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**SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION OF FORENSIC EXAMINERS, INC.**  
**A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION**  
**BYLAWS**

**Article 1- PURPOSE & MISSION**

**The Scientific Association of Forensic Examiners hereinafter referred to as (SAFE)** is established to foster the professional needs of document examiners from basic training through continuing education for certified examiners. SAFE shall review, approve, disapprove of various educational and training programs and offer specific training where possible and supported. SAFE shall remain at all times an open organization for law-biding individuals seeking to enter the field, or are already matriculating in an approved educational or training program. SAFE shall establish and maintain the highest standards for certification. SAFE shall seek the highest level of accreditation for its certifications and the Board of Directors shall be primarily responsible for pursuing this mission.

The Scientific Association of Forensic Examiners shall be incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the state of Maryland.

**Section 1.01 Principal Office.**

The principal offices of the corporation shall be 5000 Thayer Center, Ste. C, Oakland, MD 21550 and Boca Raton, FL 33486.

**Section 1.02. Registered Office.**

The registered office of the corporation shall be 501 Burnt Mill Ave., Silver Springs, MD 20901.

**Section 1.03. Other Offices.**

The Corporation may also have offices at other locations within or outside the state of Maryland, where the Corporation is qualified to do business as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate or the business of the Corporation may require.

**Article 2- RIGHTS, MEMBERS AND DIRECTORS**

**Section 2.01 Rights.**

The corporation shall be controlled by its members through a Board of Directors. All members shall be individual persons. All members shall have the same rights, privileges, restrictions and conditions EXCEPT:

2.01(a) only members who are Certified Forensic Document Examiners or members working toward certification shall have voting rights with "Certification" being from SAFE or as recognized by SAFE;

2.01(b) Use of SAFE logo and any other trademarks of the Corporation shall be restricted to members who are active members.



### **Section 2.02 Transferability.**

Membership interests in the Corporation are NOT transferable.

**Section 2.03 Membership in General, Application and Annual Dues.** Anyone wishing to become a member of SAFE shall complete an application and pay a non-refundable application fee. Upon admission to SAFE, members shall pay annual dues to SAFE in the amount set by the Board.

**Section 2.04 Membership Book.** The Corporation, SAFE, shall maintain a book or file listing the name and address of each member, along with the date they became a member. The book or file shall also contain the date any member resigns his/her membership or it is otherwise terminated. The membership book shall be kept at the principal place of business of the Corporation.

**Section 2.05 Non-liability of Members.** No member by virtue of just being a member of SAFE shall be liable for the debts, liabilities or obligations of SAFE.

**Section 2.06 Termination of Membership.** A member's membership interest in SAFE shall terminate on the occurrence of any of the following events:

2.06(a) upon receipt by any Officer or Director of a member's written resignation of membership in SAFE;

2.06(b) upon the death of a member;

2.06(c) upon failure of the member to pay dues within 30 days after dues are due; Termination of membership shall occur automatically, without notice being given by SAFE. Membership may be reinstated in full if dues are paid within 60 days of the due date;

2.06(d) If after being given an opportunity to be heard, the SAFE Board of Directors finds that a member has engaged in conduct that violates the SAFE code of ethics, the purposes for which SAFE was formed, or has breached the duty of good faith owed to SAFE, then the member's interest in SAFE should be terminated. In the event of termination, the member so terminated shall receive a pro-rated refund of dues for that year only;

2.06(e) failure of Active members to participate in continuing education; or

2.06(f) Upon member being convicted of a felony

### **Section 2.07 Board of Directors**

2.07(a) The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall be referred to as "The Board." The Board shall have all of the powers, rights and duties assigned to the Board under the Non-Profit Corporation Act.

2.07(b) **Duties of the Board of Directors.** A Director shall not have the duties of a trustee of a trust with respect to the Corporation, with respect to any property or funds held, or administered by the Corporation, including any property subject to restrictions imposed by the donor or transferor of the property.

The Board shall establish a clear set of primary objectives consistent with the mission statement. The Board shall report to the membership progress on these objectives annually.

