

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

**Q.** Since trace data on crime guns crosses jurisdictional boundaries, how does the term “geographic jurisdiction” apply?

**A.** Assuming the requesting agency is seeking trace data relative to a *bona fide* investigation within its jurisdiction, the agency receives a complete trace results report regardless of the origin of the firearm. For example, if the New York Police Department seeks a trace on a firearm recovered in connection with a homicide in Brooklyn, it will receive the results whether or not the Federal firearms licensee (FFL) is in the distribution chain (manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer) and the first retail purchaser are located outside of New York City or even New York State.

**Q.** Can law enforcement agencies working joint investigations to curtail firearms trafficking or fight violent crime share the trace information upon receipt from ATF?

**A.** Yes.

**Q.** Can you trace a firearm when its possible nexus to a crime is not readily apparent, e.g., a firearm recovered in a sewage drain?

**A.** Yes, ATF’s longstanding position is that investigating the origin of the firearm to develop leads to determine if has been used in a crime constitutes a *bona fide* law enforcement investigation.

**Q.** Can a jurisdiction obtain a comprehensive analysis of its firearm trace data to determine any trends and patterns relative to firearms trafficking schemes?

**A.** Yes, ATF will analyze a jurisdiction’s firearm trace data to determine any trends and patterns relative to firearms trafficking schemes, including geospatial analysis of crimes and recovery locations, source states and much more.

U.S. Department of Justice  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
Office of Enforcement Programs and Services



# ATF DISCLOSURE OF FIREARMS TRACE DATA

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) disclosure of firearms trace data.

A key component of ATF’s enforcement mission is the tracing of firearms on behalf of thousands of Federal, State, local and foreign law enforcement agencies (LEA). Firearms trace data is critically important information developed by ATF to assist state and local law enforcement in investigating and solving violent crimes. Trace data tracks the transfer of a firearm from the importer or manufacturer to the gun’s first purchaser, and can assist law enforcement in ultimately pinpointing the individual who used the gun to commit a particular crime. ATF conducts traces to identify criminals for prosecution in specific cases, as well as to develop proactive investigative and strategic analyses to interdict firearms traffickers. This brochure clarifies ATF’s disclosure policy regarding trace data.

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES  
FEDERAL BULLETIN TRACING CENTER  
111 MAIN STREET  
WALLEY HAVEN, WA 98327  
Phone: (509) 325-2200 Fax: (509) 325-2201  
Postal Mail Stop #0975 98327-0975**

**FIREARMS TRACE INFORMATION**  
Case Number: F380001111  
Manufacturer: SIGMA R. 2010000  
Model: 457  
Caliber: .45  
Serial Number: TDR1111  
Type: PISTOL  
Country: UNITED STATES  
Importer:  
Chamber:  
Identifying Mark:  
NIBIN:  
Gang Name:

**PURCHASER INFORMATION**  
Name: RICHARD BRONKES  
Address: VALLEY HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT  
111 MAIN STREET  
WALLEY HAVEN, WA 98327  
Phone: (509) 325-2200  
Investigation No: 07-49911  
Purchase Date: 01/05/2007

**RECOVERY INFORMATION**  
Recovery Date: 02/10/2007  
Recovery Date: 02/10/2007  
Time to Crime: 16 days

**DEALER INFORMATION**  
Name: GART'S GUNS  
Address: 10 VICTORY LANE  
PORTLAND, OR 97266  
Phone: (503) 311-1111  
FBI Number: 99311111  
Ship Date: 08/08/2006

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**  
Case#: 1111111  
ASN: PATROL  
YGAT YES: YES

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**  
THIS FIREARM WAS TRACED TO AN INDIVIDUAL PURCHASER.

**TRACE DETAILS**  
The information in this report must be validated prior to use in any criminal proceedings. This report does not constitute a fulfillment of the Interstate Nexus requirement in any Federal, State or Administrative legal process or litigation. That expert testimony of Interstate Nexus determination is made through trained experts who must be contacted at the local ATF Field Office or Field Division Directorate.

