

**RCMP**

**Forensic Identification Apprenticeship  
Training Program**

**Information Guide  
for  
Trainers and Administrators**

**2004**



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# Forensic Identification Training Program Information Guide for Trainers and Administrators

## **1.0 Introduction**

The RCMP Forensic Identification Apprentice Training Program (FIATP) is designed to produce competent, confident Forensic Identification Specialists.

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. Experienced Forensic Identification members serve as the primary trainers.

Trainers and administrators play a critical role in the success of the FIATP. Together, they are responsible for training, guiding and supporting Forensic Identification apprentices throughout their apprenticeships. Together, they will shape the knowledge, skills and attitudes of future RCMP Forensic Identification Specialists.

## **2.0 Trainers**

### **2.1 Qualifications and Experience**

FIATP trainers must be “Qualified “ Forensic Identification members with at least 3 years of operational forensic identification experience. Trainers are responsible for the direct instruction and supervision of apprentices and should have strong organizational, interpersonal and management skills. It is recommended that FIATP Trainers successfully complete the Police Leadership Course.

### **2.2 Appointment**

FIATP trainers are appointed by Identification Section Commanders, in consultation with the Identification Training Supervisor from Centralized Training Branch.

### **2.3 Duties**

FIATP Trainers are responsible for the direct instruction and supervision of Forensic Identification apprentices. This includes providing appropriate feedback and guidance, administering practical exercises, moot trials and Forensic Knowledge Assessments, conducting periodic file reviews and assessments, and completing and returning all relevant forms, assessments and documentation in a

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timely fashion as requested by Centralized Training, throughout the candidate's apprenticeship.

## **2.4 Training Method**

Apprentices should work under close supervision for the first few months, and they should be encouraged to observe and assist other section members during scene investigations. Once the trainer and Section Commander feel the apprentice has developed sufficient skills and abilities, responsibility and independence should be gradually increased.

Trainers are encouraged to use the developmental interview technique throughout the FIATP. This approach is very effective in encouraging the apprentice to systematically approach problems using skills/knowledge already acquired. Trainers should also use demonstration/performance approaches for practical skills, and ensure that apprentices at all levels have adequate opportunity to gain hands-on crime scene experience.

## **2.5 Recognition**

Successful FIATP trainers make substantial commitments of time and effort to the program. The Identification Section Commander should monitor the trainer's performance. The results should be reflected in the trainer's annual assessment, especially in the areas of responsibility and supervision.

## **3.0 Program Administration**

### **3.1 Centralized Training**

The overall administration of the FIATP is the responsibility of the Identification Training Section, Centralized Training Branch. All program training material, test documents and other administrative documents are maintained and distributed by Centralized Training Branch. Please contact Centralized Training if you have any questions regarding the administration of this program.

### **3.2 Continuous Evaluation**

#### ***3.2.1 FIATP Program Manual***

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Designated FIATP Trainers and local Identification Section Commanders are responsible for the continuous evaluation of FIATP apprentices. During the first year, the apprentices' progress, as each objective is achieved, should be recorded in their FIATP Program guide .

## **3.2.2 *First-Year Apprentice's Record Book***

Apprentices must also keep a record book, to document their activities including the number and type of cases attended, numbers of fingerprints found, identifications made, experimental projects undertaken (*with supporting data*), evidence given etc., for the full first year of their apprenticeship (*a three-ring binder works well*). This record will be valuable tool for the apprentice and the trainer alike to help track progress. It will also reviewed by the Qualification Board.

## **3.3 Forensic Knowledge Assessments**

First year apprentices must complete periodic Forensic Knowledge Assessments which are mailed to the designated FIATP trainer for at approximately the third, sixth and ninth month of the trainee's apprenticeship. These Forensic Knowledge Assessments will cover material the apprentice should reasonably be expected to have learned up to that point in their apprenticeship. Each Forensic Knowledge Assessment will include fingerprint comparison exercises. The apprentice may consult any readily available resource material in order to complete the Forensic Knowledge Assessments.

The trainer will mark the Forensic Knowledge Assessments for completeness and accuracy (*answers will be provided for each Forensic Knowledge Assessment*) and review the results with the apprentice. There is no pass or fail on Forensic Knowledge Assessments.

Once corrected and reviewed, the Forensic Knowledge Assessments are forwarded to the Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services who reviews the documentation and then forwards all documents to the Centralized Training Branch.

## **3.4 Fingerprint Comparison Exercises**

First year apprentices must complete a series of fingerprint comparison exercises. The apprentice will receive the complete set of exercises at the same time as the FIATP Program Guide. The apprentice will normally complete one module per month, except in those months where a Forensic Knowledge Assessment is administered.

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Completed exercises are marked by the designated trainer (*answers will be provided*) and returned to Centralized Training Branch, via the Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services, with completed Forensic Knowledge Assessments (*e.g.: return modules for month one, two, three and four with Forensic Knowledge Assessment # 1*).