2.07(c) **Authority and Number.** The Corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of seven (7) members who are Document Examiners or licensed or certified professionals in an allied field.

2.07(d) **Chairman.** The Board of Directors may elect its own **Chairman** and **Vice Chairman**. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors shall have appropriate powers to perform their duties as designated by the Board of Directors. In the event the Chairman of the Board is unavailable or incapacitated, the Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Chairman.

2.07(e) **Vacancies.** Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors by death, resignation, and removal or otherwise may be filled by an affirmative vote of the remaining Directors at a meeting specifically called for that purpose. The meeting and vote may be telephonic, electronic or by Internet transmission, but must be recorded and/or documented. A Director elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remaining unexpired term of office.

2.07(f) **Meetings.** The Board of Directors shall meet a minimum of twice a year. One meeting shall occur no later than July 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. A second meeting shall be held within 30 days of the Annual Conference of SAFE at such time as is appointed for the Annual Conference. Each Director shall receive proper notice of time and date of each meeting. The Corporate meeting may be conducted online provided a quorum is present and the meeting is recorded. Additional meetings may be held at the request of the President.

2.07(g) **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the CEO, President or any two Directors. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Board of Directors may fix any reasonable date, hour, and place, either within or without the corporate headquarters, as the date, hour, and place for holding any special meeting of the Board called by them.

2.07(h) **Quorum, Majority Vote.** At meetings of the Board of Directors, a majority of the total of Directors fixed by these By-Laws shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The act of a majority of Directors present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors. Any regular meeting of the Board of Directors may be adjourned from time to time without notice other than announcement at the meeting whether a quorum is present or not and reconvened to transact any business which might have been transacted at the original meeting noticed.

2.07(i) **Amendment of Bylaws.** The membership shall have the power to alter, amend or repeal these bylaws or adopt new by-laws except for the purpose for which the organization was established. The membership may exercise this power at the annual business meeting at which a quorum is present and notice of the action with respect to the bylaws having been contained in the notice of such meeting at least 30 days in advance of the meeting.

2.07(j) **Compensation** Directors shall not receive any stated salary for their services; however, by resolution of the Board of Directors, a Director may be paid their expenses, if any, for attending meetings with other organizations within the Forensic Sciences arena that have impact or potential impact on the organization, and / or its members.

2.07(k) **Removal.** Any Director may be removed for cause by special meeting of the Board of Directors and by vote of a majority of the Board of Directors.

**2.07(l) Terms of the Board of Directors.** Directors shall be elected by the members. All Directors must be members of the Corporation, SAFE. All Directors shall hold office until their successors are duly appointed or elected and qualified. All Directors shall serve a three-year term.

**2.07(m) Elections.** Elections for the Board of Directors shall be held every 3 years. Each member of SAFE who is entitled to vote under provision of these bylaws shall receive notice of the election. Each member who meets the requirements stated in 2.07(c) shall be allowed to submit an application to have his or her name placed on the ballot. The Nominations Committee shall nominate the members of SAFE who are to run for election to the Board. The ballot shall be e-mailed to all members eligible to vote. The candidates with the most votes shall be elected. Votes may be mailed to the Nominations Committee or voted at the annual business meeting.

**2.07(n) Advisory Members.** The Board may appoint Advisory Members to the Board of Directors. Advisory Members shall receive all notices of meetings, shall be entitled to attend all meetings and shall be allowed to engage in discussion and offer advice at meetings. However, they shall not have any voting power.

### **Article 3- OFFICERS**

**3.01(a) Officers.** The Officers of SAFE shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other Officers as may be elected in accordance with the provisions of this Article. No more than one office may be held simultaneously by the same person.

**3.01(b) Election and Term of Office.** The Officers of SAFE shall be elected by a majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors at the organizational meeting and at the annual meeting of the members thereafter. Each Officer shall hold office for a term of three (3) years and thereafter until his successor shall have been duly elected and qualified. New officers begin their duties on the first day of the month following elections.

