



ATF's NIBIN Program

NIBIN Branch, Laboratory Services, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
April 2011

NIBIN Entry of Test Fires and Evidence from Agencies Outside of ATF

The purpose of this memorandum is to address processes for submission of crime scene shooting evidence and test fires from crime guns into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) through the use of the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). In January 2001, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of the Treasury issued joint memoranda directing their Departments' law enforcement agencies to enter all crime gun ballistic information into the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). NIBIN is a nationally networked system administered by ATF to assist law enforcement in solving firearms-related violent crimes. IBIS is a collection of electronic images of ballistic evidence recovered from crime scenes and test-fired firearms that have been taken into law enforcement custody in the United States. IBIS is a proven investigative and intelligence tool that can assist in the identification of leads that were not previously available; can link firearms evidence from multiple crime scenes that were committed with the same firearm; and can link firearms evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm. IBIS may be searched locally, regionally, or nationally in an automated environment for potential matches or "hits."

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES –AGENCY NIBIN ENTRY GUIDELINES

Federal, State, or local law enforcement agencies should secure access to an IBIS instrument through an existing ATF NIBIN partner to have their evidence items and test fires entered into the IBIS using their agencies procedures. If they are unable to locate a NIBIN partner they should contact one of the ATF Forensic Science Laboratories or the ATF NIBIN Branch for assistance in locating a partner agency or directions on submitting the test fires or evidence to an ATF laboratory for entry into IBIS. Any "high confidence candidates" identified by ATF will be referred back to the submitting agency for microscopic examination. Submissions to an ATF laboratory will require the requesting agency to make their request for service on agency letterhead which details the type of service they are requesting from the ATF Laboratory. In this case it would be to ask ATF to enter test fires or evidence cartridge cases or bullets into IBIS. This serves as a "contract" between Laboratory Services and its customer for accreditation purposes. Once the contract is established, test fires must be submitted following the protocols noted below. The request must be submitted via a traceable shipping method (e.g., Fed Ex), containing the exhibits to be entered, as well as a written request on agency letterhead that contains the following information:

- (1) Agency Name and Address
- (2) Agency Case #
- (3) Agency Exhibit Number
- (4) Date Taken into Custody
- (5) Name and Telephone Number of Agency Contact Person

- (6) Name and Telephone Number of Person who Completed Test-Fire (if applicable)
- (7) Date of Test Fire (if applicable)
- (8) Firearm Description, e.g. Make, Model, Serial Number, Caliber

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – ATF IBIS ENTRY GUIDELINES

These guidelines outline the protocol for IBIS entry (acquisition and correlation review). The submitting agency will select one of the following methods:

- (1) Submit firearms to a NIBIN Partner (State or local crime laboratory) for firearms test fire and IBIS entry (*recommended method). Check with the laboratory to see what calibers they accept for entry into the system.
- (2) Submit test fires to the ATF Forensic Science Laboratory servicing their area for IBIS entry.
- (3) If a firearm is submitted through an ATF Agent to an ATF laboratory for “other” standard forensic examination, e.g., fingerprint or serial number restoration, the ATF Forensic Science Laboratory will complete the firearms test fire and IBIS entry if it has been requested. If test fires were previously submitted to a local NIBIN Partner for entry, a notation needs to be made on the submitting paperwork. If an ammunition magazine is inventoried with a firearm, it must accompany the firearm in order to be test fired.

Both firearm test fires and fired ammunition components recovered from a crime scene will be inventoried as evidence. Test fires may be inventoried under the same exhibit number as the inventoried firearm and stored with the firearm. The ATF Forensic Science Laboratory will return the test fires to the submitter for storage. Upon destruction or return of the firearm to the owner, the submitter will notify the ATF Forensic Science Laboratory or NIBIN partner that entered the test fires so a note of the destruction or return can be entered in the IBIS under that case.

Test fires from multiple cases may be shipped together in one convenience container, but must be packaged separately by case identifier with independent requests for processing. Test fires submitted to an ATF NIBIN partner may require additional paperwork unique to that partner. **EACH FIREARM WILL BE TEST-FIRED TWICE USING RECOMMENDED AMMUNITION** (refer to Attachment 1, Standard Protocol for NIBIN Test Fires – Ammunition to be Used).

