

# Morris County Sheriff's Office

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**Sheriff**



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Undersheriff

**Alan J. Robinson**  
Undersheriff

**Kelley D. Zienowicz**  
Chief



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Chief Warrant Officer

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## **MORRIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION (CSI) SECTION FIRST IN NEW JERSEY TO CONFORM TO STRICT INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

The Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Section of the Morris County Sheriff's Office is the first in New Jersey to welcome an independent assessment, which concluded the section meets rigorous international quality standards.

Morris County Sheriff James M. Gannon in 2019 voluntarily sought the services of Highlands Forensic Investigations & Consulting LLC for an independent and objective assessment of

the agency's CSI Section that provides crime scene and incident evidence collection and analysis to all 39 municipalities in Morris County.

The yearlong evaluation involved an onsite visit by Highlands Owner Howard Ryan and firm Assessors Laura Tramontin and James P. Molinaro, and continuous reviews of case files, training files, proficiency/competency testing and management documentation.

In 2019, CSI Section Detectives and Forensic Technicians worked on 1,291 cases, or, between three and four cases a day.

Under the leadership of Morris County Sheriff's Office Detective Captain Denise Thornton and Detective Lieutenant Laura Flynn, and with all CSI Detectives assisting, an extensive questionnaire about practices, policies and directives governing eight categories of CSI operations were responded to with 126 detailed and objective written proofs.

To mark the recent, successful completion of the assessment, Mr. Ryan and the assessors visited the CSI Section to present a Certificate of Conformity to the Sheriff and CSI Section Detectives. The certificate validates the completion of a Crime Scene Unit Assessment Program that demonstrates conformity to standards promulgated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 17020), relevant to best practices for crime scene investigations.

Assessor Molinaro is a retired New Jersey State Police Lieutenant, who later worked for and retired from the

Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office in the Major Crimes-Crime Scene Unit. Assessor Tramontin has more than 20 years of crime laboratory experience and worked in multiple forensic disciplines that include drug chemistry, toxicology, trace evidence and biology.

Highlands owner, Mr. Ryan, is a retired New Jersey State Police Lieutenant and crime scene investigation and reconstruction expert. His firm provides consulting services across the United States and Canada.

"I can't say how proud I am of everyone in the Crime Scene Investigation Section," Morris County Sheriff James M. Gannon said.

"This independent assessment by a forensic firm that draws upon experts with more than 130 years of combined law enforcement experience strengthens the excellence, professionalism and precision of work performed by the Morris County Sheriff's Office CSI Section. It demonstrates the objectivity of detectives, their adherence to written procedures, and will increase their confidence while explaining and defending their analyses where it counts – in courts of law," Sheriff Gannon said.

Chester Police Department Chief Thomas Williver, who is the 2020 President of the Morris County Police Chiefs Association, called the CSI Section Detectives "consummate professionals."

"The CSI Section of the Morris County Sheriff's Office provides an invaluable resource to the municipal police departments in

Morris County. The residents of Morris County should be comforted to know that the CSI Section detectives are following the best practices and standards in Crime Scene Detection, which assists law enforcement in successful prosecution or exoneration of suspects. The detectives are consummate professionals and we are proud to work with them,” Chief Williver said.

Mr. Ryan and the Assessors said the CSI Section was in good shape before the assessment began and now, with its strengthening, is poised to be a model for crime scene units across the state and nation, particularly as demands and expectations by the public of their law enforcement professionals increase.

“It’s not an easy endeavor to open the door to scrutiny but the Morris County Sheriff’s Office CSI Section did that, 100 percent,” Mr. Ryan said.

Assessors Tramontin and Molinaro said the CSI Detectives were fully committed to ensuring that all their work, no matter how minute or routine, was backed up by a directive, policy or procedure. By the end of the assessment, the CSI Section’s conforming policies and procedures were compiled in a volume entitled “Morris County Sheriff’s Office Crime Scene Investigation Manual.”

“The end product is phenomenal,” Mr. Molinaro said.

The conformity assessment required the CSI Section to provide 126 objective written proofs, and in some cases to

demonstrate skills in the categories of Facilities, Vehicles, Equipment and Supplies; Investigative Activities; Evidence and Property Control; Training and Professional Development; Ethics; Safety; and Reporting and Records Management.

The scope of questions ranged from inquiries about equipment used in processing activities, to evidence control, to documentation of shooting scenes to verification of reagents and processing powders prior to use.

“The facility is second to none and the people of Morris County should be very proud of the Crime Scene Investigation Section. The level of enthusiasm is high and everyone in the unit is thrilled to be there,” Mr. Ryan said.