

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
Public Statement of the  
**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTRE**

In Compliance with sections 7, 8, 9 of  
The Freedom of Information Act (F.O.I.A.) 1999

In accordance with Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Freedom of Information Act, 1999 (FOIA) the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre is required by law to publish the following statement which list the documents and information generally available to the public.

The Freedom of Information Act gives members of the public:

- (1) A legal right for each person to access information held by the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre;
- (2) A legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading;
- (3) A legal right to obtain reasons for adverse decisions made regarding an applicant's request for information under the FOIA;
- (4) A legal right to complain to the Ombudsman and to apply to the High Court for Judicial Review to challenge adverse decisions made under the FOIA.

**Section 7 Statements**

**Section 7 (1) (a) (i)**

**Function and Structure of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre**

Mission Statement

*To provide for all an impartial, reliable and efficient Forensic Science Service based on established scientific principles.*

The Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre is a Division of the Ministry of National Security. It comprises a staff of sixty-seven (67) and is headed by the Director.

The Forensic Science services essentially comprise the following:

- identification of illicit drugs (narcotics, psychotropics) in seized material;
- identification of fire accelerants;
- restoration of erased identification numbers (e.g., chassis and engine numbers of motor vehicles);
- identification of explosive residues;
- identification of corrosives;
- comparison of various evidential materials (e.g., soil, paint, glass);
- identification and quantitation of poisonous substances in human body fluids and viscera) and in food, water and agricultural, pharmaceutical and household products;
- determination of alcohol (ethanol) in blood;
- drug screening of blood and urine for narcotics and psychotropics;
- hair and fibre identification and comparison;
- identification of fragments of wood and other plant material;
- identification and grouping of blood and bloodstains;
- identification and grouping of semen and seminal stains;
- identification of faecal, saliva and other body fluid stains;
- comparison of handwriting;
- comparison of typewriting;
- detection of alterations on documents;
- comparison of inks, paper, adhesives, etc;

- identification of the work of various office machines;
- deciphering of indented writing;
- examination of currency notes;
- examination of firearms, projectiles and cartridge cases to determine weapon used;
- identification of devices as firearms or ammunition;
- estimation of firing distances in shooting cases;
- identification of cutting instruments and other tools from examination of toolmark;

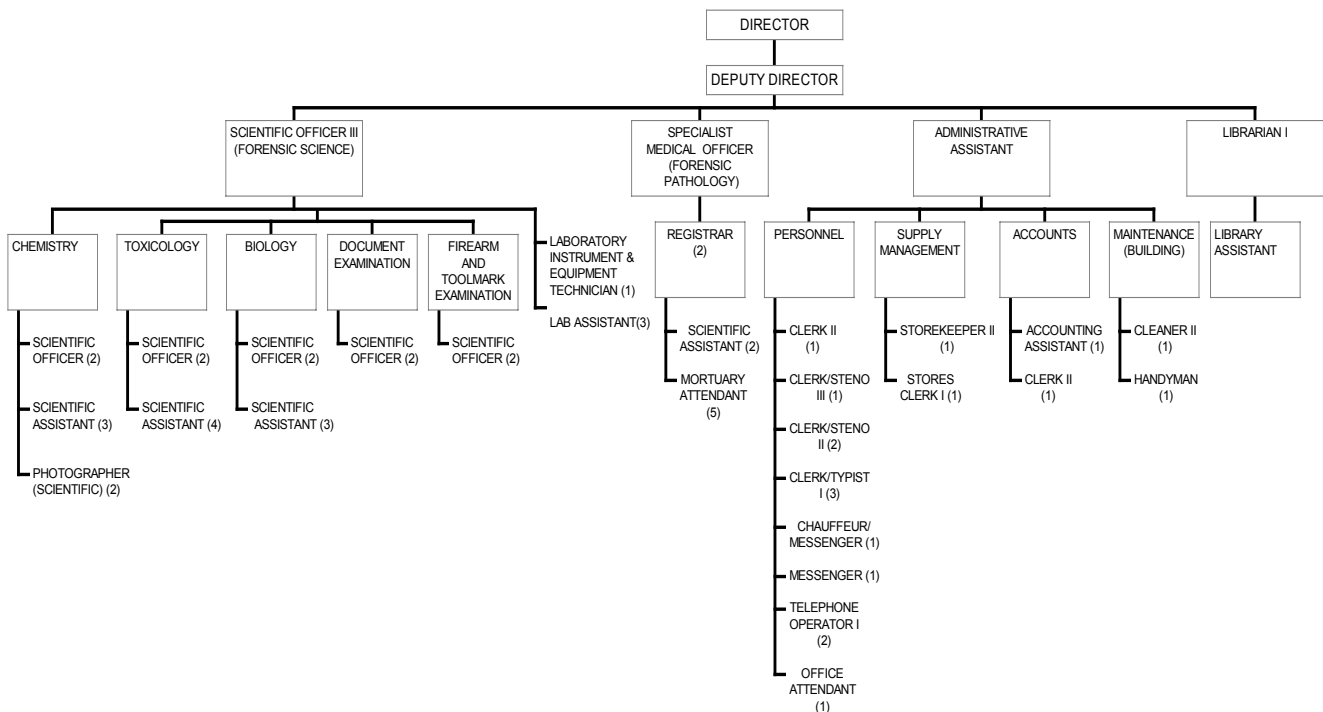
It is to be understood that the above analyses/examinations will only be undertaken in the context of forensic investigations and not in connection with other regulatory objectives.