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## **3.5 Progress Reports**

The designated FIATP trainer and Forensic Identification Section Commander will review the apprentice's progress on a regular basis. Following the completion of a Forensic Knowledge Assessment. The trainer and Section Commander will complete the assessment form included with the Forensic Knowledge Assessment. The trainer should review each assessment with the apprentice. The apprentice acknowledges the comments by signing the completed assessment.

The trainer will send the signed assessment form and the accompanying completed Forensic Knowledge Assessment booklet to the Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services, who will review both documents and forward them to the Identification Training Supervisor.

## **3.6 Criminal Case for Qualification Board**

Towards the end of the first year of training, (*usually around month 10*), the apprentice should begin preparing a criminal case for presentation to a Qualification Board. The case selected must be an actual case investigated by the apprentice and must involve fingerprint identification evidence. The case **must** be prepared **without any alterations or exclusions** to the evidence. Charts, photographs, court brief, notes, reports and, where appropriate, drawings and exhibits are required.

## **3.7 Fingerprint Comparison Test**

At approximately the eleventh month of training, and before the Qualification Board is convened, the apprentice must complete a final fingerprint comparison test. This test is similar in structure to the fingerprint comparison exercises included with the Forensic Knowledge Assessments. The apprentice must successfully complete the fingerprint test before Form 1338 can be completed (*see 3.8*).

The test is normally proctored by a senior NCO identified by Centralized Training Branch. The proctor will return the completed test to Centralized Training Branch for marking. This is a pass/fail situation and the candidate will be notified of the results by e-mail, fax or regular mail.

An apprentice who makes a **false identification** on the test automatically fails the test and will be removed from the FIATP and returned to regular duties.

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If an apprentice does not fully complete the test, but has not made a false identification, he or she may be given an opportunity to write a second test within six months of the first attempt.

### **3.8 Evaluation Form 1338**

When the apprentice and the trainer agree that the apprentice is ready to appear before a Qualification Board (*usually around months 12 to 13 of the apprenticeship*), the trainer will complete the Form 1338. The apprentice will review and sign the completed form. The Section Commander will send the completed form to the Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services, who will confirm the evaluation and forward it to Centralized Training Branch Identification Training Supervisor.

Upon receipt of the completed Form 1338, the Identification Training Supervisor will schedule a Qualification Board.

### **3.9 Qualification Board**

Most apprentices appear before the Qualification Board sometime during months 12 to 14 of their apprenticeship. Once the Qualification Board has been scheduled, the apprentice's workload should be adjusted to allow for reasonable preparation time for the hearing.

The Qualification Board will consist of a Centralized Training Branch representative, as chair person, and two other Certified Forensic Identification Specialists. And may be conducted in either official language, according to the preference of the apprentice.

The apprentice must successfully complete both parts of the Qualification Board (*interview and moot trial*) in order to continue with the apprenticeship. The apprentice will be informed of the Board's decision immediately after the conclusion of the hearing. If unsuccessful, the apprentice may repeat the Qualification Board, as allowed by Forensic Identification Policy, usually within six months of the first attempt.

### **3.10 Verification of Identification Evidence**

All criminal friction ridge and physical identifications made by an apprentice must be verified by a Qualified forensic identification member, preferably the designated FIATP trainer.

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If an apprentice makes a false identification, the FIATP Trainer must review the case with the apprentice and submit a detailed report to the Section commander. A copy of the report should be retained on the apprentice's file.

Until successful completion of the Qualification Board, apprentices may **not** verify criminal identifications for other Forensic Identification personnel.

## **3.11 Court Appearances by Apprentices**

Until successful completion of the Qualification Board, an apprentice is **not** qualified to tender opinion evidence. FIATP Trainers should ensure that the apprentice does not purposely attempt to testify as an expert in any type of physical evidence comparison / evaluation.

Upon successful completion of the Qualification Board, the apprentice will be designated a Forensic Identification *Technician*, and is then considered qualified to tender opinion evidence in court.

## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 FIATP Trainer**

- Become totally familiar with the FIATP program.
- Orient the apprentice to the Identification Section facilities, working conditions, policies, and responsibility areas.
- Review each training objective with the apprentice to determine the level of training and direction required.
- Monitor the apprentice's progress through Year 1 of the program and certify that the tasks outlined in the FIATP Training Guide have been completed and objectives reached satisfactorily.
- Monitor the progress of the apprentice's reading assignments and periodically conduct Forensic Knowledge Assessments to determine that retention and understanding are satisfactory.
- Have the apprentice attend crime scenes with yourself or other experienced Forensic Identification personnel until you are satisfied that the apprentice has the competence to work independently.
- Monitor the apprentice's working files on a regular basis to ensure they are being properly maintained and that the work is being performed accurately.

