



Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division (FATD)

FACT SHEET

Fast Facts

ATF's Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division is the leading federal authority for classifying firearms and ammunition.

ATF's Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division manages a one-of-a-kind reference collection with more than 15,000 firearms.

ATF's Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division (FATD) is the federal government's technical expert on classifying firearms and ammunition under federal statutes and regulations. FATD uses leading-edge technologies to analyze the origins of crime guns and identify emerging trends in criminal activity. They also provide technical guidance on firearms laws to law enforcement partners, U.S. Attorney's offices and congressional staff.

Firearms Enforcement Officers (FEOs) are firearm experts trained in all aspects of firearm operation and identification. They support multiagency police responses to violent crimes across the country. FEOs work closely with ATF special agents and investigators, other federal agencies and local law enforcement to identify firearms-related evidence found during search warrants and investigations.

BRANCHES AND SERVICES

The Firearms Technology Industry Services Branch (FTISB) provides firearm industry-related technical support regarding firearms laws, regulations and technology issues. The branch classifies firearms for industry members and issues marking variances to licensed manufacturers and importers to help them comply with federal laws. FTISB also makes curio and relic determinations for firearms that are novel, rare, bizarre or associated with a significant historical figure, period or event. Their specialists participate in congressional hearings and task forces and serve as technical experts for proposed firearms legislation.



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THE NUMBERS



1,491 criminal cases worked for local, state and federal law enforcement in fiscal year (FY) 2023.



6,051 pieces of criminal evidence analyzed in FY23.



830 industry requests completed and 896 firearms/parts evaluated in FY23.

The Firearms Enforcement Officer Development Branch (FEODB) provides firearms and ammunition training to ATF personnel and other law enforcement partners. The branch stays current on the latest advancements in firearms and ammunition manufacturing, including additive manufacturing (3-D printing). FEODB oversees training on weapon identification protocols, interstate connections and advanced technologies.

The Field Response Branches (FRBs) coordinate FATD services with ATF Field Operations. FRBs receive field requests and coordinate FATD support for search warrants, training and other needs. FRBs are based in regional “hubs” in Martinsburg, West Virginia, Dallas and Las Vegas. FRBs analyze and classify weapons recovered from crime scenes and during investigations by ATF special agents and other law enforcement agencies. During this process, FRBs research and classify the firearms within the scope of federal laws and regulations. These branches provide technical support and guidance through technical reports focused on the Gun Control Act of 1968, the National Firearms Act of 1934, the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, and other federal laws and regulations.

COMBATING VIOLENT CRIME

To make our communities safer, FATD staff use their vast knowledge to accurately classify crime guns and build strong legal cases against violent criminals. FATD experts also provide testimony during judicial proceedings, which can lead to the incarceration of violent criminals. FATD also works with firearm manufacturers and importers so that weapons are not illegally imported into the United States.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- FATD Information for Industry Members
- How to Request a Marking Variance for Firearms
- ATF F 3311.4, Application for Alternate Means of Identification of Firearms (Marking Variances)