

Criminal investigation

Law



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Criminal investigations What are the main things to remember in the preliminary investigation of a suspected arson? During the preliminary investigation of arson, it is necessary to survey the surroundings in order to establish if there are any factors, such as forced entry, that infer arson. It is also beneficial to look at the fire patterns and other visible evidence so as to establish the cause of the fire. External examination also allows for the gathering of evidence that will help in the analysis of the cause of the fire (Fire investigations 2013).

List and explain the various clues that flames and smoke can offer the investigator in an arson investigation.

1. Direction of fire. The direction of the fire is a valuable clue since it points to the source of the fire. Smoke deposits on surfaces walls and objects can infer this clue. Similarly, objects can point in the direction of the fire since objects melt in the direction of the fire.
2. Source of the fire. This clue usually indicated by an area with the worst damage since the fire burns for a longer time at the origin. Structural damage can also help to identify the origin of the fire as structures tend to collapse from the most weakened part due to longer burning (Russell 2009).

What types of evidence are necessary in the successful prosecution of an arson case?

According to Fire investigations (2013), the most decisive evidence in the case of arson is the presence of accelerants, which act to tamper with the fire triangle, a source of fuel, oxygen, and heat. The presence of accelerants shows that the fire was not unintentional but an act of arson. Where there is evidence as to assess of the place, such as tools used for forced entry, as well as witnesses where their testimonies are also essential since they

support the conviction of arson. Evidence regarding the content of the building prior to the fire is also vital as it can indicate motive in the fire. Motive in this case may result from movement of goods out of the building prior to the fire for insurance fraud or starting the fire to conceal a previous crime.

Reference list

Fire investigations. (2013). Forensic science central. Retrieved from [http://www. forensic science central. co. uk/fireinvestigation. shtml](http://www.forensicsciencecentral.co.uk/fireinvestigation.shtml)

Russell K. Chandler. (2009). Fire Investigation. Cengage Learning.