**3.01(c) Removal.** Any Officer may be removed upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire Board of Directors, whenever in its judgment the best interests of SAFE would be served thereby.

**3.01(d) Vacancies.** A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise, may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

**3.01(e) President.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of SAFE and, in general, shall supervise and control all of the business and affairs of SAFE.

**3.01(f) Vice President.** In the event the death, resignation or removal of the President, the person who serves as Vice President shall assume the office of President until the Board of Directors elects a successor to the President and shall perform all such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time.

**3.01(g) Secretary.** The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of the corporate records and seal; and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the President or by the Board of Directors.

**3.01(h) Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds and securities of SAFE; receive and give receipts for monies due and payable to SAFE and deposit all such monies in the name of SAFE in such

banks, trust companies or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws; and perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the President or by the Board of Directors. The treasurer will have the books reviewed annually.

3.01(i) **Parliamentarian.** The Parliamentarian shall maintain order at the meetings and assist the officers in following Robert's Rules of Order when necessary.

## **Article 4- COMMITTEES**

### **Section 4.01 Committees.**

4.01(a) **Purposes.** The Board of Directors may establish such regular committees to assist it in the performance of its duties, as it considers appropriate.

4.01(b) **Officers.** The President may designate from among the members a chairman for each committee with the approval of the Board of Directors.

4.01(c) **Rules.** Each committee may adopt rules for its own governance that are consistent with the Bylaws or with rules adopted by the Board of Directors.

4.01(d) **Powers.** Each regular committee shall have such powers as the Board of Directors may grant it consistent with law, the Articles of Incorporation, and the Bylaws.

### **Section 4.02 Standing Committees**

Bylaws, Certification, Communication - Integration (interface with other allied professions and judiciary), Education, Ethics, Membership, Publications (Journal, web site),  
Recertification

## **Article 5- MEMBERS**

**Section 5.01(a) Members, Classes of membership. Four classes of members: (1) Certified members (2) Active members (3) Associate members and (4) Affiliate members.** Certified members are those members who have accrued a minimum number of points according to the point system defined by the SAFE Board. Active members are those members who have accrued a minimum number of points during the past calendar year according to the point system defined by the SAFE Board. Associate members are first year document examiner members or forensic examiners in non-document examiner fields. Affiliate members are members who work in fields that retain or support forensic examiners. Associate and Affiliate members are not required to accrue points. Membership is a privilege, not a right; the qualifications of membership are subject to the discretion of the Board of Directors.

5.01(b) **Qualifications for membership.** The SAFE Board of Directors shall set forth the educational, experience, and testing requirements to become and remain a Certified Member of SAFE. All other members shall be designated non-certified members and must meet one of the following criteria: (1) non-certified members must have either completed an approved training program in Forensic Document Examination, OR (2) be enrolled in and actively matriculating in an approved training program in Forensic Document Examination, OR (3) be a graduate of or enrolled and actively matriculating in a Regionally Accredited Forensic Sciences program.

5.01(c) **Authority of Members.** Only certified and active members of SAFE shall have authority to vote for the election of the Board of Directors and bylaw changes. Each member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on all matters submitted to the membership. Except as otherwise provided, all action shall be decided by a majority vote of the voting members.

5.01(d) **Meetings.** There will be an annual meeting for members to be held at the time of the annual seminar or within 30 days of the annual seminar. Additional meetings of the members shall be called and held at such times, places and at intervals as determined solely at the discretion of the Board of Directors. No member shall have any voting rights other than as may be set by the Board in these bylaws and any subsequent amendments. Meetings may be held via electronic communication except for the annual meeting.

5.01(e) **Continuing Professional Education.** The SAFE Board of Directors shall set forth continuing education requirements consistent with organization standards. This includes but is not limited to attending a seminar or conference for document examiners, taking a college course in the member's stated discipline, attending classes in the member's stated discipline via a virtual or non-virtual classroom, reading a book on the subject in the member's stated discipline or writing a review or conducting research on a topic related to document examination approved by the Board of Directors.

