

FIREARM and Toolmark Section

FIREARMS

- **POSSIBLE EXAMINATIONS**

- Function test and test fire
 - NIBIN entry
- Microscopic comparison with bullet(s) or cartridge case(s)
- Serial Number Restoration
- Distance Determination

- **FIREARM COLLECTION**

- Photograph the firearm in place prior to handling. Note:
 - Location found
 - Safety position
 - Loaded / Unloaded, Cocked
- If possible, render the firearm safe
 - Remove any magazines
 - Remove cartridges from the chamber
 - Revolvers: Open or remove the revolver cylinder, or unload each chamber
- If the firearm cannot be made safe (e.g., firearm is jammed, too corroded, or too rusted)
 - Put the safety on if possible
 - Secure only the firearm in a box
 - Indicate on the outside of the box:
 - Muzzle direction
 - That the firearm is UNSAFE
 - Notify the Crime Laboratory that the firearm is LOADED before or immediately upon arrival
 - During firearm submission, request a consultation with a firearms examiner

- Document all changes made to the firearm once it is collected and notify the lab via photos and/or notations

- **LABELING AND PACKAGING**

- Firearm(s)
 - Place the unloaded* firearm in a handgun or long gun box, with the slide locked back, if possible
 - Note: See above regarding loaded firearms.
 - Use cable ties to secure the grip and barrel of the firearm to the box
 - Keep cable tie knot inside of the box. Do not cut cable tie
 - DO NOT place a cable tie through the trigger guard, or through the barrel
 - If a magazine was recovered with the firearm:
 - Secure the magazine inside the same box with a cable tie
 - Magazines do not have to be unloaded
 - If cartridges were recovered with the firearm:
 - Unfired cartridges can be retained in the magazine, or packaged in a separate envelope inside the same box
 - Tape Seal the envelope, Initial and Date the tape seal, and Label the envelope with contents
 - Ex) Three (3) unfired 40 S&W cartridges from magazine
 - Ex) One (1) unfired 40 S&W cartridge from chamber
 - On the outer packaging, indicate clearly, with an arrow, which direction the muzzle is pointing inside the box
 - Tape Seal the box, covering any holes created from the cable ties, Initial and Date the tape seal, and Label the box with contents
 - Ex) One (1) 9mm Luger Glock model 19Gen5 semi-automatic pistol with serial number: 12345, one (1) magazine, three (3) 9mm Luger cartridges, recovered from backseat of vehicle driven by John Doe, Placard A
 - If serial number is scratched, obliterated, rusted, or missing, note “Serial Number: Unknown” on packaging. A serial number restoration can be requested. See serial number restoration section.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

- If the firearm is found submerged in water:
 - Place the firearm in a leak proof container
 - Cover with water from the location the firearm was found
 - Keep it in that water and package in a leak proof container with water from where it was found
- If the firearm is found in rain or snow:
 - Air dry before packaging
- If the firearm is at potential risk for severe rust or has tissue putrefaction on it:
 - Package in a box and place in a freezer as soon as possible
- Contact the Crime Laboratory as soon as possible

UNFIRED CARTRIDGE(S) AND / OR FIRED CARTRIDGE CASE(S)

- **POSSIBLE EXAMINATIONS**

- NIBIN Entry
- Microscopic comparisons

- **CARTRIDGE(S) AND / OR CARTRIDGE CASE(S) COLLECTION**

- Photograph items in place prior to handling: Note:
 - Location found
 - Quantity
 - Fired or unfired

- **LABELING AND PACKAGING**

- Unfired (live) cartridges:
 - If unfired cartridges are located in the same area or grouping at the scene, package together in paper bag, envelope, or small box
 - Tape Seal, Initial and Date the tape seal, and Label the packaging with contents
 - Ex) Four (4) unfired 9mm Luger cartridges from Placard C
- Fired cartridge cases:

- If fired cartridge cases are located in the same area or grouping at the scene, package together in paper bag, envelope, or small box
 - If separated at the scene, package separately
- Tape Seal, Initial and Date the tape seal, and Label the packaging with contents
 - Ex) Six (6) fired 223 Rem cartridge cases from bedroom

FIRED BULLETS

- **POSSIBLE EXAMINATIONS**

- General Rifling Characteristics (GRC)
- Microscopic comparisons

- **BULLET(S) COLLECTION**

- Photograph items in place prior to handling: Note:
 - Location found
 - Quantity

- **LABELING AND PACKAGING**

- Package individually in paper bag, envelope, or small box
- Tape Seal, Initial and Date the tape seal, and Label the packaging with contents
 - Ex) One (1) bullet from front door
- If the bullet is removed from a HUMAN BODY or ANIMAL CARCASS, rinse and dry the bullet. Remove as much tissue as possible.
 - If the bullet cannot be cleaned and dried, it must be placed in a freezer and evidence receiving must be notified of its condition upon evidence submission

EXAMINATIONS AT THE CRIME LABORATORY

- Firearm function and test fire
 - Determine if the firearm is operable. Collect test fired cartridge cases and bullets for microscopic comparison
- Microscopic Comparison
 - Determine if the fired bullets and / or cartridge cases were fired from / in the same firearm
- Serial Number Restoration
 - Make an obliterated serial number visible. Used for tracing the firearm
- Distance Determination
 - Determine the distance the muzzle of the firearm was from the target at the time of firing
- General Rifling Characteristics (GRC)
 - For fired bullets
 - Provide a list of firearm manufacturers that could have fired the bullet.
Investigative lead only
- National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)
 - Database that stores images of fired cartridge cases and automates evaluations to provides actionable investigative leads in a timely manner
 - Fired Cartridge Cases Only
 - Pistols, Autoloading Rifles, 12 Gauge Shotguns Only
 - Note: Revolvers, Single-Shot firearms, and bullets do not qualify for NIBIN entry

NIBIN

- The lab can test-fire the firearm, or the agency may submit the test-fired cartridges
 - Collect at least two (2) fired cartridge cases from each test fired firearm
 - Package in an envelope, paper bag, or small box
 - Tape Seal, Initial and Date the tape seal, and Label the packaging with contents

- Ex) Two (2) fired 12 Gauge shotshells from 12 Gauge Remington model 1100 semi-automatic shotgun with serial number: ABC123
- Complete NIBIN entry form
- Complete evidence submission form
- Test fired bullets can be packaged with test fired cartridge cases if collected
 - It is not necessary to collect bullets unless microscopic comparisons are required