

BCI Firearms Submission Policy

As part of BCI's on-going effort to effectively and efficiently assist law enforcement in Ohio, the Laboratory has revised some policies and procedures pertaining to the examination of Firearm/ Toolmark evidence and analysis. Additionally, with the goal of providing timely results in gun-related crimes, emphasis will be given to the entry of eligible evidence into the NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network) database. As a result, the following changes will be implemented:

Firearm Cases

- NIBIN-eligible evidence (i.e., cartridge cases fired from semi- or full-automatic firearms) will continue to be entered into the database. In data entry cases, a Confirmation of Entry report or a NIBIN Hit Letter will be issued to the submitting department detailing the results of the search.
- Operability of a firearm will be conducted upon request; however, if only NIBIN entry is required, BCI would prefer that the firearm be test fired in advance and only the cartridge case(s) be submitted to the Laboratory (no bullets necessary).
- Cartridge cases found inside firearms (e.g., revolvers, pump-action guns, lever-action guns, single-shot guns) will no longer be compared.
- Trigger pull analysis and serial number restoration will only be conducted upon request.
- Examination of firearms evidence from suicides will not be performed; evidence from questioned death cases will continue to be accepted and examined.
- Airguns will not be tested by the Firearm/Toolmark section.
- Gun prediction/General Rifling Characteristic lists will not be conducted.
- Distance approximations will only be performed if the suspect firearm AND ammunition are submitted, unless the clothing exhibits contact characteristics. In these cases, the clothing can be examined without a firearm/ammunition.

Toolmark Cases

- Toolmark evidence will only be examined in cases in which a tool can be associated with an individual (i.e., on or in immediate proximity of suspect, linked to suspect by LP or DNA). Whenever possible, also submit additional sample materials to be used for generating standards for comparison.
- Toolmark cases with no tool for comparison will not be accepted unless a suspect tool is submitted with the evidence.

Based on the circumstances of a case, exceptions to the Firearm/Toolmark policies may be warranted. In such cases, the evidence items and testing requested should be discussed with Laboratory Management prior to submission.