



At the Frontline Against Violent Crime

## **SPECIAL AGENT INFORMATIONAL PACKET**

**BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES  
SPECIAL AGENT  
Grades 5, 7, and 9**

### **WANT TO BE A SPECIAL AGENT?**

The career of a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) special agent is unique and one of the most challenging in Federal law enforcement. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., ATF has field offices throughout the United States and its territories. Highly trained special agents are responsible for investigating violations of Federal law relating to firearms, explosives, arson, and alcohol and tobacco diversion. These investigations involve surveillance, interviewing suspects and witnesses, making arrests, obtaining and executing search warrants, and searching for physical evidence.

The profession of special agent is exciting and rewarding. Special agents must be tough - both physically and mentally. They must also be able to handle rigorous training, personal risks, irregular hours and extensive travel. Special agents are subject to reassignment to any ATF office in the United States.

**Please review the enclosed information regarding salary and benefits,  
basic requirements and conditions of employment.**

**Applications for position openings will ONLY be accepted in response to a specific ATF  
job notice or vacancy announcement.**

**For updates on ATF special agent recruitment efforts, please visit our website at  
[www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov) or contact the ATF Recruitment, Hiring & Staffing Center at 202-648-9100.**

**ATF is looking for energetic, innovative, solution-oriented professionals to assist the ATF team  
in it's mission to prevent terrorism, reduce violent crime and protect the public.**

*The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer*

## POSITION INFORMATION

- **Position Title and Grade Levels:** Criminal Investigator (Special Agent), GL-1811, grades 5, 7, and 9.
- **Major Duties:**
  - Investigate criminal violations of Federal laws within the enforcement jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Justice.
  - Conduct investigations of violations relating to explosives, firearms, arson, and alcohol and tobacco diversion.
  - Gather and analyze evidence through investigative leads, seizures and arrests, execution of search warrants, and a variety of other means.
  - Prepare concise criminal investigative case reports.
  - Testify for the Federal government in court and before grand juries.
- **Work Schedule:**

ATF's business hours are generally 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, a special agent's work schedule and number of hours worked per day or week will vary according to assignments. (For compensation see Law Enforcement Availability Pay in the Salary and Benefits section of this informational packet.)
- **Travel:** Travel may be considerable, depending upon assignments.

## SALARY AND BENEFITS

- **Base Annual Salary Range For Year 2011**

**\$33,829 (Grade 5, Step 1) to \$42,948 (Grade 9, Step 1)**  
(Salary range excludes locality pay and 25% Law Enforcement Availability Pay).

Starting base salary will depend upon grade qualifications (see the basic qualifications section of this informational packet).
- **Locality Pay:** All ATF duty stations qualify for locality pay. Special agents receive an additional percentage of their base salary, which will vary by duty location. The current range of locality pay is 14.16% to 35.15%.
- **Law Enforcement Availability Pay:** Because of the type of work and additional work hours, special agents receive 25% Law Enforcement Availability Pay, which is added to locality pay.
- **Promotion Potential:** The full performance level for this position is Grade 13 (\$71,674 - \$93,175 excluding Law Enforcement Availability Pay and locality pay).

**Note:** Promotions are based upon performance and must receive supervisory approval.
- **Foreign Language Award Program:** The Foreign Language Award Program authorizes cash awards for ATF employees who possess and make substantial use of one or more foreign language(s) in the performance of their official duties. The cash award is based upon proficiency and substantial usage.

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Male applicants born after December 31, 1959, must be registered with the Selective Service System, or be exempt from having to do so under Selective Service law.
- **Law Enforcement Age Requirement:** applicants must be at least 21 years of age and not older than 37 at the time of appointment in accordance with Public Law 100-238, this position is covered under law enforcement retirement provisions; therefore, candidates must be appointed before reaching their 37<sup>th</sup> birthday unless they are a preference eligible veteran OR presently serve or have previously served in a Federal civilian law enforcement retirement-covered position (after subtracting the years/months of prior Federal service worked in a primary law enforcement position, applicants must be at least 37 years of age). The maximum entry age limit was established under the age discrimination prohibitions contained in Section 15 of the Age Discrimination and Employment Act.
- Possess a current and valid automobile operator's license.
- Complete ATF special agent applicant questionnaire (at time of application).
- Take and pass the ATF Special Agent Examination.
- Take and pass the ATF Special Agent Applicant Assessment Test.

- Take and pass the Pre-employment Physical Task Test which is composed of three elements (1.5 mile run, push-ups and sit-ups), with a minimum score.
- Appear for and successfully complete a field panel interview – a writing sample will be required.
- Be in compliance with ATF's drug policy for special agent applicants (posted at "Careers" at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov)).
- Take and pass a medical examination by an authorized government physician and meet medical requirements. Medical requirements include:

At a minimum, ATF Special Agents must meet uncorrected distance vision of at least 20/100 in each eye, and corrected distance vision must test 20/20 in one eye and 20/30 in the other. Normal depth perception and peripheral vision are required as is the ability to distinguish shades of color by plate tests.

Applicants that have undergone Automated Lamellar Keratoplasty (ALK); Laser in-situ Keratomileusis (LASIK); Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK); and Radial Keratotomy (RK) must provide proof that they have passed the specific protocol. The test must be administered by a board-certified ophthalmologist who will document the results of the protocol test and that the test was performed no sooner than the prescribed time after the date of surgery (3 months or one year, depending on the type of surgery).

Hearing loss, as measured by an audiometer, must not exceed 30 decibels at 500, 1000, and 2000 HZ levels.

Applicants must be able to perform physically strenuous duties safely.

