



FIRE INVESTIGATOR COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT 2: Registration levels and criteria

1. **Scope and Purpose:**

All persons, from both the public and private sector, conducting fire investigations and providing a professional or expert opinion which has the potential to impact on or prejudice a third party shall be registered with SACNASP.

Expert opinion pertaining to fires involving serious injuries/fatalities, cause of fire and explosion events, cause of damage to property and the contribution of human fault regarding the origin, cause and effect of the fire, or explosion are examples of investigations that have the potential to impact negatively on a third party.

Superficial evaluation of a fire scene that does not include the offering of a professional, or expert opinion are exempt from the requirement to register.

The cause determination function by operational fire and rescue service staff as part of their incident attendance and general fire incident reporting activities are examples of superficial evaluation. Fire cause determination by an employee that forms part of an in-house incident reporting process may also constitute superficial evaluation.

While the levels and requirements of registration should not result in unfair and/or unreasonable requirements, the registration requirements and criteria must provide confidence for persons using the service; accommodate recourse for users where professionalism, competence and ethics have been breached; and provide a system to encourage and record Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as part of initial and renewal registration applications.

This document provides guidance on the levels of registration and applicable criteria that need to be met.

It draws on the competency requirements outlined in the document Fire Investigator Competency Requirements, Guidance Document 1: Education, Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills Component.

The registration model consists of two levels with a provision for provisional registration.

The education, experience and competence components are point-based while there are some compulsory elements that will also need to be complied with.

2. Recommended registration levels:

The levels of registration have been developed to help ensure that a suitable progression path is provided and to ensure that the system can be effectively and efficiently implemented.

As a result, the following levels of registration are recommended:

2.1 Fire Scene Examiner.

A limited scope registration for persons expected to conduct a fire scene examination to identify a suspected area of origin and cause mainly for the purpose of statistics or the base line recording of the possible cause of a fire or explosion incident in a workplace.

Examples of persons suited to registration at this level include:

- Persons within Fire and Rescue services, who, for statistical purposes, are expected to conduct a preliminary investigation to gather information to be used within the service.
- Persons involved in company incident investigations requiring a careful examination of a fire scene, the information from which will be used in an enquiry.
- Persons working within the fire investigation industry under mentorship who are progressing to registration as a Fire Investigation Practitioner

2.2 Fire Investigation Practitioner

A full scope registration for persons conducting a comprehensive fire investigation and assessment of a fire or explosion event including origin, cause, spread and effect.

A Fire Investigation Practitioner's work results in an expert opinion suited to professional consultancy and/or court testimony (criminal or civil) regarding fire or explosion origin and cause.

3. Registration Criteria – Point-Based Component:

3.1 Education and Qualifications:

| | Education and academic qualifications or recognised equivalent | Point Value |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 3.1.1 | National Senior Certificate or similar (NQF level 4) | 15 |
| 3.1.2 | Diploma in a field related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 6) | 20 |
| 3.1.3 | Diploma in a field NOT related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 6) | 15 |
| 3.1.4 | Bachelor's Degree in a field related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 7) | 20 |
| 3.1.5 | Honours Degree in a field related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 8) | 30 |
| 3.1.6 | Master's Degree in a field related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 9) | 40 |
| 3.1.7 | Doctoral Degree in a field related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 10) | 45 |
| 3.1.8 | Bachelor, Honours, Masters or Doctoral Degree in a field NOT related to the practice of fire investigation. (NQF level 7 - 10) | Bachelor: 15 Others: 20 |
| Total points claimed | | |

REQUIREMENT (Cumulative Points)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Fire Scene Examiner | Minimum | 15 points |
| | Maximum | 34 points |
| Fire Investigation Practitioner | Minimum | 35 points |
| | Maximum | 40 points |

NOTE:

Related: Fields related to the field of fire investigation include natural science of chemistry and physics as well as the engineering fields of chemical, electrical, fire and mechanical engineering.

3.2 Fire Investigation Related Training:

| | Type of Training | Point Value |
|-------|--|--|
| 3.2.1 | Successful completion of a SACNASP recognised assessed (tested) training and CPD programmes in a relevant discipline such as fire investigation, fire safety, fire engineering, police/fire service, forensic practice relevant to the practice of fire investigation. | 2 points per 8 hours of course duration. |
| 3.2.2 | Full attendance of SACNASP recognised, but not assessed (tested) training and CPD programmes relevant to the practice of fire investigation. | 1 point per 8 hours of course duration. |

REQUIREMENT (Cumulative Points)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Fire Scene Examiner | Minimum | 15 points |
| | Maximum | 29 points |
| Fire Investigation Practitioner | Minimum | 30 points |
| | Maximum | 40 points |

NOTE:

- Unassessed or untested training may not make up more than 25% of the training points claimed.
- Training which is not directly relevant to the discipline of fire investigation may not make up more than 10% of the training points claimed.
- Fire investigation relevant training is training that relates to the knowledge and skills profiles outlined in the Fire Investigator Competency Requirements, Guidance Document 1: Education, Qualifications, Knowledge and Skills Component and other associated disciplines as acceptable to SACNASP.

