

BRET DESH

IAAI-CFI, NAFI-CFEI

Independent Forensic Investigations Corporation (IFIC)

Papillion Fire Department

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Independent Forensic Investigations Corporation (IFIC) 2/2022 to Current
Fire Investigator

Papillion Fire Department 3/2014 to Current
Fire Investigator – Fire Apparatus Engineer – Firefighter – Paramedic

Gretna Volunteer Fire Department 9/2012 to 9/2022
Firefighter – Paramedic

EDUCATION

Associate of Science Hutchinson Community College – Fire Science 2009

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Fire Investigator – International Association of Arson Investigators
Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator – National Association of Fire Investigators
Fire Investigation Technician – International Association of Arson Investigators
Licensed Private Investigator – State of Iowa
Remote Pilot Certificate (Part 107) – Federal Aviation Administration
Paramedic – National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians
Nebraska State Fire Training:
Firefighter I
Firefighter II
Fire Instructor 1
Hazardous Materials - Operations Level
National Incident Management System
Incident Command System (ICS) Courses: IS100, IS200, IS300, IS700, IS800

MEMBERSHIPS

International Association of Arson Investigators – IAAI
International Association of Arson Investigators, Nebraska Chapter
National Association of Fire Investigators – NAFI
International Association of Fire Fighters – IAFF
Papillion Professional Firefighters – IAFF AFL-CIO Local 3767

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

CFITrainer.net – 369 Hours of Tested Training (Full Transcript available upon request)

*To avoid redundancy, only one instance of each completed course is listed.

Program Name	Hours	Date
A Plaintiff and Defense Perspective	2	9/14/2023
Accreditation, Certification, and Certificates	3	5/24/2022
An Analysis of The Station Nightclub Fire	4	3/31/2022
Arc Mapping Basics	4	1/30/2022
Basic Electricity	4	3/18/2022
Charleston Sofa Super Store Fire	4	5/8/2022
Charting Your Career Path in Fire Investigation	3	3/11/2024
Commercial Kitchen Fires 1: Fundamentals	3	3/26/2024
Critical Evaluation and Testing of Commonly Reported Accidental Causes	3	4/14/2024
Critical Thinking Solves Cases	4	2/25/2025
Digital Photography and the Fire Investigator	4	1/28/2022
Discovery in Civil Cases	3	11/15/2022
Discovery in Criminal Cases	3	2/25/2025
Documenting the Event	4	12/5/2023
Effective Investigation and Testimony	3	6/16/2024
Electric & Hybrid Vehicle Fires	3	1/28/2022
Emerging Technologies in Fire Investigation	3	5/16/2023
Ethics and the Fire Investigator	3	3/26/2024
Explosion Dynamics	4	7/2/2024
Fatal Fires: An Introduction	4	9/13/2023
Fatal Fires: Fire Effects on the Body	3	1/9/2025
Fatal Fires: Investigation	3	2/4/2025
Fire Chemistry	3	3/18/2024
Fire Dynamics in the Wildland	3	5/6/2024
Fire Effects Part 1: Heat Effects on Fuels	3	5/20/2025
Fire Effects Part 2: Combustion By-Products Effects	3	8/28/2023
Fire Flow Analysis	3	4/9/2024
Fire Investigation for Fire Officers	3	6/8/2024
Fire Investigator Scene Safety	3	10/13/2023
Fire Protection Systems	3	12/12/2023
Fundamentals of Interviewing	4	6/16/2024
Fundamentals of Residential Building Construction	3	12/5/2023
How First Responders Impact the Fire Investigation	2	4/9/2024
Insurance and the Fire Investigation	4	2/27/2024
Introduction to Appliances	3	1/28/2022

