



Fact Sheet



Public Affairs Division - Washington DC

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ATF LABORATORY SERVICES

The ATF Laboratory Services Division provides analytical and advisory services on scientific matters. Laboratory Services comprise four organizational groups: the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), with facilities in Atlanta, San Francisco, Washington and the Fire Research Laboratory (FRL). The Washington FSL and the FRL are collocated with administrative offices in suburban Maryland and constitute the National Laboratory Center.

The ATF laboratories have a distinguished history dating back to 1886. From two scientists working in the attic of the U.S. Treasury building, the operation has grown to a staff of more than 100 professionals. ATF laboratories are committed to providing accurate and authoritative scientific information needed to reduce violent crime and protect the public.

ATF laboratories are staffed with chemists, scientists, forensic biologists, engineers, fingerprint specialists, firearm and tool mark examiners, document examiners, and administrative personnel. ATF laboratory personnel hold leadership positions in numerous professional scientific organizations and are among the most highly qualified specialists in their fields. ATF actively supports and encourages professional certification of its scientists and examiners.

In fiscal year 2013, ATF's laboratories accomplished the following:

- Processed 2,475 forensic cases
- Processed 74 fire research cases
- Processed 3,374 ATF NIBIN cases
- Provided 105 days of expert testimony in the courts
- Worked 108 days at crime scenes
- Provided 579 days of training instruction for federal, state and local investigators and examiners

ATF laboratories pioneered the creation of a national accreditation program for forensic laboratories and were the first federal laboratories that were accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board (ASCLD/LAB). They have maintained accreditation since 1984 and undergo rigorous on-site inspections every five years. Those evaluations include personnel qualifications and standards for evaluation, evidence control, security, handling and preservation

techniques, instrument maintenance, calibration and use of comparison standards, and internal and external proficiency testing. In 2011 the ATF laboratories underwent evaluations for accreditation to ISO 17025 (International Organization of Standardization) and all four laboratories were accredited.

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