The Forensic Pathology services consist mainly of

- post mortem examination of bodies of deceased persons to determine cause of death in cases of unnatural death, particularly those suspected to involve a felony;
- identification of skeletal remains;
- histological examination of tissues.

The TTFSC will not agree to perform for a client any service not specified above, unless all the implications of the relevant analysis or examination have been investigated and it is clear that the institution possesses personnel with the required expertise, as well as the equipment, reagents and materials necessary for the procedure.

The organization chart of the Centre is shown below.



**Effect of Functions on Members of the Public**

The Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre does not deal directly with members of the Public.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (ii)**

**Categories of Documents in the possession of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre**

- A. Files
  - 1. Administrative Matters
    - (1) Policy
    - (2) Staff Matters
    - (3) Circulars
    - (4) Projections.

2. Conferences/Seminars/Meetings/Events
  - (1) International
  - (2) Local
  - (3) Administrative.
3. Finance
  - (1) Estimates
  - (2) Accounts
  - (3) Administrative.
4. Office Management
  - (1) Scientific Supplies
  - (2) Office Supplies
  - (3) Books/Journals
  - (4) Minor Equipment
  - (5) Maintenance of Building
  - (6) Maintenance of Scientific Equipment
  - (7) Maintenance of Office Equipment
  - (8) Vehicles.
5. Operations
  - (1) Quality Control
  - (2) Analyses
  - (3) Relations with Organizations in Trinidad and Tobago
  - (4) Relations with International Countries and Bodies
  - (5) United Nations
  - (6) Lectures
  - (7) Computerization
  - (8) Security
  - (9) Publications.
6. Personnel
  - (1) Creation of Posts
  - (2) Filling of Vacancies
  - (3) Acting Arrangements
  - (4) Temporary Appointments/Leave Reliefs
  - (5) Personal.
7. Reports
  - (1) Administrative
  - (2) Forensic Science
  - (3) Forensic Pathology.
8. Training
  - (1) International
  - (2) Local
  - (3) Policy.

B Standard Operating Procedures

- (1) Biology
- (2) Chemistry
- (3) Documents
- (4) Firearms and Toolmarks
- (5) Toxicology.

C Publications

Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre Annual Reports

**Section 7 (1) (a) (iii)**

**Material Prepared for Publication or Inspection**

Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre's Annual Reports.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (iv)**

**Literature Available by Subscription**

Not applicable.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (v)**

**Procedure to be followed when accessing a Document from the TTFSC**

**How to Request Information**

*General*

Our policy is to answer all requests for information both oral and written. However, in order to have the rights given to you by the FOIA (for example the right to challenge a decision if your request for information is refused), you must make your request in writing. The applicant must, therefore, complete the appropriate form (Request for Access to Official Documents) available in our Lobby, for information that is not readily available in the public domain.

*Addressing Requests*

To facilitate prompt handling of your requests, please address it to the Designated Officer (see Section 7 (1) (a) (vi) ) of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre.

*Details in the Request*

Applicants should provide details that will allow for ready identification and location of the records that are being requested. If insufficient information is provided clarification will be sought from the applicant. If you are not sure how to write your request or what details to include, communicate with our Designated Officer.