Introduction to Evidence	4	10/24/2023
Introduction to Fire Dynamics and Modeling	4	12/15/2023
Introduction to Youth-Set Fires	3	5/10/2024
Investigating Fire and Explosion Incidents Involving a Line-Of-Duty Death	3	6/13/2022
Investigating Motor Vehicle Fires	4	7/9/2024
Investigating Natural Gas Systems	3	2/20/2023
Legal Aspects of Investigating Youth-Set Fires	3	5/19/2024
Lightning Fundamentals	3	5/20/2025
Lithium-Ion Battery Fires	3	4/27/2023
Live Event - Digital Forensics	2	6/13/2024
Live Event: Insurance and Law Enforcement	2	9/8/2022
MagneTek: A Case Study in the Daubert Challenge	2	1/1/2023
Managing Complex Fire Scene Investigations	4	7/2/2024
Motive, Means, and Opportunity: Determining Responsibility in an Arson Case	4	5/19/2024
Motor Vehicles: The Engine and the Ignition, Electrical, and Fuel Systems	3	7/9/2024
Motor Vehicles: Transmission, Exhaust, Brake, and Accessory Systems	3	7/9/2024
NFPA 1033 & 921: 2022/2021 Editions Important Updates	3	7/12/2022
NFPA 1033 and Your Career	2	4/9/2022
Photovoltaic Cells & Systems	3	9/9/2023
Physical Evidence at the Fire Scene	4	12/10/2023
Postflashover Fires	4	4/30/2022
Residential Electrical Systems	4	1/2/2023
Residential Natural Gas Systems	3	5/6/2024
Search and Seizure	4	12/6/2023
Site Safety Assessment	3	11/30/2022
The Deposition Part 1: Format, Content, and Preparation	3	6/16/2022
The Deposition Part 2: Questioning Tactics and Effective Responses	3	6/16/2022
The Practical Application of the Relationship Between NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921	2	4/10/2022
The Scientific Method for Fire and Explosion Investigation	3	12/15/2023
Thermometry, Heat, and Heat Transfer	3	5/11/2022
Understanding Undetermined	3	3/15/2022
What the Insurance Professional Needs to Know About Fire Investigation	3	2/7/2025
Writing the Initial Origin and Cause Report	3	6/9/2024

Seminars, Conferences, and Live Events	Hours	Date
IAAI Expert Witness Testimony Class – Sevierville, TN Intensive 3-day course on expert witness preparation, courtroom procedures, direct/cross examination techniques, and presentation of technical fire investigation evidence in trial settings. Instructor: J.P. Ray – Tennessee Chapter IAAI	40	8/8/2025-8/10/2025
IAAI Certifications and Endorsements Update Comprehensive review of current standards for fire and explosion investigations and investigator qualifications. Instructor: Trace Lawless – IAAI	3	5/19/2025
IAAI Nebraska 2024 Conference – Hastings, NE Forensic Fire Death Investigation Investigation of fire-related fatalities, including burn pattern interpretation on human remains, differentiation between postmortem and antemortem injuries, scene documentation, and integration of forensic pathology with fire investigation methodology. Instructor: Dr. Elayne Pope	20	9/17/2024-9/19/2024
Forensic Electronic Data Recovery Recovery and preservation of electronic evidence, with emphasis on digital video recorder (DVR) data extraction. Included instruction on identifying, securing, and interpreting data from various electronic devices relevant to fire and criminal investigations. Instructor: Tully Kessler		
Lithium-Ion Battery Fire Basics Hazards, ignition mechanisms, and fire behavior of lithium-ion batteries. Covered identification of battery types, failure modes, suppression considerations, and post-incident evidence preservation techniques. Sponsor: National Association of Subrogation Professionals	1	5/7/2024
National Fire Academy R0772 – Emmitsburg, MD Two-week advanced course in fire investigation. Provided in-depth instruction on systematic scene examination, fire pattern recognition, fire dynamics, documentation, evidence collection, and analysis in accordance with NFPA 921. Included practical exercises, case study evaluations, and team-based investigations to develop proficiency in origin and cause investigations.	72	4/14/2024-4/26/2024

IAAI Nebraska 2023 Conference – Kearney, NE

Fire dynamics and ignition sources, including analysis of smoking materials, fire behavior principles, and a detailed case study of the Boyd Street Fire. Emphasis on fire cause determination, scene documentation, and application of scientific fire investigation techniques. Instructor: Johnathan Butta, ATF

28 9/19/2023-9/22/2023

Lithium-Ion Battery Symposium – Live Stream Webinar

Full-day webinar featuring multiple expert presenters covering lithium-ion battery hazards, failure modes, fire dynamics, suppression considerations, and investigative best practices. Sponsor: Fire Safety Research Institute

6.5 3/30/2023

Challenges to Expert Qualifications, Methodology, & Opinions – Gretna, NE

Examination of common challenges to expert witness qualifications, methodologies, and opinions in fire investigation and related litigation. Focus on preparing for Daubert hearings, cross-examination strategies, and strengthening expert testimony credibility. Instructors: David Bridges & Trace Lawless – IAAI

6 3/22/2023

IAAI Nebraska 2018 Conference – Omaha, NE

Explosion Dynamics and Dust Explosions

Investigation and analysis of explosion incidents with emphasis on dust explosion phenomena, ignition source characterization, and blast effect evaluation. Instructor: Dr. Scott Davis, PE

28 9/18/2018-9/21/2018

Washington D.C. Arson Case Study

Investigation of a high-profile arson case handled by the ATF, highlighting federal investigative techniques, evidence management, and fire cause determination. Detailed review of the Thomas Anthony Swett case, including coordination with law enforcement and interview techniques. Instructor: Tom Daley, ATF

Papillion Fire Department

Complete over 100 hours of Fire/EMS training per year through the Papillion Fire Department. Examples of training include live fire operations, incident command, EMS continuing education, technical rescue, and hazardous materials response.

