

Fatal Fire Victim Recovery

Date: Oct 24, 2019

Co-sponsors: HD Forensics, LLC, and Tripwire Operations Group, LLC

Location: Tripwire Facilities, Gettysburg, PA

Course Tuition: \$225 (10% discount for 2 or more courses)

Principle Instructors: Dennis C. Dirkmaat, Ph.D., D-ABFA; Michael J. Hochrein, Special Agent FBI, Ret.

Participants: Coroners, Law Enforcement and Fire personnel, University students (*limited to 20 individuals*)

Course Overview

The one-day course is designed to introduce participants to the basics of properly processing rather complex and difficult fire scenes involving a human victim. The course will cover the basics of scene documentation (written, photographic, and cartographic [mapping] means) of both burned structures and car fires. The effects of fire and heat on soft and hard biological tissues will also be detailed. Forensic cases and the protocols developed as part of the U.S. National Institute of Justice Grant #2008- DN-BX-K131 will be discussed. An additional course offered on Saturday, Oct 26th, 2019, will offer participants the chance to use the skills they have learned in this course on a mock outdoor forensic scene involving a car fire with a human proxy. See the Hands-on Recovery Course description for details.

Thursday, Oct 24, 2019

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| 7:30 – 8:00 | Registration |
| 8:00 – 9:30 | Introduction to Forensic Anthropology/Archaeology (Dirkmaat)
Introduction to forensic anthropological and forensic archaeological techniques, principles, and methodologies. |
| 9:30 – 9:45 | Break |
| 9:45 – 10:30 | Fatal Fire Recoveries (Dirkmaat)
Introduction to fatal fire recoveries, including challenges unique to the fatal fire scene. |
| 10:30 – 12:30 | Scene recovery protocols and cases (Dirkmaat)
Discussion of proper archaeology protocols for fatal fire recoveries. Protocols being presented were developed as part of U.S. National Institute of Justice Grant #2008-DN-BX-K131 "Recovery and Interpretation of Burned Human Remains" awarded in 2008 to Mercyhurst University's faculty. |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 – 3:00 | Mapping at a Fatal Fire Scene (Hochrein)
Discussion on using forensic archaeological mapping techniques to document spatial information including association, context, and provenience at the outdoor scene. |
| 3:00 – 3:15 | Break |
| 3:15 – 4:30 | How Bodies Burn (Dirkmaat)
Discussion of the modifications to soft tissue and the skeleton when a body is exposed to fire. The taphonomic process of fire and the implications for trauma analysis will also be discussed. |

- 4:30 – 5:30 Fatal Fire Cases (Dirkmaat)
Discussion will focus on how these protocols have been used with actual fatal fire cases.
- 5:30 – 6:00 Review and Certificates Awarded