



Fact Sheet



Public Affairs Division - Washington DC

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ATF CERTIFIED EXPLOSIVES SPECIALISTS (CES)

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Certified Explosives Specialist (CES) program comprises experienced special agents who investigate violations of the federal explosives laws. The CES provides support to state and local authorities and serve as ATF's primary resource to provide technical expertise and analysis in support of ATF's explosives enforcement mission in the areas of explosives identification, handling, use, disposal and post blast investigation.

The CES specializes in investigating violations of federal explosives and firearms laws. These violations include bombings, explosives thefts and other explosives-related matters relevant to the unlawful use, storage, manufacture and distribution of explosives. The CES enforces the federal explosives laws and protect the public from criminal acts and the unsafe storage of explosives. Their efforts support ATF's and the Department of Justice's strategic goals of preventing terrorism and promoting the nation's security.

A CES must maintain a working knowledge of commercial, military and homemade explosives, and improvised explosive devices. As ATF's primary investigative resource on explosives, they respond to all explosions, conduct explosives recoveries and large scale seizures, conduct disposal operations, provide technical assistance to other public safety entities, and deliver courtroom testimony within their area of expertise. The CES also supports ATF industry operations investigators in matters relating to explosives regulations. Additionally, they train ATF personnel, private- and public-sector safety entities, other law enforcement and military personnel, and international partners.

The CES must complete a two-year candidacy program that consists of formal classroom and range training, written assignments and testing. In total, the CES candidate must complete a minimum of ten weeks of training during the first two years, followed by an additional five weeks of training within five years of the initial certification. Additionally, they must complete 12 graduate-level credit hours in explosives engineering/technology. During their candidacy, a CES must also participate in explosives-related investigations, disposal operations, and explosives demonstrations. After attaining CES status, a special agent must successfully recertify every two years, which involves standardized practical skills testing and a one-week course.

A CES who successfully completes the U.S. Army/FBI Hazardous Device School (six-week course at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala.) qualifies as a certified bomb technician who may render safe destructive devices when in the interest of the

public safety.

The ATF CES work on a daily basis with the U.S. Bomb Data Center, ATF explosives enforcement officers, the National Response Team, three forensic science laboratories, and Explosives Detection Canines at explosives incidents and in criminal investigations.

ATF is charged with enforcing the federal explosives and arson laws, which include the National Firearms Act (codified at Title 26, United States Code, Chapter 53), the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, Title XI, and the Safe Explosives Act of 2002 (codified at Title 18, United States Code, Chapter 40), and implementing regulations (codified at Title 27, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 479 and 555).

As of fiscal year 2013, ATF has more than 260 CESs located throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Canada, Mexico and Colombia.

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