

## THE SWEDISH MODEL OF EDUCATION FOR CRIME SCENE EXAMINERS

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**ABSTRACT:** In Sweden there are almost 200 crime scene examiners and all of them make use of SKL – the National Laboratory of Forensic Science, as the major provider of forensic laboratory examinations in Sweden. A project team composed of staff from both the laboratory and the police authorities has compiled a training programme for crime scene examiners. This training is designed to qualify the students to approach all aspects of crime scene in a professional manner. The training extends over 16 weeks as sandwich training with lectures and practical exercises. Simulated crime scenes are arranged and the students have to examine a burglary scene, a rape scene, a murder scene and a fire scene examination. The students are required to critically assess the evidential value of the samples they have recovered and they will also get knowledge about investigations in a Forensic Science laboratory. Instructors and teachers are experienced crime scene examiners and staff from the Forensic Science Laboratory.

**KEY WORDS:** Education; Crime scene examiner; Training programme.

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In Sweden there are almost 200 crime scene examiners distributed amongst 21 Police authorities. All of them make use of National Laboratory of Forensic Science, as the major provider of forensic laboratory examinations in Sweden. One working team with staff from the laboratory and the police authorities has compiled an education for crime scene examiners. This training course for crime scene examiners is based on giving a broad knowledge about everything from burglary to homicide, from sexual assault to arson. A shorter part about laboratory work is included, directed at scrutinising, examination and sorting out traces and exhibits for further examination at the forensic laboratory together with some basic methods of developing latent fingerprints.

The course shall provide the knowledge and proficiency skills for the participants to:

- Plan and accomplish the examinations for crime scene and fire causes;
- Co-operate with the leader of inquiry, senior investigator and relevant institutions and authorities;

- Examine and sort out traces and exhibits in the crime scene unit at the local police authority for further examinations;
- Perform elementary examinations in the laboratory at the local police authority;
- Compile documentation and state a written report;
- Give evidence in court.

The pedagogic method should mainly be problem based learning. We believe that this method increases participants' ability to develop their knowledge and skills after the course.

To plan contents, design and size of the course we defined three levels of competence in particular fields:

- Awareness in the sense that you know about the field and where to find references to knowledge and proficiency skills;
- Knowledge in the sense that you have theoretical knowledge and enough competence to apply your knowledge independently to a new situation;
- Proficiency skills in the sense that you can perform practical tasks in a qualified way, which includes theoretical knowledge.

We have defined a number of areas that should be covered during the course and for each of these areas we have formulated the contents with reference to the levels of competence.

One example of these areas is firearms:

- Awareness of shooting distance determination;
- Awareness of examination of traces recovered in connection with shooting event;
- Knowledge of different kinds of firearms and ammunition;
- Knowledge of laws and regulations concerning firearms;
- Knowledge of regulation and directions to the police authority from the Nation Police Board;
- Knowledge and proficiency to handle firearms;
- Knowledge and proficiency to determine the line of fire;
- Knowledge and proficiency to recover traces, that is physical evidence in connection with a shooting event.

Another example is fingerprints:

- Awareness of fingerprints detection available for different kinds of objects;
- Awareness fingerprints identification;
- Knowledge of order of priority of fingerprint development methods;
- Knowledge of good working environment for developing latent fingerprints;

- Knowledge and proficiency to examine different kinds of objects with the most common fingerprint development methods;
- Knowledge and proficiency to take photos of developed fingerprints in a crime scene.

The structure of the training course: before the participants are aloud to begin this training course they ought to have approximately one year of job training in the crime scene unit at the local police authority. During this year they are learning the fundamental principals in crime scene examination.

The course starts with three weeks of theory and one-week of forensic medicine. This is followed by three different case studies, each of them containing a practical crime scene examination including all documentation and the handling of exhibits. All this is sandwiched with the necessary of theory. Before we begin with the first case the group is divided into two smaller groups. The participants in one group go back to their own police authority for nearly four weeks. The other group begins with the first case and this means for instructors and teachers to do the same case twice. During these three cases the participants are working two by two and shall have access to all available equipment for crime scene examination.

The first case is a burglary and the participants examine traces like shoeprints, fingerprints and toolmarks, The second case is a rape with an unknown perpetrator and this examination is concentrated on traces and exhibits for DNA-analysis and fibre-analysis. The third case is a homicide where knives, fire arms bloodstain patterns and drugs are involved and this case is also the most difficult one. Instructors and teachers are crime scene examiners and staff from the Forensic Science Laboratory with a high level of experience. The participants are working in an independently way but whenever there is a need for help teachers are available. After crime scene examination they have to examine and sort out traces and exhibits for further examinations including fingerprints development with the most common methods. The other traces and exhibits are examined at the Forensic Laboratory together with staff from the laboratory for the purpose of understanding laboratory examinations. We also have court training and for this event we use the written report from case number three. During this exercise the participants are acting as prosecutors, lawyers, crime scene examiners and judges.

Examination of suspected arsons are trained during three weeks together with people from the rescue service. Simulated arsons in small sheds are arranged and the participants have to determine the cause of fire.

In between the different parts of the training course the participants are expected to study at home and also to write a report of a special project.

Finally, there is one week of summing up and completion and presentation of the special project. To get the diploma, you must pass some written tests, written reports from the crime scene examinations and a report of the special project. The course envelops 16 weeks to be completed within one year exclusive of the first year of job training.

For the further training and to raise the level of competence all crime scene examiners have a chance to attend a conference based on lectures and workshops every second year.

We have also discussed to do special training courses in fingerprint development, bloodstain patterns analysis, major crimes and laboratory work, depending on needs, interests and experience from different police authorities.