

# National Forensic Science Week

## Planning Guide

September 16-22, 2018



## **Forensic Science Week Events**

In order to fully recognize the contributions of forensic science in our community, we recommend considering some of the following events:

- **Lab Tours for local, state, and national level politicians and staffers**
  - With the growing impact of forensic science on the criminal justice system, as a method of producing investigative leads, exonerating the innocent, and providing reliable evidence for prosecution, it is essential that our legislators and executives from all levels of government understand the realities of modern forensic science.
  - Instructions are provided on a subsequent page to invite politicians and their staff for a tour with a template letter.
  - With the increase interest in national forensic committees, forensic legislation, and a growing demand for forensic services with limited resources, these tours will provide an incredible opportunity for engagement between the policy makers and the forensic practitioner.
  
- **Recognition of staff**
  - Awards ceremonies, lunch, snacks or a simple thank you throughout the week
  - For example, The Philadelphia Police Department in previous years has hosted a Family Day for its Office of Forensic Science where the PPD closed Forensic Science Week with a picnic and limited tour of its facility for the family members of its staff. Normally, the OFS is not open to visits by family members. Therefore, this event not only recognized the staff, but also allowed them to share what they do with their family.

- **Community Outreach**

- Schools, recreation centers, public libraries, local science museums, day camps are all excellent venues to host a “day with a forensic scientist.”
- By sharing our knowledge, we will give the community a better appreciation for what we do, and just may encourage a child to have a greater interest in science and math.

## **Proclamations: An official method to gain attention and show appreciation**

As a way to celebrate and gain recognition for Forensic Science Week, encourage your local, regional or state government officials to issue a proclamation, which is simply a formal public statement like the example on the next page. When officials sign and promote a proclamation, the local news media has a photo or video opportunity upon which to build a story. Attention is drawn to your Forensic Science Week events and your forensic investigators and scientists are publicly acknowledged, which is a primary function of the week.

Forensic Science Week also provides an opportunity for public officials and the entire community to learn more about the realities of forensic science and the vital role that it plays in our criminal justice system. This opportunity should be further expanded through activities, planned during the week, such as lab tours for policy makers, community outreach events, and staff recognition.

Proclamations are typically issued by leadership representing the federal government, states, municipalities, counties, cities or towns. To inquire about an official's interest in issuing a proclamation, write a letter or contact a member of staff as soon as possible. There is typically a standard submission process. So, ask about the process and follow the proper steps. Many of our organizations may already have contacts with our executive and/or legislative branches of government that can provide advice and guidance on this process.

A sample proclamation has been provided on the next page; however, you or the political staffers may want to customize your proclamation for your community.

## **National Forensic Science Week – Sample Proclamation**

**Whereas**, forensic science is a vital public service; and

**Whereas**, access to quality forensic analysis dramatically improves the investigation of criminal activity, leading to the exoneration of the innocent and the prosecution of the guilty; and

**Whereas**, forensic science plays a critical role in public outreach and crime prevention, and is evolving in its role as an important member of the criminal justice community; and

**Whereas**, crime scene investigators, forensic examiners, and forensic scientists provide unbiased, accurate, and reliable analyses of evidence recovered from across the nation; and

**Whereas**, numerous professional organizations have recognized September 16-22, 2018, as National Forensic Science Week; and

**Whereas**, individuals all across the country will be celebrating this event; and

**Whereas**, the hard-working people that compose our forensic science organizations deserve universal regard and appreciation for their commitment to proper scientific investigations for the cause of justice;

Be it known that on this (number) day of (month), I, (mayor/governor/etc's name), (mayor/governor/etc) of (city/state/country), in recognition of this event, do hereby declare September 16-22, 2018, to be Forensic Science Week in (city/state/country), and urge residents to express their appreciation for the people, facilities and technologies that make reliable forensic science possible in our community.

## **Advocacy Directions**

1. Find the names and office phone numbers of your Senators and Representatives.
  - Visit: <http://www.contactingthecongress.org> and input your zipcode.
  - You will be given a list of your senators and congressmen with their office phone numbers.
2. Call each office and ask for the Senator or Congressman's Scheduler.
  - When you speak with the scheduler, explain that National Forensic Science Week is August 10-16 during the recess and you would like to invite the Senator/Congressman and/or their staff to visit the crime laboratory while they are back in their district.
  - Write down the name of the scheduler and ask for an email address.
  - Often you will need to fill out a form and give a subject of visit. For purpose or subject write: education.
3. In addition to any form that your particular Senator/Congressman require, please review and edit the enclosed letter to provide specific information pertinent to your organization
4. Follow up your conversation with email or fax and include the enclosed letter (postal mail takes too long).
5. Do not limit the invitations to federal legislators. The same template and methods should be used to invite your local or state representatives for a tour of your facility.

**Note: we will provide policy documents for you in the event that the Member of Congress or Staff asks about your position on a subject**

(LETTERHEAD)

(Date)

The Honorable (Full Name)  
(Room #) (Name) (Senate or House) Office Building  
United States (Senate or House of Representatives)  
Washington, DC (20510 for Senate; 20515 for House)

Re: National Forensic Science Week and the Importance of Reliable

Forensic Science Dear (Senator or Congressman/woman):

In recognition of the important role that proper forensic science plays in the investigation of crimes throughout the nation, from exonerating the innocent to identifying the guilty, several professional organizations are sponsoring a National Forensic Science Week from August 10-16, 2014 to recognize the scientific and technical professionals that serve our communities in this vital role.

As part of this week's activities and in light of the importance of federal forensic legislation, national committees, increased demands for forensic analysis, and the significant impact that forensic science has on the criminal justice system, the **INSERT ORGANIZATION**, respectfully, invites you and your staff for a tour of our **INSERT FACILITY NAME** on **INSERT DATE**.

We believe that your participation in this event will provide useful information for you and your staff on the realities of modern forensic science. Additionally, your participation will assist in fully recognizing the significant contributions of our staff in providing quality forensic services to the citizens of **INSERT AREA**.

I look forward to working with you and your staff on any future forensic issues, and hope that you are able to join us for the celebration of National Forensic Science Week and tour of our facility.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

(Job Title)