

There's More to Forensic Science Than You Think

Summary: *A career in forensic science can be a rewarding experience, especially since there are several specialties that you can pursue.*



You may have just watched one of the many criminal science investigation shows like *Bones*, *NCSI*, *CSI*, etc. and be **dying to become one of them**. You may already have a passion for criminal justice and think this is your route since being a cop or attorney is not your style. The term forensic scientist applies to a variety of jobs that involve applying science to answer legal questions. Here are some of the **specific jobs you can pursue** within the forensic science industry.

Forensic Science Technician

Imagine this career as the utility workers. They assist with collecting evidence, conducting analysis, and investigating crime scenes. Most of their time is spent at the scene or in a laboratory. You must have an eye for detail and be trained in evidence collection. The typical pay ranges from \$32,000 to \$83,000 per year depending on where you are employed and years of experience.

Bloodstain Pattern Analyst

This job entails analyzing the pattern of blood to learn clues about various crimes. This person is a forensic science technician that has specialized in violent crime scenes. They look at the drips, splatters, spills, and stains of blood to help pinpoint the weapon used, whether there was a struggle, the direction the victim or suspect went, who was the primary aggressor, and if the



wounds were self-inflicted. The salary is similar to that of forensic science technicians.

Forensic Ballistics Expert

These experts know guns up and down. They are able to match a bullet back to the gun that shot it. This expert can also determine the trajectory of the fired bullets to find the origin point. If you have a passion for guns and want to learn how to look at a gun and know if it was fired recently, then try out this career. The salary ranges from \$30,000 to \$80,000.

Forensic DNA Analyst

DNA contains the genetic coding that helps determine likely suspects. DNA evidence is often the most important part of a case. This person takes samples to find out who was at the scene and they can compare samples to databases to find a match. Expect to earn \$30,000 to \$80,000 per year.

Polygraph Examiner

Polygraph tests are not perfect and don't always hold up in court, but their findings are still valuable to help investigators solve crimes and detect deception. These examiners go through lengthy training to be able to develop their skills. Their average salary is \$56,000 a year.

Forensic Documents Examiner

A forensic documents examiner can compare handwriting samples, detect fraud, and pinpoint the origin of a document. This includes looking at forgeries of contracts, bank statements, checks, and other electronic records and documents. Their training enables them to check the validity of a signature and find the relative age of a document. The salary for this specialty varies greatly depending on the employer and amount of experience.

Digital Forensics Experts and Forensic Computer Investigators

This specialty is bigger than ever, with technology becoming such a big part of everyday functions. There are more clues and electronic fingerprints than ever before, and cybercrime is rapidly growing. Expect to be highly trained in technology and receive a salary somewhere around \$50,000.

Forensic Toxicologist



Toxicology can explain a lot about how or why someone dies. These people mainly work on DUI and DWI cases and in those involving possible overdoses. A strong understanding of chemistry and biology is required as well as pharmacology.

Forensic Accountant

These people learn how to easily understand taxes and financial books and usually have a degree in finance or accounting. These accountants are trained in following the money trail in financial crime cases. They work to weed out fraud, ultimately keeping our bank accounts safer. They can earn over \$100,000 a year.

Forensic Anthropologist

These people have specialized expertise in examining human remains. This comes into play in cold cases and gruesome crimes. They study decomposed physical remains and skeletal systems to determine sex, age, approximate weight, and even the types of injuries incurred. Quite often they work at colleges and universities as their primary role and assist law enforcement as needed. Expect to hold at least a master's degree, preferably a doctorate in this position. The pay typically ranges from \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year.

Read [Top 10 Dirty Jobs That Pay Well](#) to learn about jobs that require getting dirty.

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