5.01(f) **Member Resignation.** A member may resign from the Corporation at any time. Resignation must be in writing and may be offered or served on any Board Member or on the entire Board of Directors. Resignations may also be received by any Officer and subsequently forwarded to the Board of Directors. Actions on resignations and any applications for reinstatement shall be acted on the Board of Directors only.

5.01(g) **Suspension and Expulsion.** The Board of Directors may suspend, expel or discipline any member if the member is found guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction of a crime punishable by more than one year in prison, a felony or any crime involving a moral turpitude. A crime of moral turpitude includes but is not limited to offenses such as fraud, bribery, corruption, conspiracy, embezzlement, theft by a fiduciary or trustee, or theft by trick, deceit or false pretenses. Also included are offenses based in misrepresentation and perjury. The Board of Directors may also in its sole discretion, expel, suspend or discipline a Member if it determines a Member has:

- Failed to abide by the corporation's governing rules, including bylaws
- Has committed any act discreditable to the Corporation or its membership
- Provided false information on his/her application as to credentials, education, training or work history or criminal background
- Has been declared incompetent or insane by a court of competent jurisdiction
- Failed to cooperate in an SAFE internal investigation
- Used the SAFE "Certified Forensic Document Examiner" CFDE™ designation or logo or other trademark contrary to the use stated in Article 7 herein.
- Failed to pay required dues within 30 days from the due date
- Has been sanctioned for failure to disclose pertinent facts on a case where the member was acting as a testifying expert in a court of law
- Has been determined by a court of law to have testified while under the influence of one or more psychotropic drugs or alcohol
- Has failed to take any continuing classes during the fiscal year



**5.01(h) Honorary Members.** The board may confer honorary membership to individuals who donate their services to SAFE and/or the field of document examination.

#### **Article 6- CERTIFICATION**

The Founders of SAFE affirmatively believe that “certification” should be indicative of an individual possessing the necessary skills and knowledge to work in the field of Forensic Document Examination; and that “certification” by SAFE should represent the highest standard of skills and knowledge in the industry. The founders have determined that the acquisition of skills, knowledge and the “ability to do the job” can and most often do come from a variety of different learning methods. The SAFE Board specifically rejects the notion that only one method of training or education type is superior to others. SAFE promotes and recommends all varieties of learning methodologies, and offers a receptive hand to virtual learning environments as well as brick and mortar classrooms and laboratories. To this end, a point scheme shall be the vehicle to obtaining certification. The point scheme shall award or attach points to various types of learning and training methods, including distance learning, virtual classroom training, apprenticeship training, accredited college and university programs and other as is approved by the Board of Directors.

A total number of points shall elevate a member to certification eligible status. Upon application, a candidate having met all other requirements shall be a Candidate for Certification. An application for certification must be completed by the candidate and submitted to the Certification Chairman with the required payment set by the Board of Directors.

Subsequent to certification, a certified member shall undergo periodic proficiency testing once testing becomes available. All certified members shall meet established minimum benchmarks for proficiency. The Standards Committee shall determine these standards when proficiency testing of an appropriate nature is available and approved by the SAFE Board of Directors.

#### **6.01(a) Certification under SAFE.**

Certified Members are those who have completed a basic training program approved by SAFE, successfully passed SAFE requirements, procedures and testing for certification and have been designated as SAFE certified. SAFE Certified Members must successfully fulfill requirements for recertification when required, and has not otherwise forfeited the status of SAFE Certification.

#### **Article 7- CORPORATE SEAL AND TRADEMARKS**

The seal and logo of the Association, and the mark CFDE® “Certified Forensic Document Examiner” are trademarks of SAFE, Inc. Use of the seal and of the corporation shall be limited to active members in good standing. Use of CFDE® is limited to document examiners certified by SAFE.

#### **Article 8- CONTRACTING, ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS with SAFE**

The Board of Directors may approve and execute contracts with outside entities, or may designate an officer to execute contracts and/or articulation agreements approved by the Board. Day to day expenses and operating costs not exceeding a threshold determined by the Board may be authorized to be paid by one or more officers of the corporation.