

WHAT IS A FORENSIC CHEMIST?

Forensic chemists analyze non-biological trace evidence found at crime scenes in order to identify unknown materials and match samples to known substances. They also analyze drugs/controlled



substances taken from scenes and people in order to identify and sometimes quantify these materials.

Working in a lab, they run tests on samples collected by investigators. They use a variety of techniques, including microscopy, optical analysis (such as UV, infrared, X-ray), gas chromatography and other technologies. They carefully document their findings and write reports that are used to support criminal investigations. Forensic chemists may also testify to their findings in court.

Working Conditions

Forensic chemists usually work in a laboratory setting, often as employees of local, state or federal government. They often stand or sit for long periods of time, perform repetitive tasks and use highly technical equipment.

They must follow strict procedures regarding the handling and documentation of evidence, as well as scientific protocols to ensure the quality and reliability of tests and equipment.

The pressure from law enforcement personnel to speed results can be intense, so the forensic chemist must be able to prioritize well and work efficiently while ensuring that the results are accurate.



Testifying in court requires strong communication skills, including the ability to remain calm in the face of cross-examination and explain complex scientific procedures in a manner juries can understand.

http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/Career/125/Forensic_Chemist