and security specialists may be promoted to non-supervisory GS-13s when the employee has completed three years as a GS-12.

2. The employee must have achieved a successful level of performance for the year preceding the time in grade promotion eligibility date.

B. Early Impact GS-13 Promotions.

1. GS-12 digital forensic examiners, fingerprint specialists, and safety and security specialists may be promoted to non-supervisory GS-13s after one year as a GS-12. See PRO-7205.12B, Impact Promotion to GS-13.

2. The employee must have achieved a successful level of performance at the GS-12 level and must have demonstrated successful performance at the GS-13 level.

7205.13 Promoting Non-Supervisory Analysts to GS-14.

See the Forensic Chemist CPG.

7205.14 GS-14 Supervisors/Program Managers.

NOTE: This section does not apply to forensic chemists. See the Forensic Chemist CPG.

A. Laboratory management or SF makes selections.

B. SF requests funding for permanent change of station (PCS) from the Career Board as needed.

NOTE: The Career Board decides if funding is available once requested.

7205.15 GS-15 Digital Forensic Examiners.

GS-15 positions will be filled through the use of competitive promotions. GS-15 level digital forensic examiner positions include the ALD and LD positions at the Digital Evidence Laboratory.

7206 PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

7206.1 Purpose.

The DEA Office of Forensic Sciences ensures a consistent expectation of integrity for personnel within the laboratory system by providing guiding principles of ethical and professional responsibilities. The guideline (e.g., Department of Justice (*DOJ) Code of Professional Responsibility for the Practice of Forensic Science*) describes expected behavior and supplements the DEA Standards of Conduct (PM 2735).

NOTE: Exhibit 1/7206 lists acronyms used in this subchapter.

7206.2 Responsibility.

The LD ensures:

A. The review of guidelines and discusses annually with all laboratory staff.

B. The guideline is signed and dated by each person in the laboratory to acknowledge the review and expectations. At a minimum, this form is signed upon starting employment with DEA and during the annual performance appraisal process.