



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the Deputy Attorney General

The Deputy Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

December 12, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS
AND EXPLOSIVES
ADMINISTRATOR, DRUG ENFORCEMENT
ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS
DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE
DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR UNITED STATES
ATTORNEYS
INSPECTOR GENERAL, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
GENERAL
HEADS OF LITIGATING COMPONENTS
ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM:

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

Lisa Monaco

SUBJECT:

Processing Ballistics Evidence in the National Integrated Ballistic
Information Network (NIBIN) in Connection with Criminal
Investigations

The Department of Justice is committed to addressing the gun violence epidemic that takes the lives of too many people in our communities. To combat this senseless violence, we must make effective use of innovative tools and technologies that help law enforcement prevent violent crime by tracing guns used in criminal activity, analyzing ballistics evidence, connecting crime scenes, and identifying deadly shooters for arrest and prosecution.

The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) is an essential gun intelligence tool. Operated by ATF, NIBIN enables federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial investigators to match fired cartridge casings to the guns from which they were fired and link shooting incidents. NIBIN technology has proven its value by generating investigative leads essential to solving gun crimes and reducing violence.

The effectiveness of NIBIN is dependent on the comprehensive collection of fired casings, the prompt test-firing of recovered firearms, and the timely entry of all that ballistics evidence into the NIBIN system. To enhance NIBIN's effectiveness, ATF has engaged in extensive outreach and training to federal law enforcement and our state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners, and these efforts have resulted in significant progress. Entry of ballistic data into NIBIN has steadily increased, as has the number of investigative leads the

system generates. In fiscal year 2022, the NIBIN network processed the entry of 631,533 acquisitions and generated 189,197 leads linking one or more shooting incidents across the United States.

Enhancing the Requirement to Enter Evidence into NIBIN. Over 20 years ago, Attorney General Janet Reno required that the Department's agents and investigators enter ballistics evidence into NIBIN. Today, I reaffirm this requirement and expand it to require that all firearms and fired cartridge casings recovered in connection with every criminal investigation opened by your agencies, including during Department-funded task force operations, must be analyzed and entered into NIBIN. This requirement applies regardless of whether a Department component or a state, local, Tribal, or territorial law enforcement partner takes possession of the firearm or fired cartridge casing. For any agency without a readily accessible NIBIN acquisition site, ATF can assist by providing acquisition services at select ATF Field Divisions, as well as the three national ATF NIBIN lab sites.

Improving Timeliness of Ballistics Data Entry. Prompt entry of ballistics data into NIBIN is critical to preventing and solving gun crimes. The sooner that leads linking shooting incidents are generated, the more swiftly law enforcement can take shooters off the streets before they can strike again. Accordingly, commencing 60 days from today, the Department's agents and investigators will be required to enter ballistics data into NIBIN no later than 14 days after a firearm or fired cartridge casing is recovered, absent unexpected and extenuating circumstances.¹ In addition, the Department's agents and investigators should strive to enter ballistics data into NIBIN within 48 hours of recovery.

As set forth in our Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Violent Crime, the Department is most effective when we target our federal enforcement resources and work collaboratively with our law enforcement partners. The use of NIBIN to prevent and solve violent crimes at all levels of the justice system illustrates the Department's ability to leverage technology and partnerships to make our communities safer. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for all that you do to further the Department's commitment to reducing violent crime.

¹ To the extent logistical barriers are identified that complicate compliance with this requirement, components should contact the Office of the Deputy Attorney General for assistance.