



# HFSC Launches CSI Academy to Train New Hires

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thirteen trainees began Monday a 400-hour CSI Academy being held by the Houston Forensic Science Center. Those who successfully complete the academy will become crime scene investigators in HFSC's Crime Scene Unit.

The academy combines classroom and field training to teach crime scene investigators scientific protocols for the proper processing, preservation and collection of physical evidence. As part of the training, Dr. Itiel Dror, a prominent expert on cognitive bias in the forensic sciences, will conduct a two-day workshop. Anthony Graves, a member of HFSC's Board of Directors who spent more than a decade on death row for a crime he didn't commit, will share his story with the group. Representatives from the Harris County District Attorney's Office, the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, the Houston Police Department's Homicide and Special Investigation Unit, the Harris County Public Defender's Office and the Organization of Scientific Area Committees will also present at the academy.

The trainees will also receive instruction in courtroom testimony and spend time working mock crime scenes in HFSC's training facility.

The academy is part of HFSC's transition to a fully civilian Crime Scene Unit by year's end.

"Evidence collection is the start of the forensic process, and HFSC is committed to ensuring it is done according to proper scientific protocols," said Dr. Peter Stout, HFSC's CEO and president. "This helps ensure all analysis done on that evidence is credible and best serves the justice system."

The media will be invited to view portions of the training when the CSI Academy begins hands-on activities. Details of that availability will be provided closer to the date.

HFSC is a local government corporation that provides forensic services to the City of Houston and other local agencies. HFSC is overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor of Houston and confirmed by the Houston City Council. Its management structure is designed to be responsive to a 2009 recommendation by the National Academy of Sciences that called for crime laboratories to be independent of law enforcement and prosecutorial branches of government.

HFSC operates in seven forensic disciplines.

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