

**RCMP**

**Forensic Identification Apprentice  
Training Program**

**Information Guide**

**2004**

***Forensic Identification Apprentice Training Program  
Information Guide***

This Information Guide is produced by RCMP Forensic Identification Services for the use of RCMP members involved in the Forensic Identification Apprentice Training Program (FIATP). For more information, please contact one of the following:

RCMP Centralized Training Branch  
P.O. Box 8885 Stn T  
NPS Building, Room 304  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1G 3M8  
(613) 990-0628  
(613) 991-2690  
(613) 993-1033

**or**

RCMP Forensic Identification Services  
Room 503  
National Police Services Building  
1200 Vanier Parkway  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0R2  
(613) 990-9834

## **CONTENTS**

**Part 1     Introduction**

**Part 2     Policy and Administration**

- 2.1    National
- 2.2    Local

**Part 3     Eligibility and Candidate Selection**

- 3.1    Eligibility
- 3.2    Application
- 3.3    Candidate Selection
- 3.4    Candidate Pre-screening
- 3.5    Conditional Transfers
- 3.6    Suitability Assessment
- 3.7    Acceptance and Permanent Transfer

**Part 4     Forensic Identification Apprenticeship Training Program**

- 4.1    Start Date and Duration
- 4.2    Canadian Police College Forensic identification Course
- 4.3    Year One
  - 4.3.1    Training Approach
  - 4.3.2    Program Requirements
  - 4.3.3    Qualification Board
  - 4.3.4    Technician Qualification
- 4.4    Years Two, Three and Four
  - 4.4.1    Training Approach
  - 4.4.2    Program Requirements
  - 4.4.3    Completion of FIATP and Certification
- 4.5    Promotion
- 4.6    Continuing Education
- 4.7    Program Amendments

## **1.0 Introduction**

The RCMP Forensic Identification Apprenticeship Training Program (FIATP) is designed to provide participants with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to become competent, confident practitioners in the science of forensic investigation. RCMP members who successfully complete the full FIATP earn the title of certified Forensic Identification Specialist.

Certified Forensic Identification Specialists are highly skilled professionals. This is reflected in the exacting standards that Forensic Identification apprentices are expected to meet throughout the FIATP. In order to successfully complete the FIATP, members must demonstrate their ability to:

- research, test and evaluate scientific data;
- recognize fingerprint patterns according to current Automatic Fingerprint Identification Systems;
- analyze crime scenes;
- search for, recognize and recover all forms of forensic identification evidence for analysis;
- physically and chemically examine crime scenes and exhibits for trace evidence;
- accurately analyze, compare and identify fingerprint evidence;
- accurately analyze, compare and identify physical evidence;
- accurately record evidence through photography and measurements;
- search for, recognize and recover evidence for Forensic Laboratory analysis;
- accurately produce technical evidence reports;
- prepare demonstrative evidence in the form of charts, drawings and photographs to be tendered as evidence; and
- tender evidence in a court of law as an expert in the comparison and identification of fingerprints and physical evidence.

Certified RCMP Forensic Identification Specialists are respected worldwide for their knowledge, skill and experience. Those members who successfully complete the FIATP and earn certification as Forensic Identification Specialists should be proud of their accomplishment.

## **2.0 Policy and Administration**

### **2.1 National**

National policy governing the FIATP is set by Forensic Identification Services.

The program is administered nationally by the Identification Training Section, Centralized Training Branch(CTB). All program training material, test documents and other administrative documents are maintained and distributed through CTB.

### **2.2 Local**

The Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services and the local Forensic Identification Section Commander are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the FIATP and supervision of apprentices within their region/section.

## **3.0 Eligibility and Candidate Selection**

### **3.1 Eligibility**

All regular RCMP members who have completed a minimum of three years operational policing duties, of which two are recent, are eligible to apply for placement in the FIATP.

### **3.2 Application**

Members apply for the FIATP by responding to a Job Opportunity Bulletin (JOB) posted annually by Centralized Staffing. Applicants names will be retained for one year only. Unsuccessful applicants must re-apply each year to be considered for the following year.

For more information, please contact Centralized Staffing, Centralized Training, or your local Forensic Identification Services Section.

### **3.3 Candidate Selection**

Members must meet the following requirements in order to be accepted into the FIATP:

- successfully complete the candidate pre-screening;
- accept a conditional transfer; and
- successfully complete the Forensic Identification Apprentice Training course.

