

27 CFR 178.92: IDENTIFICATION OF FIREARMS

Importers may adopt serial numbers placed on certain firearms by foreign manufacturers.

ATF Rul. 75-28

[Status of ruling: Active]

The Bureau has been asked whether importers, who import firearms that already bear serial numbers assigned by foreign manufacturers, may adopt such markings and be relieved of the requirement for affixing additional serial numbers when such firearms are imported into the United States.

Licensed importers are required, under 18 U.S.C. 923(i), to identify, by means of a serial number engraved or cast on the receiver or frame of the weapon, in such manner as the Secretary shall by regulations prescribe, each firearm imported or manufactured by such importer or manufacturer.

Regulations in 27 CFR 178.92 specify that the identification to be placed on a firearm by an importer shall consist of an individual serial number not duplicating any serial number placed by the importer on any other firearm. Other identifying marks required by the section include the model, if such designation has been made; the caliber or gauge; the name of the manufacturer (or a recognized abbreviation thereof) and also, when applicable, of the importer; the name of the country in which manufactured; and the city and State (or a recognized abbreviation thereof) of the importer. In addition, this section provides that the Director may authorize other means of identification on a showing by the manufacturer or importer that such other identification is reasonable and will not hinder effective administration of the regulations.

The Bureau has determined that in some cases the serial number placed on a firearm by a foreign manufacturer is adequate to provide the identification number required by section 178.92.

Held, where a serial number has been placed on the frame or receiver of a firearm by a foreign manufacturer in the manner contemplated by 27 CFR 178.92, and such serial number does not duplicate a number previously adopted or assigned by the importer to any other firearm, the importer may adopt the serial number of the foreign manufacturer: provided the importer shall in all cases place his name and address (city and State, or recognized abbreviation thereof), and any other marks necessary to comply with the identification requirements of 27 CFR 178.92, on such imported firearms.