



ATF-LS-FT13 Standard Ammunition File	Published Online: March 2018
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Unofficial Copy; May Not Be Most Current Version	Page: 1 of 2

I. Scope

A current and complete ammunition reference collection is an important source of information for firearms examiners in routine examinations, particularly in cases where the identification of potential ammunition manufacturer(s) is important in the case investigation, nexus determination and the information of search warrants. Additionally, the determination of source may play a role in proper test firing and distance-to-target determinations. This policy is applicable to all ATF Laboratory Services Forensic Laboratories.

II. References

AFTE Journal. 1969 – present.

Barnes, Frank C. *Cartridges of the World, 10th Edition*. Krause Publications, 2003.

Cartridge Headstamp Identification Catalog (CHIC). Available via the ATF IntraWeb.

Forker, B. *Ammo and Ballistics*, Third Edition. Safari Press, 2006.

III. Safety Precautions

See ATF-LS- FT8 Firearms Safety Guidelines.

IV. Apparatus/Reagents

Inertia bullet puller and packaging materials for disassembled ammunition components.

V. Procedures

1. Reference collection samples shall be fully documented, uniquely identified, and properly controlled.
2. The items in the Standard Ammunition File are ideally sorted by caliber. A numbering system assigning a unique identifier to each sample will be used to assist in the cataloging of the collection. The cataloging can take the form of an electronic or paper system.
3. Each item in the collection should consist of at least the following: one intact cartridge, and one disassembled cartridge.
4. At a minimum, the information displayed on the ammunition box for a given reference sample will be fully documented and cataloged for each collection entry, which may include the following:
 - Manufacturer of cartridge
 - Lot number
 - Caliber and weight of the bullet
 - Bullet design and/or composition
 - Number and size of shot; composition

Ammunition components may be traceable by the information on the ammunition box and/or the headstamp via the manufacturer.

5. Each of the reference collection containers shall be marked with at least the reference collection file number. Additionally, each component within the container should also be marked permanently with the identifying number.
6. Only ammunition from reliable sources will be added to this collection to protect the integrity of the reference materials in the Standard Ammunition File. For instance, seized loose ammunition from numerous sources is not a reliable source.
7. New or updated reference samples obtained by one laboratory should be sent to the FSL-W ATF laboratory in order to maintain the most current and up-to-date Standard Ammunition File. The reference items should be shipped along with the appropriate cataloging information and/or documentation using secure and accepted shipping and packaging methods. The reference items will be accessible to all three ATF Laboratories.

VI. Quality Control

Any additional items that are added to the reference collection shall be properly filed and the cataloging system updated by members of the Firearms Section as necessary. The Standard Ammunition File is stored in a secure, restricted access location for use by the Firearms Section to maintain proper control over the reference materials. Safe handling practices and proper caution in accordance with the Firearms Safety Guidelines should be exercised where applicable.