NOTE: Any firearms deemed to be unsafe, inoperable, and incomplete should not be test fired.

If a firearm has been seized and has not been sold in commerce it should not be test fired and entered. Examples would be new firearms seized in a gun shop raid or a shipment from a foreign country that is seized by customs as it is being unloaded from a ship.

Any questions concerning this process should be directed to the NIBIN Branch at (240) 264-1431 or the ATF Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) in your area. The FSL contact numbers are; FSL-Atlanta (404) 417-2700, FSL-San Francisco (925) 280-3600, FSL-W (240) 264-3800. For a map showing which ATF Laboratory services your area refer to Attachment 2.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory P. Garvey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a stylized "P".

Deputy Assistant Director
Forensic Services

Standard Protocol for NIBIN Test Fires — Ammunition to be Used

This document specifies the ammunition to be used for all test fires being entered into the IBIS. These specifications are based on tests to date, and firearm examiner experience.

In cases where the ammunition used by a suspect is known, additional test fires may also be made using like ammunition. The first test fires should be with the same brand of ammunition that the suspect was known to have and then test fired using the protocol ammunition.

Firearms should be test fired a minimum of two (2) times with jacketed ammunition (specific calibers and manufacturers listed below¹).

1. The ammunition listed was chosen because it has projectile expansion qualities and case hardness that maximize the potential for reproducing marks from the firearm barrel and action.
2. Two test fires are needed to ensure reproducibility from the firearm and to allow the best test fire to be entered into the IBIS.
3. Different metal surfaces receive the marks from the firearm in different ways. Both jacketed and lead test fires are needed for .22 and .38 caliber firearms to give the IBIS and examiners the best opportunity for making a match.

Types of Ammunition to Use for Test Fires

.22 caliber	Remington .22 standard velocity lead round nose, Remington .22 Mohawk, high velocity, CCI .22 Mini Mag copper coated round nose
.25 auto	Remington, PMC, UMC 50 grain metal case, FMJ
.32 auto	Remington, UMC, or PMC , full metal jacket (FMJ)
.380 auto	Remington or PMC 95 Grain FMJ UMC 95 grain metal case
9mm Luger	Remington or PMC 115 grain FMJ, UMC 115 grain metal case
9mm Makarov	CCI 95 grain, Federal 90grain JHP

¹CCI = Cascade Cartridge Industries; FMJ = Full Metal Jacket (Copper); R-P = Remington Peters; PMC = Eldorado Cartridge Corporation — a subsidiary of Pan Metal Corporation

UMC= Union Metallic Corporation (Remington)

Types of Ammunition to Use for Test Fires

.38 Special	Remington or UMC 158 grain lead round nose CCI 38 special +P jacketed hollow point, Hornady 38 Spl 158 grain JHPXTP
.357 Magnum	same as .38 Special
.357 Sig	Remington 125 grain JHP UMC 125 grain metal case Federal 180 grain FMJ
.40 S&W	Remington 180 grain JHP Federal 180 grain JHP UMC 180 grain metal case
10mm	Remington 180 grain JHP UMC 180 grain metal case Remington 200 grain metal case PMC 200 grain metal case
.45 auto	Remington or PMC 230 grain metal case UMC 230 grain metal case
7.62 X 39mm	UMC – 123Gr. Metal Case, Winchester – 123Gr., FMJ
12 Gauge	Remington Lite target various loads, PMC Field & Target – various loads
.223 Remington	Remington 55 Gr. Metal Case, PMC 55 Gr. FMJ-BT, Winchester 55 Gr. FMJ

The above list represents the core calibers that are most often associated with criminal activity, and confiscated by agents during raids and or seizures. As a result these are the main calibers currently being entered into the IBIS by ATF. For firearms bearing calibers other than those listed, contact the ATF laboratory in your area or your local laboratory for further instructions.

Attachment 2

To determine which ATF Laboratory to send your submission to consult the below map for your state and the Laboratory that services that region of the country.