LIVE FIRE TRAINING

- Omaha, NE – Metropolitan Community College 6/21/2024
A scene investigation was performed on a single room burn cell. This class was put on for the Papillion Fire Department Fire Investigation Team. The burn cell included several lithium-ion batteries within the debris, and the electrical system was energized at the time of the fire, so my team was able to practice an Arc Survey in a controlled environment. Instructor: David Sobotka – Omaha Fire Department
- Emmitsburg, MD – Fire Investigation Essentials 4/23/2024
Appliances Lab – Various household appliances were examined, taken apart, and intentionally put in situations that may cause a fire. Internal safety components, such as thermostats and thermal cut outs were discussed. We then bypassed the redundant safety mechanisms in the appliances and intentionally caused them to fail in a controlled environment. Devices were taken apart and examined post fire. Instructor: David Cusatis – National Fire Academy
- Emmitsburg, MD – Fire Investigation Essentials 4/17/2024
Electrical Lab – Household electrical systems were discussed. The lab building contained example components that would be found in a house. A main panel, branch circuits, various receptacles, switches, and components. We manipulated and changed wiring to simulate incorrect installation, as well as see live examples of failure in electrical components and overcurrent situations causing failure in extension cords. Instructor: David Cusatis – National Fire Academy
- Emmitsburg, MD – Fire Investigation Essentials 4/16/2024
Live controlled burn of a flashover cell. 2 similar fires were burned with different ventilation conditions to demonstrate the differences in fire patterns, fire effects, and ventilation patterns. A total of 11 scene examinations were performed at the National Fire Academy during this class. Instructor: Kevin Oliver – National Fire Academy
- Kearney, NE – IAAI Nebraska 2023 Conference 9/21/2023
Live controlled burn of a complex ventilation situation at the Kearney Fire Training Center. Fire dynamics and the effects of ventilation on the fire were observed in real time, bringing together all the classroom elements we had learned in a practical demonstration. 2 Scene Examinations were performed at this training. Instructor: Johnathan Butta – ATF
- Kearney, NE – IAAI Nebraska 2023 Conference 9/20/2023
Smoking materials as ignition sources lab. A series of hands-on tests were conducted using smoking materials as the ignition source for our test fires. Many different configurations of both the source smoking materials and the fuels ignited were tested to gain a better understanding of conditions needed for flaming and smoldering combustion to take place. Instructor: Johnathan Butta – ATF

- David City, NE – IFIC Training Investigation Seminar 7/28/2023
Setup, scenario development, and burning of 12 total burn rooms between 2 donated houses. These burns were in preparation for an all-day seminar aimed at insurance claims agents to help them better understand fire investigation, and some of the possible causes and scenarios we encounter in the field.
- Fairbury, NE – Fairbury Vol. Fire Department Investigation Class 6/21/2019
Controlled environment training burn where real-world fire causes were simulated by intentionally setting fires in different ways, demonstrating how unique burn patterns can present to investigators. 4 separate scene examinations were run throughout the day in different rooms of the donated house.
- Papillion, NE – Papillion Fire Department Burn Demonstration 10/18/2018
I took part in a fire safety week demonstration for school-aged children. 2 identical rooms were burned in a trailer-style burn box showing the difference between a sprinklered room and a non-sprinklered room, as well as the importance of crawling low in smoke. I assisted with the setting up of the rooms, as well as being on the fire suppression team.
- Bellevue, NE – Papillion Fire Department Live Burn 9/28/2018
Participated in a full-scale training exercise at the Bellevue Fire Training Center. Papillion, Bellevue, Gretna, Omaha, and Springfield Fire Departments were all in attendance. Live burning, standpipe operations, search and rescue drills, and hose line operations were all practiced in different evolutions throughout the day, with a real-time exercise at the end putting all of the skills together into one event.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Life Saving Citation – Papillion Fire Department	2025
Code Save Award – Papillion Fire Department	2025, 2024
EMS Life Saving Medal – Papillion Fire Department	2023, 2015, 2015
City Life Saving Award – La Vista Police Department	2023
10 Year Service Award – Gretna Volunteer Fire Department	2022

Multiple commendations for sound judgment and life-saving performance in high-pressure emergency situations.