

Blair Darst

IAAI-CFI (V), NAFI-CVFI

Senior Staff Consultant, Fire Sciences



Mr. Blair Darst is a Senior Consultant for Engineering Systems Inc. (ESi) with over 30 years of experience in investigating various structural and vehicle fires. He has supervised and been the primary investigator for both criminal and civil fires involving multi-party complex investigations and has testified as an expert in the field of origin and cause in both State and Federal Court. Mr. Darst's expertise includes fire behavior, fire analysis, and digital photography.

Mr. Darst is a member of the International Association of Arson Investigators as a Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) with a specialty in vehicle fires. He is a member of the National Association of Fire Investigators and a Certified Vehicle Fire Investigator (CVFI). He has served on the Training Council for the Georgia Chapter of the IAAI, providing instruction on vehicle fires to chapters in Georgia. Mr. Darst is also a Georgia Police Officer Standard and Training Instructor with experience teaching at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center. Mr. Darst is a Certified Pilot and a Certified Drone Pilot.

Prior to his career in fire service and investigation, Mr. Darst served four years in the United States Marine Corps. He received an Honorable Discharge in 1987. In 1988, he became a National Certified Paramedic and worked on both ground and air services. Mr. Darst is a Certified Fire Fighter and worked as a firefighter/paramedic for Gwinnett County Fire, becoming a fire investigator in 1994. In 1996, he completed the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training to become a certified police officer. He became an Arson Investigator in 1998 and worked for Gwinnett County till 2003, when he moved to Barrow County to develop and oversee a fire investigations program for the Barrow County Fire Department.

Education

Columbia Southern University, with emphasis on Fire Investigations and Business Management, 2018 – 2020

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, June 2000

Police Academy 1996

Georgia Fire 1993

Contact Information

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ESi Atlanta

430 Technology Pkwy, NW
Peachtree Corners, GA 30092

Areas of Specialization

- Fire Origin and Cause Determination
- Structural and Vehicle Fires
- Fire Behavior
- Post Blast Analysis
- Fire Protection Systems
- Artifact collection and handling
- Aviation



The University of Cincinnati, 1987 - 1989

Licenses & Certifications

Certified Fire Investigator (CFI, IAAI 08-045)

Certified Fire Investigator Pro Board #274457

FAA Private Pilot 4464053

FAA Drone Pilot 5171038

Georgia Certified Fire Fighter 60-13720C-93

National Board of Fire Service Professionals #3320 (1994)

Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council #PBLE 961340S

Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council Arson Investigator PS07960002N

Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council Instructor

Positions Held

Engineering Systems Inc., Peachtree Corners, Georgia

Senior Staff Consultant, December 2025 – Present

Cunningham Investigative Associates

Fire Analyst 1994-2025

Barrow County Fire Department

Chief Fire Investigator 2003-2020

Lieutenant

Gwinnett County Fire Department

Arson Investigator 1998-2003

Fire Medic 1990-1998

Dawson County Sheriff's Department

Patrol and Criminal Investigations Division, May 1996- January 1997

Specialized Training

Technical Rope Rescue

Motor Vehicle Fires

Paramedicine emphasis on Pediatric and Advanced Cardiac Life Support

Post-Blast Explosions

Instructions in the Field of Police and Fire

Online lecture to Kia Motors of America on burn pattern analysis and forensic investigations into origin and causes of vehicle fires, 2022

Online lecture to the Georgia Chapter of the International Association of Special Investigative Units, 2021

Motor Vehicle Investigation for the Northwest Fire Investigators Association 2020

Lectured on Recreational Vehicle Fires at the Georgia Fire Investigators Spring Seminar and Metro Atlanta Fire Investigators Association in 2018

Lectured on Vehicle Fire Investigations in the Basic Arson Course at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, 2003 to 2010.

Lectured on Fire Investigation at the Gwinnett County Fire Department on various occasions from 2000 to 2003.

Lectured on Fire Investigation at the Gwinnett County Police Department on various occasions from 2000 to 2003.

Lectured on Fire Investigation at the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Department on various occasions from 2000 to 2003.

Lectured on Fire Investigations on various occasions at the Barrow County Fire Department from 2003 to 2020.

Professional Affiliations

International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)

IAAI Georgia Chapter of IAAI

National Association of Fire Investigators (NAFI)

National Fire Protection Association

International Association of Bomb and Explosive Technicians. 1999 to 2004

National Registry of Paramedics 1989 -1997

Professional Achievements and Honors

Instructor, Pediatric Life Support, December 1993

Top Graduate (Top Rung), Gwinnett County Recruit School, March 1993

Unit Citation Award, Station 11-B, 1996

Academic Excellence and High Shooter award at Northeast Georgia Police Academy, May 1996



Academic Excellence for Criminal Investigations at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in May 1997

Awarded the Bob Gore Scholarship to attend the 33rd Southeastern Arson Seminar, September 1997
Dean's List, University of Cincinnati and Columbia Southern University