

Activities of the IUGS-IFG and GIN - The Applications of Geology to Help Investigate and Solve Crimes -

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'Forensic Geology' (also known as 'Geoforensics' or 'Forensic Geoscience') is the application of geology to criminal investigations. Forensic geologists may assist the police in some types of crimes to help determine what happened, where and when it occurred, or to help search for homicide graves or other objects buried in the ground. In a law enforcement context, geoforensic specialists may support the police in two broad fields of geoforensics, (a) Geological (trace) evidence, and (b) search.

Geological (trace) evidence. This involves the collection, analysis, interpretation, presentation and explanation of geological evidence. Geological trace evidence can vary considerably and may include for example; rock fragments, soils and sediments, which occur naturally in the ground, artificial (anthropogenic) man-made materials derived from geological raw materials (such as bricks, concrete, glass or plaster board), or micro-fossils. These may be transferred onto the body, person or the clothing of a victim or offender. The huge variability of rocks and soils, particularly in the United Kingdom, is helpful in potentially placing an offender or item at a particular location.

Search. Some geological techniques may be used to help the police search for locating (and sometimes the recovery of) objects buried in the ground, including for example, homicide graves, mass graves related to genocide, weapons, firearms, improvised devices, explosives, drugs, stolen items, money, coinage and jewellery.

In February 2011, the International Union of Geological Sciences Initiative on Forensic Geology (IUGS-IFG) was established, aiming '*to develop forensic geology internationally and promote its applications*'. IUGS-IFG and the Geoforensic International Network (GIN) are organizing and helping activities internationally on academic meetings as well as outreach and training programs on forensic geology.

The principal objectives of the IUGS-IFG are to:

1. Collate and disseminate data and information on forensic geology applied to policing and law enforcement, criminal, environmental and civil investigations;
2. Promote international meetings, seminars, conferences and training;
3. Develop a 'Committee' to act as principal advisers, collaborators and active participants;
4. Develop an international network whereby each 'member' will act as a principal contact in their respective country for the collation and dissemination of information on forensic geology;
5. Collate, make available and where appropriate review any existing documentation and publications in forensic geology; and
6. Produce a document endorsed by the Committee to be called; '*A Guide to Forensic Geology*'.

Details of IUGS-IFG are available from web site: <http://www.forensicgeologyinternational.com>

Keywords: forensic geology, geoforensics, forensic geoscience, IUGS-IFG, search, geological trace evidence