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- Encourage the apprentice to witness the presentation of expert testimony as often as possible.
- Conduct mock cross-examinations of the apprentice on physical evidence.
- Administer, correct and review with the apprentice, all Forensic Knowledge Assessments and fingerprint comparison exercises received from Centralized Training.
- Complete periodic assessments of first year apprentice's as requested by Centralized Training.
- Conduct a minimum of two progress reviews for second, third and fourth year apprentices.
- Forward all completed Forensic Knowledge Assessments, exercise material and assessment forms in a timely manner to the Section Commander for review.
- Forward all documentation and assessment forms to the Identification Training Supervisor in a timely fashion.
- Report any difficulties experienced by the apprentice and make recommendations when necessary.
- Complete final Certification assessment (*Technical review*) of fourth year apprentices and make a recommendation regarding certification as a Forensic Identification Specialist.

#### **4.2 Forensic Identification Section Commander**

- Review all Forensic Knowledge Assessments and exercise material completed by an apprentice, and assessment forms completed by the trainer.
- Conduct a minimum of two progress reviews for each second, third and fourth year apprentice in your region.
- Forward all documentation and assessment forms to the Regional Manager, Forensic Identification in a timely fashion.
- Liaise with the Trainer and the Identification Training Supervisor to correct any difficulties that would impair or prevent the apprentice's successful completion of the program within the specified time.
- Complete final Certification Assessment of the apprentice and make a recommendation regarding certification to become a Forensic Identification Specialist.

#### **4.3 Regional OIC Forensic Identification Services**

- Maintain a training file on each apprentice within the division to monitor their progress throughout their apprenticeship.

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- Review the trainer's and apprentice's progress on a timely basis or during normal quality reviews.
- Review all Forensic Knowledge Assessments and exercise material completed by apprentices, and assessment forms completed by trainers.
- Forward all documentation and assessment forms to the Identification Training Supervisor, Centralized Training Branch, in a timely fashion.
- Liaise with the Trainer, Section Commander, and the Identification Training Supervisor to correct any difficulties that would impair or prevent the apprentice's successful completion of the program within the specified time.
- If possible, conduct Qualification Boards with the Identification Training Supervisor.
- Conduct a minimum of two progress reviews for each second, third and fourth year apprentice in your region.
- Receive and acknowledge final Certification Assessments and forward final recommendations on certification as "*Forensic Identification Specialists*" to Centralized Training Branch, Identification Training Supervisor.

### **4.4 Centralized Training, Identification Training Supervisor**

- Manage the overall program Nationally.
- Arrange for sufficient funding to run the program.
- In cooperation with Centralized Staffing, coordinate the evaluation and selection of program applicants.
- Plan and coordinate the overall Centralized training of each candidate.
- Liaise with Centralized Staffing and Regional OICs Forensic Identification Services to determine suitable training locations.
- Maintain a master training file on each apprentice in the program.
- Prepare, administer and process all necessary documentation concerning the overall administration of the apprentice program.
- Provide assistance to field trainers and regional managers to ensure the objectives of the program are met.
- Prepare and administer all apprentice Forensic Knowledge Assessments, exercises and tests.
- Review all apprentice assessment and progress reports.
- Assess and monitor any reported difficulties in the apprentice training and initiate remedial action as required.
- Review and amend all training material as required.
- Schedule, coordinate and act as chairperson on all Qualification Board hearings.

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- Inform apprentices of time/date/location of Qualification Boards.
- Review all moot trial case material submitted by apprentices and act as defense counsel at Qualification Board hearings.
- Prepare all test material, Qualification Board reports and certificates of designation.

**4.5 Apprentice**

**4.5.1 First Year Apprentices (Trainees)**

- Become familiar with Identification Section facilities, working conditions, policy, your responsibilities, other members.
- Complete assigned reading.
- Complete fingerprint comparison exercises;
- Complete periodic Forensic Knowledge Assessments.
- Participate in moot trials.
- Complete minimum of five (5) independent research projects.
- Participate in a Forensic Laboratory Familiarization Course.
- Observe and assist other section members.
- Work under close supervision and gradually take on increased responsibility.
- Establish a record book of your “Trainee” period.
- Attend court to witness the presentation of expert testimony.
- Complete the Fingerprint Comparison Test.
- Prepare for Qualification Board.
- Appear before Qualification Board.
- Submit **all** your criminal friction ridge and physical evidence identifications to your designated trainer for verification.

**4.5.2 Forensic Identification Technicians (Second, Third and Fourth Year Apprentices)**

- Carry a diversified case load commensurate with your level of experience.
- Complete additional required forensic training courses.
- Complete other recommended courses.
- Complete RCMP Corporal’s promotion process.
- Undergo a final Certification Assessment (*Technical review*).