**TRACE INFORMATION**  
District: 111  
GUNSHOW Y/N: NO

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**  
Type: PISTOL  
Country: UNITED STATES

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**  
Name: MOORE, CHARD L  
DOB: 01/01/1968  
Sex: M  
Race: WHITE  
Height: 5 ft 5 in  
Weight: 160 lbs

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**  
Last Inspection: 02/11/2006  
Phone: (318) 111-1111  
Transaction Date: 02/21/2005

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**  
Last Inspection: 03/20/2003  
Phone: (503) 111-1111  
Transaction Date: 08/08/2006

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**  
Inspection: 01/01/1993

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**  
Phone: (413) 111-1111  
Transaction Date: 02/02/2005

ATF has a proud tradition of supporting its law enforcement partners at every level of government and will continue to provide those partners with the information they need to protect our communities from individuals who would use firearms to further illegal activity. Congress has recognized ATF's crucial role in that investigative process and has acted to protect that sensitive data on behalf of the law enforcement community. Congress' protection is asserted via a budgetary appropriations restriction, which, since 2003, has contained a nondisclosure provision applicable to trace data. While ATF cannot expend funds to disclose any of the contents of the Firearms Tracing System (FTS) or any information required by the Gun Control Act, neither the appropriations language nor ATF rules prohibit the sharing of trace data with law enforcement agencies conducting criminal investigations within their geographic jurisdiction. Nor does the restriction prohibit State or local law enforcement from sharing trace data with other jurisdictions once it is in their hands. Additionally, nothing prohibits ATF from analyzing trace data trends and releasing our own reports that law enforcement agencies can use. In fact, ATF uses and shares multi-jurisdictional trace data with law enforcement agencies to identify firearm trafficking trends and leads.

This is not to say that ATF indiscriminately releases trace information. ATF considers trace information as law enforcement sensitive since it is often the first investigative lead in a case. Trace information is treated no differently than fingerprint matches and other crime scene information, since premature disclosure can adversely affect an ongoing investigation and

endanger lives. ATF's longstanding policy has been to provide total access to trace results to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction with respect to the trace request, but to safeguard those results from third parties. Congress' appropriations restriction simply codifies ATF's longstanding policy of sharing trace data with other law enforcement agencies for the purpose of conducting a criminal investigation.

Our priority will continue to be to release trace data in a manner consistent with our longstanding policy, and to support the over 17,000 federal, state, local and foreign law enforcement agencies that avail themselves of this crucial law enforcement tool.

## General Disclosure Guideline

As a general guideline, there is a three-pronged test: 1) the requesting agency must be a LEA, 2) The requesting LEA must have geographical jurisdiction, and 3) the information must be for a *bona fide* criminal investigation (and jurisdictional-based aggregate analysis of trafficking patterns and trends). See-2006 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Public L. 109-108, 18 U.S.C. § 923 note (2005).



The document is a 'FIREARMS TRACE SUMMARY' form from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). It contains the following sections and information:

- Request Date:** 02/11/2007
- Requester:** #Trace User:
- DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**
- BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES**
- NATIONAL TRACING CENTER**
- FIREARMS TRACE SUMMARY**
- Trace Number:** 1 8000001111
- Request Date:** 02/11/2007
- FIREARM INFORMATION**
- Manufacturer:** SMITH & WESSON
- Model:** 457
- Caliber:** 45
- Serial Number:** 1081111
- Type:** PISTOL
- Country:** UNITED STATES
- PURCHASER INFORMATION**
- Richard Monroe**
- 111 Main Street**
- 111 Main Street, WA 91327**
- Phone:** (800) 780-7113
- Print Date:** February 22, 2007
- DOB:** 01/25/1987
- HEIGHT:** 5' 11"
- WEIGHT:** 110 lbs
- HAIR:** BROWN
- EYES:** BLUE
- SEX:** Male
- RACE:** White
- DRIVER'S LICENSE:** YES
- ADVERTISING INFORMATION**
- CASE#:** 111111
- AGENCY:** PATROL
- YQAT YQND:** YES
- SUMMARY OF RESULTS**
- THIS FIREARM WAS TRACED TO AN INDIVIDUAL PURCHASER.**
- DEALER INFO**
- Casey's Gun**
- 25 Victoria Lane**
- Portland, OR 97006**
- Phone:** (503) 111-1111
- DISTRICT:** 111
- GUNSHOW Y/N:** NO
- SHIP:**
- Trace Details**
- Sensitive but Unclassified - For Official Use Only**