- Weight must be in proportion to height.
- Take and pass a drug test.
- Take and successfully complete a polygraph examination.
- Successfully complete a background investigation for a top secret security clearance.
- This position requires the incumbent to carry a firearm and ammunition. Persons who have been convicted of felonies and certain misdemeanors, including a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence (Title 18, U.S.C. section 922 (g) (9)) are not eligible to possess a firearm or ammunition.
- **Applicants will be required to sign a geographic mobility agreement acknowledging that if selected, they may be assigned to any office in the United States, to include U.S. territories, and are subject to relocation at any time.**
- **Payment of relocation expenses to the first appointment with ATF will not be authorized unless you are a current ATF employee.**

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- All applicants must take and pass a pre-employment Physical Task Test (PTT). Applicants will be tested one time only in three areas, in the following order, and with minimal rest between events: 1. Sit-ups (the maximum number performed within 1 minute without stopping). 2. Push-ups (the maximum number performed within 1 minute without stopping). 3. One-and-one-half-mile run (the minimum completion time for a 1.5-mile run.) To pass, applicants must achieve age and gender-based minimum scores for the 1.5-mile run, sit-ups and push-ups as listed at the ATF web site, [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov). The same PTT will be administered again during the first week of the Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) and must be passed with the same minimum scores. Prior to the completion of CITP each applicant must take and pass the PTT again and must achieve a higher score based on age and gender-based standards as posted on the ATF web site (<http://www.atf.gov/careers/special-agents/training.html>).
- The ATF National Academy strongly encourages all applicants and new special agent hires to be in top physical condition prior to arriving at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). The physical demands of the training at FLETC and the ATF National Academy require repetitive long distance running, repetitive calisthenics, lifting moderate to heavy weights, considerable physical exertion during the prescribed training regimen and other physical fitness-related activities, and considerable physical exertion while demonstrating a variety of law enforcement techniques and methods.
- The ATF PTT will be administered at each of the 25 ATF Field Division Offices. ATF Field Division Offices are listed on the ATF website at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).
- For additional information on special agent training requirements, visit the "Careers" section at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov) (click on Special Agent then "ATF Pre-employment Physical Task Test" link).

#### METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

- Applicants must meet basic qualifications (at least) at the GS-5 level to be eligible to take the ATF Special Agent Examination (see the basic qualifications section of this informational packet).

- All applicants must take and pass the ATF Special Agent Examination and the ATF Special Agent Applicant Assessment to be eligible for further consideration for special agent positions.
- Administration of Tests: The test sessions are approximately 4 hours for both tests. The Office of Personnel Management administers and scores both tests.
- **Applications for position openings or testing opportunities will only be accepted in response to a specific ATF job notice or vacancy announcement.**

For updates on ATF Special Agent recruitment efforts, please visit the "Career Opportunities" section of our website at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR GRADE 5	BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR GRADE 7	BASIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR GRADE 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three years of general experience, one of which was equivalent to at least the GS-4 level. General experience is defined as progressively responsible work in criminal investigative or law enforcement fields that requires knowledge and application of laws relating to criminal violations;</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A combination of education and experience. Education is credited on the basis of 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours of undergraduate work which is equivalent to 9 months of work experience.</li> <li><u>Note:</u> see non-qualifying general experience section.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A bachelor's degree with Superior Academic Achievement (SAA). Superior Academic Achievement is based on one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Class standing</u> – applicants must be in the upper third of the graduating class.</li> <li><u>Grade point average</u> – applicants must have a minimum average of 2.95 out of a possible 4.0, based on 4 years of education or based on courses completed during the final 2 years of the curriculum.</li> <li><u>Three point five (3.5)</u> or higher out of a possible 4.0 based on the average of the required courses completed in the major field of study or the required courses in the major field completed during the final 2 years of the curriculum.</li> <li><u>Membership in a national honor society</u> as listed in the Association of College Honor Societies: Booklet of Information (1992-95) and/or Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities (1991).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Applicants are required to provide proof of SAA; <i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GS-7 requirements may also be met by completion of 1 year of full-time graduate education (18 semester hours) <i>or</i></li> <li>One full year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-5 grade level. Specialized experience is experience in or related to investigations of criminal violations that provided the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the position. Examples of qualifying specialized experience include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership or membership on a military intelligence or criminal investigative team or component in which the principal duties consisted of security investigations, intelligence gathering or criminal prosecution.</li> <li>Analyzing raw investigative data and preparing comprehensive written investigative reports.</li> <li>Investigating complex claims involving suspected crimes or alleged fraud.</li> <li>Investigating criminal cases requiring the use of recognized investigative methods that may have included presenting evidence in court.</li> <li>Supervising or conducting interrogations that involved eliciting evidence, data or surveillance information.</li> <li>Law enforcement work in which 50 percent or more of the time involved criminal investigations requiring the use of surveillance, undercover or other criminal detection methods.</li> <li>Investigating computerized businesses and/or accounting systems and forming sound conclusions as to related criminal business practices and compliance with federal laws and regulations.</li> <li>Investigative work that required rapid, accurate judgments and sound decision-making in applying regulations, instructions and procedures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Successful completion of formalized programs of in-service training for any of the above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two full years of progressively higher level graduate education;</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A master's degree or other graduate degree such as: an LL.B, J.D. etc.,</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One full year of specialized experience. Experience must have been equivalent to at least the GS-7 level. The applicant must have specific knowledge, skills and abilities using criminal investigative techniques to successfully perform the duties of the position.</li> </ul> <div style="background-color: yellow; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>NON-QUALIFYING GENERAL EXPERIENCE</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work experience as a uniformed law enforcement officer, where the principal duties consist of investigations and arrests, involving traffic violations, minor felonies, misdemeanors, and comparable offenses; <i>or</i></li> <li>Work experience in which the major duties involve guarding and protecting property; preventing crimes, and/or legal research without the application of investigative techniques.</li> </ul>