### **3.4 Candidate Pre-Screening**

Candidate pre-screening is conducted by Centralized Staffing, in cooperation with Forensic Identification Services and Centralized Training. FIATP candidates will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- education (e.g., post secondary training in related discipline such as biology or chemistry);
- SOCO training;
- other related training;
- other related experience;
- history of good performance evaluations;
- demonstrated interest in forensic identification duties;
- successfully complete the Physical Comparison Aptitude Test;

An eligibility list will be created based on the candidates' evaluation. Candidates selected from the eligibility list will be offered conditional transfers to a Forensic Identification Section.

### **3.5 Conditional Transfers**

Most of the FIATP is conducted at local Forensic Identification Sections. Candidates must be prepared to accept a transfer to an available Forensic Identification Section in order to continue with the program. As much as possible, long-distance transfers are kept to a minimum. However, this is not always feasible. Transfers offered at this stage are conditional, pending successful completion of the Forensic Identification Suitability Assessment and final acceptance into the FIATP.

### **3.6 Apprentice Suitability Assessment**

Upon acceptance of a conditional transfer, candidates for the FIATP will undergo a Three Week Suitability Assessment at a local Forensic Identification Section during which the candidate's applicable skills, knowledge, aptitudes and personal suitability for Forensic Identification duties will be evaluated. Working under the supervision of experienced Forensic Identification personnel, candidates will:

- participate in crime scene examination;
- experiment with forensic investigation techniques and laboratory procedures;
- present forensic evidence at a moot trial; and
- attend an autopsy or tour a morgue (if possible).

This assessment is a two-way evaluation. While the candidate's suitability for Forensic Identification duties will be assessed, it is also a good opportunity for the candidate to

become more familiar with the requirements of the job. Any allergies the candidate may have to the numerous chemicals forensic specialists use in the course of their work should also become evident during this Course. Some candidates decide at this stage not to pursue a career in forensics after all.

### **3.7 Acceptance and Permanent Transfer**

Upon completion of the suitability assessment, the participating Forensic Identification Section will send an evaluation of the candidate to CTB. Based on this evaluation, CTB may:

- recommend a candidate for acceptance into the FIATP;
- defer the candidate's placement into the FIATP for an indeterminate period of time (a reason for deferral will be provided); or
- terminate a candidate's continued participation in the FIATP.

CTB will notify all candidates of their status.

Unsuccessful candidates, and candidates who voluntarily withdraw from the program, will return to their regular duties.

Successful candidates will be transferred to their designated Forensic Identification Section to begin training, as soon as operationally convenient.

## **4.0 Forensic Identification Apprenticeship Training Program**

### **4.1 Start Date and Duration**

The FIATP is a minimum of four years in duration. Although individual progress through the program may vary, members must successfully complete all program requirements and serve the full four-year apprenticeship in order to be eligible for certification as Forensic Identification Specialists. The four-year apprenticeship period starts effective the actual date of arrival in the designated Forensic Identification Section.

### **4.2 Canadian Police College Forensic Identification Course**

Upon acceptance into the FIATP, Centralized Training will arrange for the apprentice to attend the next available Forensic Identification Course at the Canadian Police College (CPC). This is the first step in the FIATP, and the apprentice must successfully complete this course to continue with the program.

Ideally, the apprentice will complete the CPC Forensic Identification Course before physically transferring to a Forensic Identification Section. This is not always feasible. If the apprentice is transferred before completing the CPC course, he/she may still start their apprenticeship but may not be able to fully participate in all FIATP activities until completion of the CPC course.

### **4.3 Year One**

#### **4.3.1 *Training Approach***

This is an intensive year of work and study. Working closely with their assigned trainer, first year apprentices combine independent study with structured courses, practical exercises, research, periodic Forensic Knowledge Assessments, moot trials, and hands-on participation in case investigations. First year apprentices will gain valuable on-the-job experience under the direct supervision of experienced Forensic Identification personnel.

#### **4.3.2 *Program Requirements***

First year apprentices must successfully complete all of the following program requirements in order to continue with the program:

- reading and self-directed study;
- fingerprint comparison exercises;
- other practical exercises as assigned;
- periodic Forensic Knowledge Assessments;
- moot trials;
- independent research projects (minimum of five);
- supervised participation in case investigations; and
- fingerprint comparison final test.

In addition to the above program requirements, first year apprentices will receive at least two progress reviews. Apprentices who fail to show adequate progress, or fail to complete any of the required program elements, may be removed from the FIATP and returned to regular duties.