**Request not handled under the FOIA**

A request under the FOIA will not be processed to the extent that it asks for information, which is currently available in the public domain, either from the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre or from another public authority, for example brochures and pamphlets.

**Responding to your Request**

*Retrieving Documents.*

The Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre is required to furnish copies of documents only when they are in our possession or we can retrieve them from storage.

*Furnishing Documents*

An applicant is entitled to copies of information we have in our possession, custody or power. We are required to furnish only one copy of a document. If we cannot make a legible copy of a document to be released, we may not attempt to reconstruct it. Instead, we will furnish the best copy possible and note its quality in our reply.

Please note we are not compelled to do the following:

- i. Create new documents. For example, we are not required to write a new program so that a computer will print information in the format you prefer.
- ii. Perform research for you.

**Time Limits**

*General.*

The FOIA sets certain time limits for us to decide whether to disclose the documents you have requested. If we fail to meet the deadlines, the FOIA gives you the right to proceed as if your request has been denied. We will try diligently to comply with the time limits, but if it appears that processing your request may take longer than the statutory limit, we will acknowledge your request and advise you of its status. Since there is a possibility that requests may be misaddressed or misrouted, you may wish to call or write to confirm that we have received the request and to ascertain its status.

*Time Allowed.*

We will determine whether to grant your request for access to information as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days as required by Section 15 of the FOIA. If a decision is taken to grant access to the information requested, you will be permitted to inspect the documents or be provided with copies, if you so request.

*Fees and Refunds.*

The Freedom of Information Fees and Charges Regulations prescribe the fees related to the search, retrieval and provision of documents. You are entitled to receive the document/s within seven days of payment of the relevant fee. If we fail to provide the information within seven days period you are entitled to a refund of the fees paid in addition to access to the document/s requested.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (vi)**

**Officers in the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre responsible for:**

- (1) The initial receipt of and action upon notices under Section 10
- (2) Requests for access to documents under Section 13 and
- (3) Applications for correction of Personal Information under Section 36 of the FOIA.

The **Designated Officer** is:

Job Title	Director
Name	<b>Yolanda Thompson</b>
Address	Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre Barbados Road Federation Park Port of Spain
Telephone	622 1011
Fax	622 5443
e-mail	<a href="mailto:ttfsc@trinidad.net">ttfsc@trinidad.net</a>

**The Alternate Officer is**

Job Title	Acting Deputy Director
Name	<b>Arlette Lewis</b>
Address	Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre Barbados Road Federation Park Port of Spain
Telephone	622 1011
Fax	622 5443
e-mail	<a href="mailto:tfsc@trinidad.net">tfsc@trinidad.net</a>

**Section 7 (1) (a) (vii)**

**Advisory Boards, Councils, Committees and other bodies**

At the present time there are no bodies that fall within the meaning of this section of the FOIA.

**Section (7) (a) (viii)**

**Library/Reading Room Facilities**

The Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre utilizes the Reading Room facilities of the Ministry of National Security.

Information in the public domain can be accessed in the Reading Room of the Ministry of National Security, Abercromby Street, Port of Spain.

The Reading Room is open to the public from Mondays to Fridays between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Section 8 Statements**

**Section 8 (1)(a) (i)**

**Documents containing interpretations or particulars of written laws or schemes administered by the TTFSC, not being particulars contained in another written law.**

- Freedom of Information Act 1999.
- Provisional Collection of Taxes (No 2) Order, 1992 under the Evidence Act Chapter 7:02, Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre, Ministry of National Security, **Scale of Fees**.

**Section 8 (1) (a) (ii)**

**Manuals, Rules and Procedures.**

1. Quality Manual
2. Standard Operating Procedures for Biology, Chemistry, Documents, Firearms and Toolmarks, Toxicology, Stores.
3. Manual of Staff Circulars
4. Safety Manual

**Section 8 (1) (b)**

Standard operating procedures for the purchase of Minor Equipment Items – Sub Head 03. Procedure for the Evaluation of Tenders.

**Section 9 Statements**

**Section 9 (1) (a)**

At this time we have no reports or statements containing advice or recommendations prepared by a body or entity established within the TTFSC.

**Section 9 (1) (b)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (c)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (d)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (e)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (f)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (g)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (h)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (i)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (j)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (k)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (l)**

Not applicable

**Section 9 (1) (m)**

Not applicable