



Quick Notes is an ICAC communication that will give you quick, timely links to recent news items impacting arson prevention, investigations, litigation and training. We trust that Quick Notes will be an easy way for you to remain current in news concerning arson control.

Events

2014 ICAC Webinar Series: Expert Witness



An ICAC Event | May 15, 2014 | 3:00 pm EST

One Dimensional vs. Two Dimensional Experts: Knowing the Difference Can Help You Avoid Costly Pitfalls in Selecting and Instructing Experts

Presented by Terry Dawn Hewitt and Rick Hammond.

Expert witnesses are the lynchpin of fire and explosion cases. If an expert is insufficiently qualified or performs poorly in the heat of litigation, even a most promising case can sour quickly. In many fire cases, the insurance claims handler or SIU supervisor are under severe time pressures to hire one or more experts for a given case, often without the help of the attorney who will ultimately handle the case. Without having experienced first-hand the ways that expert testimony can go wrong in depositions or trials, they are at a disadvantage in selecting and instructing experts.

This webinar will help you to distinguish between a one-dimensional expert who appears to have all of the requisites of an expert with sufficient expertise in his or her field; and a two-dimensional expert who not only has the requisite expertise, but has developed a crucial second dimension – the skills necessary to testify effectively. This webinar will provide:

- Examples of cross-examination techniques that can defeat even very knowledgeable one-dimensional experts at depositions or trial;
• Strategies that two-dimensional experts use to deflect such techniques; and
• A checklist for selecting and instructing two-dimensional experts.

Register

\$40.00 ICAC Member | \$60.00 Non-Member

Fire Investigations

Man sentenced in arson plot

Escobedo told police Davila threatened to blackmail him with sexually explicit photos unless he cooperated in the plan to set fire to a friend's home.

www.mysanantonio.com

West Bluff apartment fire likely electrical

Fire investigators will never know with 100 percent certainty that the blaze was electrical in nature because the extent of damage has made further on-site investigation unsafe...

www.pjstar.com

Arson Trials

Clayton restaurant owner pleads guilty to arson solicitation

Prosecutor cites a confidential source recorded a conversation that indicated the arson plan called for igniting a fire that would appear to have started from faulty Christmas lights. It was also alleged the payment to set the fire was \$200.

www.whig.com

Defendants in arson/fraud trial allowed to change pleas

A federal district judge has permitted three defendants in an arson/fraud case to withdraw previous guilty pleas while admitting to other charges. The three were allowed to withdraw their guilty pleas to arson and, in return, admit to a conspiracy to commit arson.

www.williamsondailynews.com

Case Law

U.S. v. JONES

Jones was convicted for participating in arson and the district court limited Jones's ability to introduce evidence of his fear of Wright – i.e., that he reasonably believed there was a present, imminent, and immediate threat by Wright of death or serious bodily injury. This case is an interesting case about "arson by duress".

http://scholar.google.com

METROPOLITAN PROPERTY & CASUALTY INSURANCE COMPANY v. CALVIN

Metro seeks declaratory judgment that the insurance policy is void because of material misrepresentations made by the Calvins before (at the time of application) and after the fire.

http://scholar.google.com

News/Interest

Ohio's arson registry of more than 100 offenders seeing little use in first year

More than a year after Ohio lawmakers created a statewide database to list all arsonists, citing concerns about repeat offenders, state fire investigators have yet to use the registry for a single case.

www.cleveland.com

Abbott: Review of old arson cases is legal

The Texas State Fire Marshal's Office may continue reviewing old arson cases for bad science, Attorney General Greg Abbott said in a formal opinion released Monday. Nothing in state law limits the office from testing old convictions to determine if the arson cases were based on science or scientific techniques now known to be flawed, false or misleading, the opinion said.

www.statesman.com

Men's rugby team reinstated after completion of arson investigation

Penn State Intercollegiate Athletics has announced the reinstatement of the men's rugby team. The team was suspended during an investigation into an incident of arson, which destroyed the rugby and cross country teams' sheds near the Penn State golf course.

news.psu.edu

Associate Member Profile

Forensic and Scientific Testing, Inc. Forensic and Scientific Testing, Inc. is an ISO Accredited and independent Forensic engineering laboratory specializing in Fire Debris Analysis, Electrical Failure Analysis, Vehicular Fluid Analysis, Vehicle Analysis, Mechanical Analysis, and Fire Investigation support.

www.fast-lab.com

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