

# Forensic Biologist

## WHAT IS A FORENSIC BIOLOGIST?

Forensic biologists examine blood and other bodily fluids, hair, bones, insects and plant and animal remains to help identify victims and support criminal investigations.

Using technology in the lab and in the field, forensic biologists collect and analyze biological evidence found on clothing, weapons and other surfaces to determine the time and cause of death.

They keep detailed logs and write reports about what they find. Attention to detail is critical, because a single mistake can cause the evidence to be thrown out of court. Senior-level forensic biologists may testify in court about their findings.

Forensic biologists may become experts in:

- DNA analysis
- Forensic anthropology
- Forensic pathology
- Forensic entomology
- Forensic botany
- Biological chemistry



In addition to helping solve crimes, forensic biologists may investigate environmental contamination or other public health threats.

### Working Conditions



Working so closely with biological material (including every sort of fluid found in the human body) can be messy, smelly and generally unpleasant.

Field work can be particularly dirty work. At crime scenes, forensic biologists collect leaves, insects and other biological material and examine the victim's clothing and remains (which may be in an advanced state of decomposition). They may sift through the surrounding dirt and even garbage looking for biological evidence.

In the lab, forensic biologists examine this evidence using microscopes and other technology. They photograph and catalog the evidence and perform DNA and other tests on the samples.

The work can be repetitive and boring, but the reward comes in finding a critical piece of evidence investigators can use to solve the crime.

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