

## Terms Used in the Report

### Crime Gun

For purposes of firearms tracing, a crime gun is any firearm that is illegally possessed, used in a crime, or suspected to have been used in a crime. Table E in each community report shows the crime types associated with crime gun trace requests.

### Firearm Trace

A firearm trace is the process of tracking a recovered crime gun's history from its source (manufacturer/importer) through the chain of distribution (wholesaler/retailer) to the individual who first purchases the firearm. Crime guns are traced by ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC). Because of the structure of Federal firearms regulation and recordkeeping requirements, it is generally not possible for the National Tracing Center to trace crime gun transfers beyond the first retail sale using firearm industry records. To further trace a crime gun's path, ATF must conduct an investigative trace, in which special agents investigate the subsequent chain of possession.

### Trace Request

Requests for firearm traces are submitted to the NTC by Federal, State and local law enforcement to solve individual crimes and acquire illegal trafficking information. Requests may be submitted by telephone, facsimile, mail, or as an electronic file through the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) or a law enforcement agency computer. ATF trace forms require a description of the firearm, the individuals possessing or associated with the firearm, the recovery location, and the underlying offense that brought the crime gun to the attention of law enforcement.

### Comprehensive Tracing

Comprehensive tracing by community, or comprehensive community tracing, involves the tracing of all recovered crime guns in a geographic area (e.g., town, county, metropolitan area, or State). Trace information is used to solve individual cases, to maximize the investi-

gative information available in Project LEAD for use in identifying potential illegal firearms traffickers, and to analyze crime gun trends and illegal trafficking patterns.

### Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL)

An FFL is any person, including a partnership, corporation, or business entity holding a valid license issued by ATF that allows them, or their employees, to "engage in the business" of dealing, manufacturing, importing, repairing, or pawnbrokering firearms. By law, all FFLs must keep records of their firearms transactions and forward all their records to ATF upon going out of business.

### ATF National Tracing Center (NTC)

The NTC works with law enforcement agencies, firearms manufacturers and FFLs to determine the manufacturing and initial sale history of firearms recovered by law enforcement officials in the United States or abroad. The NTC is also the repository for all FFL out-of-business records.

### Project LEAD

Project LEAD is ATF's information system designed to produce investigative leads concerning illegal firearms trafficking. The system compiles trace information resulting from trace requests in order to identify recurring trends and patterns that may indicate illegal trafficking. Project LEAD is an investigative tool provided to ATF field offices for use by local task forces.

### Crime Gun Analysis Branch (CGAB)

ATF's crime gun analysis unit, located at the National Tracing Center, analyzes firearms trafficking patterns, supports investigations, and is responsible for compiling this Report.

### Firearm Serial Number

The Gun Control Act of 1968 requires that a serial number be affixed to firearms manufactured or imported into the United States. This is the primary means of identifying a firearm and tracing it to the FFL that first sold it and to its first unlicensed purchaser.

### **Obliterated Serial Number**

Some individuals attempt to obliterate the firearm serial number after they have purchased a firearm. ATF and local law enforcement agencies can restore the serial numbers of most crime guns that are recovered with obliterated or partially obliterated serial numbers. Obliteration of a serial number is a Federal crime, as is possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number.

### **Firearm Type**

The NTC categorizes firearms into a number of types, including semiautomatic pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles, machine guns, and unknown types. Firearms are usually described by identifying the firearm type, manufacturer, and caliber. Together with the serial number, this information is needed to accurately trace a firearm.

### **Purchaser**

A firearm trace seeks to identify the FFL that first sold the crime gun and the first individual who purchased the firearm. This information can assist law enforcement officials in investigations and in understanding the sources of illegal trafficking in firearms.

### **Straw Purchaser**

A straw purchaser is a person illegally purchasing a firearm for another person, for instance for a juvenile or adult felon.

### **Possessor**

The possessor is the individual found in possession of the crime gun.

### **Time-to-Crime**

Time-to-crime is the time between the initial retail sale of a firearm by an FFL and its recovery as a crime gun, or the submission of a trace request. This measure can be an important indicator of illegal firearm trafficking.

### **Source State**

This is the State in which the FFL that first sold the crime gun at retail is located. The source State can only be determined if a trace is initiated and identifies the FFL that sold the firearm.

### **Juvenile, Youth, and Adult Age Categories**

This Report provides Tables that present information by five age categories: juveniles (age 17 and under), youth (ages 18 to 24), and adult (age 25 and over), age unknown, and all categories combined.