



## Firearms/Toolmark Submission Guidelines

### General Submission Guidelines

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation Forensic Services (CBIFS) recognizes that each case is distinctive. Our submission guidelines will address typical situations encountered by your agency but cannot speak to all of the unique circumstances that are often exclusive to a particular case. With this understanding, the CBIFS provides the following information to assist you in the submission of your evidence.

### National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)

In 1999, ATF established NIBIN to administer automated ballistic imaging technology. In 2002, the CBI entered into a formal agreement with the ATF to enter ballistic information into NIBIN. The CBI enters fired cartridge cases into IBIS (Integrated Ballistic Identification System) and compares these images against those in NIBIN. Confirmation of a match (NIBIN hit) is made by our firearms examiners.

#### **Suitable for NIBIN Entry:**

- Evidence searched in the NIBIN are searched in the Colorado database, searches of additional regions must be requested.
- Semiautomatic pistols, shotguns, and rifles.
- Test fired cartridge cases from semiautomatic pistols, shotguns, and rifles. If you are submitting test fired cartridge casings, please include the pertinent firearm information including make, model, and serial number.
- Evidence cartridge cases from criminal cases are automatically screened and entered into NIBIN.

#### **Not Suitable for NIBIN Entry:**

- Firearms which do not automatically eject cartridge cases when fired, i.e. derringers, revolvers, and single shot rifles/shotguns are not suitable for entry into NIBIN. These items can be submitted for firearm functionality testing.
- Test fired bullets are not routinely entered into NIBIN.

The CBIFS will assist your agency in the test firing and collection of cartridge cases suitable for NIBIN entry. Please contact your local laboratory for additional information.

### Additional Considerations

#### Firearms

- Firearms will be preferably packaged in a safe manner in a gun box. If you are unable to determine if a firearm is unloaded, please call your local CBIFS to make arrangements for submitting the possible loaded firearm.
- Many firearms have magazine safeties that do not allow the firearm to be fired without a magazine in place; therefore, magazines recovered with a firearm should be submitted.

- If a fired bullet is lodged into wood or other material and cannot be removed safely, the material itself can be submitted with the bullet encased. The analyst will remove the bullet with minimal damage.
- Live ammunition may be submitted and examined if probative.
- For clothing items that require muzzle to target distance determination, the following is suggested as the best possible way to submit these items:
  - The clothing items should be properly dried and packaged prior to submittal at CBIFS;
  - To preserve the clothing item properly, first dry the item on a clean sheet of paper;
  - Next, place another piece of paper between the layers of clothing;
  - Finally, place a final sheet of paper on top of the clothing item.
  - The paper encased clothing can now be folded or rolled and then placed into a paper bag.
  - Clothing items should be packaged separately to prevent contamination.

### Toolmarks

- Wires that are submitted for toolmark examination should have the suspect ends clearly labeled.
- Items with the toolmark or suitable Mikrosil casts may be submitted for examination. Larger items may need to have the suspect area carefully removed. Please contact CBIFS with questions on how to most appropriately remove the suspect area.
- Suspect tools should be packaged separately, with the cutting surface protected from damage.

### Summary

These firearms/toolmark guidelines are recommendations of what should be included in the initial evidence submission to the CBIFS, but do not reflect what should or should not be collected at the crime scene. In support of your agency and upon request, the CBIFS will provide training on the proper collection and submission of firearms/toolmarks. Please see our General Submission Guidelines for an overview of the submission process.

Please feel free to contact us at any time regarding your firearms/toolmarks submissions. It is our goal to ensure your understanding, educate you on situations that may be unfamiliar to your agency and to work collaboratively to ensure the citizens of Colorado are served at the highest possible level.