



eTrace

FACT SHEET

Fast Facts

eTrace helps identify gun traffickers, potential suspects and patterns of violent gun crime to help law enforcement agencies solve criminal cases.

eTrace helps criminal investigators quickly track down the origin and purchaser of crime guns.

eTrace is used by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to both enter and access firearms trace data.

eTrace is a web-based application that is used to trace the purchase and/or history of weapons used in violent crimes. The system, available in both English and Spanish, is key in generating leads to help solve violent crimes across the country.

These leads help law enforcement agencies quickly identify potential gun traffickers and suspects in criminal investigations. eTrace is used to trace crime guns can be tracked from their original manufacturer or importer, through the wholesale/retail distribution chain, to the first person who bought them.

Firearms are traced by local, state, federal, and international law enforcement agencies. Authorized users can search eTrace using a variety of fields including gun serial number, type of crime, date of recovery and names of individuals involved. In addition, participating law enforcement agencies can opt to share firearms trace data with all other eTrace users in their state who have also opted to share their data. eTrace thus allows its users to detect patterns of violent crime across jurisdictions.

FIREARMS eTRACE SYSTEM

LEADS



LEA* recovers a firearm at a crime scene

LINK



LEA enters a trace request via **eTrace** to identify the firearm's origin to develop investigative leads

DETECT



eTrace provides information used to link a suspect(s) to a firearm in a criminal investigation(s)

RECOVER



eTrace provides information that can be used to detect interstate, intrastate and international trafficking

What happens when a trace is conducted...

*LEA – Law Enforcement Agency

THE NUMBERS



ATF's National Tracing Center reviewed, analyzed and processed over **623,000** firearms trace requests in fiscal year 2022.



As of January 2023, more than **9,300** law enforcement agencies use eTrace in their investigations, including agencies from **50** foreign countries.

HOW ETRACE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

When firearms are found at a crime scene, it is critical for investigators to quickly track down the origin of the weapons and any possible suspects. eTrace serves as a one-stop shop for comparing firearms data across multiple jurisdictions, helping agencies close cases faster.

The benefits of eTrace include:

- Robust statistical reports that generate new investigative leads
- Faster processing of firearms trace history
- Targeted trace data relevant to a specific state or local jurisdiction
- Real-time data verification and case updates

eTrace is part of the broader ATF mission to catch violent offenders and criminal suppliers, and get their weapons off the street. ATF is constantly looking to leverage technology like eTrace to streamline the investigative process.

COMBATING VIOLENT CRIME

eTrace is the primary investigatory tool of ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC). ATF is the only federal agency authorized to trace firearms; however ATF's authorization is only to trace firearms for law enforcement agencies involved in a bona fide criminal investigations. ATF also provides the access to the application free of charge to authorized law enforcement agencies.

The eTrace system allows law enforcement agencies to conduct comprehensive traces of recovered crime guns and establish leads in their investigations. The system also allows agencies to strategize long-term on how best to reduce firearms-related crime, firearms trafficking and violence in their communities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Submitting Firearms Trace Requests
- eTrace Brochure (PDF)
- Request an eTrace Account (law enforcement only)