

Tarah L. Helsel

Title: Manager and Forensic Scientist, Forensic Science Department

Education:

B.S. Forensic Science, Waynesburg University, 2016
Minors: Biology, Chemistry, Waynesburg University, 2016

Employment History:

2022 – Present RJ Lee Group, Inc., Manager and Forensic Scientist
2021–2022 RJ Lee Group, Inc., Supervisor and Forensic Scientist
2016–2021 RJ Lee Group, Inc., Forensic Scientist
2015 Gateway Analytical, Gibsonia, PA., Intern

Summary:

- Manages RJ Lee Group’s Forensic Science Department; oversees and participates in the preparation, analysis, interpretation and reporting of gunshot residue (GSR) evidence using Scanning Electron Microscopy/Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy (SEM/EDS).
- Has given testimony in federal and state courts in the area of gunshot residue (GSR) on more than one hundred occasions.
- Has given testimony for the prosecution and defense.
- Accepted as an expert in the states of Maryland, Kansas, Delaware, Michigan, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Washington, Florida, New Jersey, California, Nebraska, Minnesota, New York, South Dakota, Texas, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and North Carolina, as well as Puerto Rico and the countries of Bermuda, Turks and Caicos and the Cayman Islands.
- Led the department to successful laboratory accreditation by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) in the areas of Trace Evidence – Gun Shot Residue (GSR) and GSR Distance Determination.

Professional Memberships:

- Member & Chair, Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS)
- Member, American Society of Trace Evidence Examiners (ASTEE)
- Member, Ignitable Liquids, Explosives & Gunshot Residue Subcommittee, The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC)

Presentations:

- Presenter – “Gunshot Residue,” Pennsylvania State Police Advanced Homicide Symposium, Penn State Harrisburg. March 5, 2024
- Presenter – Gunshot Residue,” York County District Attorney’s Office Training, York, PA. July 24, 2023
- Presenter – “Gunshot Residue,” York City Police Department Training, York, PA. October 6, 2022
- Guest Lecturer– “Gunshot Residue: Background, Analysis, & Collection Techniques,” Duquesne University Trace Evidence Techniques, Pittsburgh, PA. October 28, 2020
- Presenter – “Stepping into the Future of Gunshot Residue Analysis: An Overview and Examination of GSR in Light of the SWGGSR Guide,” Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists (NEAFS) Annual Meeting, Pocono Manor, PA. November 9, 2017

Conferences Attended:

- Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS) Annual Meeting—2024
- Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS) Annual Meeting—2023
- International Association for Identification (IAI) Tri-State Educational Conference—2019
- Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS) Annual Meeting—2019
- Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS) Annual Meeting—2018
- Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists (NEAFS) Annual Meeting—2017
- Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS) Annual Meeting—2017