3.3 Fire Investigator Experience:

| | Full/Part-Time | Requirement | Point Value |
|-------|---|--|---------------------|
| 3.3.1 | Full-Time Fire Investigator (Persons whose job description and responsibility is primarily to conduct fire investigation on a full-time basis). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of 1500 hours worked per year including vacation and sick leave, etc., and ▪ A minimum of 12 full investigations in any one year. | 10 points per year. |
| 3.3.2 | Part-Time Fire Investigation (Person whose job description includes a responsibility for fire investigation in relation to other duties). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of 750 hours worked per year (must be documented) and ▪ A minimum of 6 full investigations in any one year. | 5 points per year. |

MINIMUM REQUIREMENT (Cumulative Points)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Fire Scene Examiner | Minimum | 0 points |
| | Maximum | 29 points |
| Fire Investigation Practitioner | Minimum | 30 points |
| | Maximum | 50 points |

NOTE:

- Formal job descriptions to be provided.
- Suitable documentation indicating hours involved for Part-Time Investigators such as time sheets or logs.
- A log of all fire investigations conducted over the last 24 months to be provided. SACNASP panel will randomly select two investigations, sanitized versions of which will need to be submitted for evaluation in consultation with the instructing client's consent.
- The list of adjudicating members will be provided in the annual SACNASP report to applicants.

3.4 Other Professional Experience (other than Fire Investigation directly):

| | Type of Experience | Point Value |
|-------|--|---|
| 3.4.1 | Fire-fighter, law enforcement, security, risk management, insurance risk survey or loss adjuster. | ½ point per year maximum. |
| 3.4.2 | Criminal and forensic investigation. | 1 point per year maximum. |
| 3.4.3 | Fire engineering, fire safety, fire risk management | 1 point per year maximum. |
| 3.4.4 | Articles published on a subject directly related to fire and explosions in fire investigation-related journals. | 2 points for each subject to a maximum of 10 points. |
| 3.4.5 | Lecturing on Fire Investigation on formal programmes. | ½ point per contact hour subject to a maximum of 20 points. |
| 3.4.6 | Membership of a professional organisation directly related to fire investigation. | 1 point per year subject to a maximum of 10 points. |
| 3.4.7 | Membership of a professional organisation, not necessarily directly related, but nevertheless, relevant to fire investigation. | ½ point per year subject to a maximum of 5 points. |

REQUIREMENT (Cumulative Points)

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Fire Scene Examiner | Minimum | 5 points |
| | Maximum | 10 points |
| Fire Investigation Practitioner | Minimum | 10 points |
| | Maximum | 20 points |

3.5 Expert Witness and Court Experience:

| | Expert Witness/Court Activity | Point Value |
|-------|---|-----------------------|
| 3.5.1 | Expert testimony in a court or a judicial Board of Inquiry testifying on fire/explosion origin and cause (Proof of testimony to be provided). | 5 points per occasion |
| 3.5.2 | Successful completion of an assessed (tested) SACNASP recognised Expert Testimony Course (proof of attendance to be provided). | 10 points |

MINIMUM REQUIREMENT:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Fire Scene Examiner | Nil |
| Fire Investigation Practitioner | Minimum 10 points Maximum 15 points |

3.6 Point System Summary:

| 3.6.1 | Fire Scene Examiner | Min. | Max. |
|---------|--|-----------|-----------|
| 3.6.1.1 | Education and Qualifications as per 3.1 | 15 | 34 |
| 3.6.1.2 | Fire Investigation related training as per 3.2 | 15 | 29 |
| 3.6.1.4 | Other professional experience as per 3.4 | 5 | 10 |
| | Point System Totals | 35 | 73 |

| 3.6.2 | Fire Investigation Practitioner | Min. | Max. |
|---------|--|------------|------------|
| 3.6.2.1 | Education and Qualifications as per 3.1 | 35 | 45 |
| 3.6.2.2 | Fire Investigation related training as per 3.2 | 30 | 40 |
| 3.6.2.3 | Fire Investigator Experience as per 3.3 | 30 | 50 |
| 3.6.2.4 | Other professional experience as per 3.4 | 10 | 20 |
| 3.6.2.5 | Expert witness and court experience | 10 | 15 |
| | Point System Totals | 115 | 170 |

4. Additional registration requirements not point based:

4.1 A minimum of two referees on the prescribed form.

4.2 A declaration regarding fitness to practice on the prescribed form covering:

- Receipt, understanding and commitment to the Code of Conduct for Fire Scene Examiners and Fire Investigation Practitioners.
- No criminal record.
- No action pending against the applicant in a criminal court or by a professional or regulatory authority.

4.3 Review of a minimum of two fire investigation reports as randomly selected by the SACNASP evaluation Committee as per 3.3.

5. Registration system implementation:

Implementation will be managed by way of a Provisional Registration process. On promulgation of the need to register, prospective Fire Scene Examiners and Fire Investigation Practitioners, will:

- Need to lodge their applications for registration with SACNASP within twelve months.
- On confirmation of the granting of Provisional Registration by SACNASP, have 12 months to fully align with any registration shortfalls as identified and communicated by SACNASP.

The granting of Provisional Registration will be at the discretion of SACNASP.

Persons seeking Provisional Registration for Fire Investigator Practitioner will require a minimum two years fire investigation experience, and will need to meet the competency requirements for Provisional Registration as determined by SACNASP.

6. Continuing Professional Development (CPD); registration renewal or recertification.

This will be developed in accordance with SACNASP policies taking the following into consideration:

- Annual renewal to be accompanied by evidence of CPD to the value determined for both levels of registration.
- Recertification via competency assessment and CPD portfolio every 5 years.