

Forensic Scene Examiner

Forensic scene examiners go to crime scenes to find, gather and record evidence, which police officers use to investigate crimes and convict offenders. They deal with volume incidents (such as burglary) or serious/complex incidents (such as murder).

The Work

Level 1 examiners deal with volume incidents but can attend serious/complex incidents under supervision. Level 2 examiners deal with all crimes.

You could be:

- attending scenes of crime, accidents and other major incidents to preserve, examine and record evidence
- making sure that police cordons are in place and that the scene is secure and protected from contamination
- assessing the scene to decide the best approach to collecting and dealing with evidence
- working with the police and other agencies, advising them of the best way to handle the scene
- gathering trace evidence such as: fingerprints, blood samples, DNA, hair, fibres, footprint impressions or tyre marks, and preparing these for analysis in the laboratory
- taking photographs and video footage of the scene
- packaging, labelling and storing items of evidence
- keeping equipment in good working order
- writing reports and statements and reporting your findings to the procurator fiscal, and possibly presenting evidence in court.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on the exact job specifications and any salary increases relating to the specific post.

The salary for a Level 1 (Volume Incident Examiner) is £41,844 a year (Grade 6). A Level 2 (Serious Crime Examiner) starts at £43,904 a year (Grade 7). You would also be paid allowances for shifts and being on call. (Salaries are from April 2025).

Conditions

- You would usually be based in police headquarters or a divisional office, but spend a lot of time travelling to other places including crime scenes.
- You would work a 35-37 hour week, on shifts, including nights, weekends and public holidays. You may be on call for emergencies.
- You will be outdoors in all weathers, often in unpleasant conditions.
- You may have to climb on roofs, crawl through mud, carry heavy equipment across fields and work at heights.
- You would have to wear protective clothing, including mask and gloves at crime scenes.

- Some crime scenes or incidents can be very distressing.

Getting In

Entry is very competitive. In Scotland, scene examiners are recruited by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Forensic Services division, which provides a national forensic service to Police Scotland.

- SPA specifies that you should be educated to HNC level or equivalent in a scientific subject or have relevant experience within a forensic environment.
- Entry requirements for an HNC (SCQF Level 7) is usually 1-2 Highers and 3 subjects at National 5, or a relevant NC or NQ (SCQF Level 4-6). For photography you would need a portfolio of your work.
- Level 2 Examiners are expected to have completed a recognised Volume Scene Examiners course or FERRT course.
- Many entrants have previous experience in photographic, laboratory or forensic work. Although not specified as a requirement, this experience could be an advantage.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of course. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.
- It helps if you have experience of dealing with the public and handling sensitive situations.
- You need a full current driving licence.

Job vacancies are advertised on the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) website.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- an interest in science and learning new techniques
- a thorough and methodical approach
- excellent communication skills
- good problem solving and information research skills
- good observational skills and an eye for detail
- a strong stomach
- good IT skills
- an understanding of health and safety requirements.

You need to be able to:

- deal with a wide range of people
- think on your feet and use your initiative
- record and report information accurately
- work well on your own and as part of a team
- cope with unpleasant and distressing situations
- follow strict procedures.

Training

- You do introductory training on the job, to learn about the organisation, function, your local section and the role.
- Level 1 Examiners will need to complete the Scene Examination Training Programme.
- You would be mentored by a Level 2 Examiner during your training.
- You do further training to keep up to date.
- Expert training is given to prepare you for collecting evidence at dangerous, and possibly contaminated scenes.
- Additional specialist training skills are provided in areas such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents; post bomb scene management; fire and explosion investigation; and disaster management.

Getting On

- With experience, you may be able to move on to senior positions or supervisory work, for example senior scene examiner or head of scenes of crime.
- It is important to keep up to date with new techniques and equipment and you may undertake further training for continued professional development (CPD).

More Information

A forensic scene examiner is usually a support (civilian) post with the police, although police officers may also work in this area.

The Forensic Services department of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) provides a fully integrated national service that covers biology, chemistry, DNA, drugs analysis, fingerprints, scene examination and other specialist services such as documents and handwriting, fibres, firearms, toxicology and tyres and tachographs.

Contacts

Scottish Police Authority (SPA)

Tel: 01786 896630

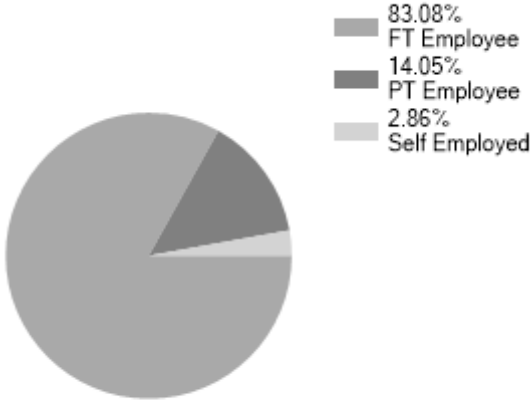
Email: enquiries@spa.police.uk

Website: www.spa.police.uk

X: @ScotPolAuth

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

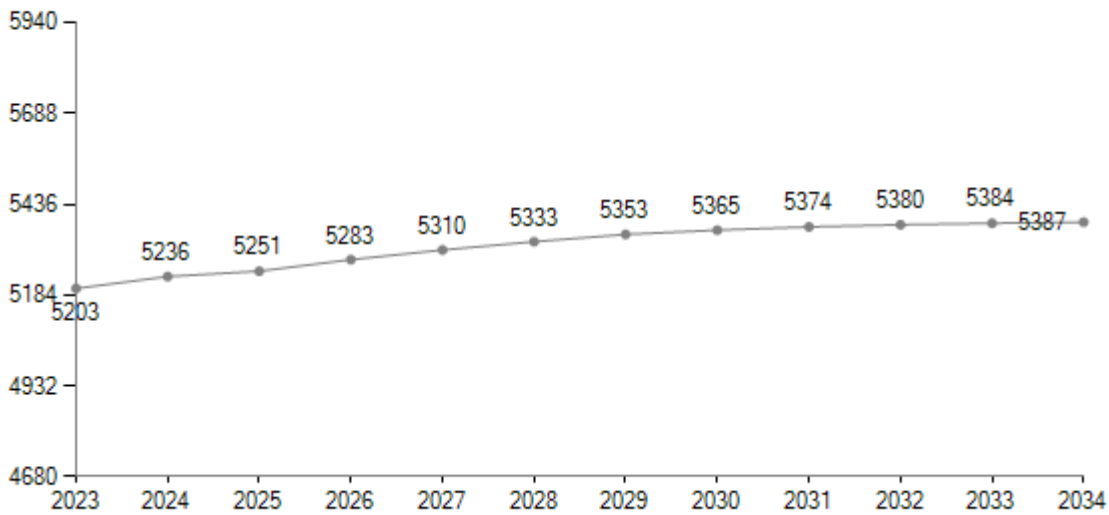


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)