#### **\_\_\_\_\_ 4.3.3 *Qualification Board***

Following the successful completion of all Year One program requirements, apprentices must appear before a Qualification Board to demonstrate their level of expertise. Most apprentices appear before the Qualification Board sometime during months 12 to 14 of their apprenticeship. Each Qualification Board consists of the CTB Identification Training Coordinator and two other certified Forensic Identification Specialists. Qualification Boards are normally held in a neighbouring Division.



The Qualification Board has two parts:

- an oral exam on all aspects of forensic identification; and
- a moot trial where the apprentice will present and defend evidence he/she has collected from an actual crime scene.

The apprentice must successfully complete both parts of the Qualification Board in order to continue the apprenticeship. If necessary, the apprentice may repeat the Qualification Board within six months of the first attempt. Failure to successfully complete the Qualification Board on the second attempt will result in the apprentice's removal from the FIATP and return to regular duties.

#### **4.3.4 Technician Qualification for Second, Third and Fourth Year Apprentices**

Upon successful completion of the Qualification Board, apprentices earn the designation of Forensic Identification *Technician*, and are considered qualified to give opinion testimony in court.

### **4.4 Apprenticeship Years Two, Three and Four**

#### **4.4.1 Training Approach**

Years two, three and four of the FIATP are a time for continuous learning. For the remainder of their apprenticeship, Forensic Identification Technicians continue to increase their knowledge and refine their skills through structured course work, self-directed study and on-the-job experience. Forensic Identification Technicians may conduct independent case investigations, drawing on more experienced Forensic Identification personnel for guidance and support.

#### **4.4.2 Program Requirements**

In addition to the entry requirement for three years of operational experience, Forensic Identification Technicians must successfully complete all of the following program requirements to successfully complete their apprenticeship and be eligible for certification as Forensic Identification Specialists:

- active participation in case investigations;
- RCMP Advanced Forensic Identification Training Course (AFITC);
- RCMP Crime Scene Video Course; and (CSVC)
- RCMP Fluorescent Techniques Course. (FTC)

### **4.4.3 Completion of FIATP and Certification**

Upon completion of the full apprenticeship, including all of the above program requirements, the Forensic Identification Technician's primary trainer and the local Forensic Identification Commander will complete a Certification Assessment of the technician. This Certification Assessment will include the following:

- a full file review;
- a written assessment; and
- copies of sample case work completed by the technician.

Based on the Certification Assessment, the technician may be recommended for:

- certification as Forensic Identification Specialist;
- deferral of certification pending additional training/experience; or
- removal from the FIATP and return to regular duties.

The completed Certification Assessment and recommendation will be forwarded to the Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services for approval. The Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services will forward the final recommendation the OIC FIS for final review and decision.

Upon receipt of recommendation for certification, the OIC FIS will issue the final certificate. Upon receipt of the final certificate, the technician will have completed the full FIATP and earned the title of certified Forensic Identification Specialist (Congratulations!).

## **4.5 Promotion**

Upon certification, Forensic Identification Specialists are eligible for promotion within the discipline through the normal promotion process. Members who entered the FIATP as constables, and have been successful in the corporal promotion process, are eligible for promotion to corporal. Members who have not passed the corporal's promotion process are not eligible for promotion, but are eligible to receive acting pay equivalent to that of a corporal. The RCMP Functional Job Analysis identifies the position of Forensic Identification Specialist at the rank of Corporal.

## **4.6 Continuing Education**

Continuing education is strongly encouraged for all Forensic Identification personnel. The following courses are not required for successful completion of the FIATP but are highly recommended for all Forensic Identification Technicians and Specialists:

- RCMP Blood Stain Pattern Recognition Course;
- Post secondary courses in forensics/forensic science (e.g.: St. Mary's University, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Ryerson University, USA Institute for Scientific Studies);
- RCMP Police Leadership Course;
- Post secondary/senior police course in administration or management; and
- Computer applications training.

Funding assistance may be available for continuous learning under the A-250 program. For more information, please contact your local Forensic Identification Section Commander.

#### **4.7 Program Amendments**

The FIATP is designed to develop the best Forensic Identification Specialists possible. It will continually evolve to reflect advances in technology, new forensic techniques, and changes in police responsibilities/activities. Your suggestions to improve the program are welcome. Please forward suggestions for changes to the FIATP to Forensic Identification Services, RCMP Headquarters.

***For more information on the Forensic Identification Apprenticeship Training Program, please contact CTB at (613)990-0628 or (613) 991-2690***