



Approved:  
*Chief Marcia Harnden*

Subject:

# 611. Restoration of Firearm Serial Numbers

Effective:  
November 28, 2017

Revised:  
January 8, 2025

CALEA Standards:

Page:  
1

## 611.1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to develop standards, methodologies, and safety protocols for the recovery of obliterated serial numbers from firearms and other objects using procedures that are accepted as industry standards in the forensic community.

## 611.2: POLICY

**It is the policy of the Albany Police Department to restore firearm serial numbers with the goal of determining prior owners to return firearms to their rightful owners or curb the illegal trade of contraband firearms.**

## 611.3: PROCEDURE

Any firearm coming into the possession of the Albany Police Department as evidence, found property, etc., where the serial numbers have been removed or obliterated will be processed in the following manner:

### 611.3.1: PRELIMINARY FIREARM EXAMINATION

- a. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Be sure the firearm is in an unloaded condition. This includes removal of the ammunition source (e.g., the detachable magazine, contents of the tubular magazine) as well as the chamber contents.
- b. If the firearm is corroded shut or in a condition that would preclude inspection of the chamber contents, treat the firearm as if it is loaded. Make immediate arrangements for a firearms examiner or other qualified examiner to render the firearm safe.
- c. Accurately record/document the condition of the gun when received. Note the positions of the various components such as the safety, cylinder, magazine, slide, hammer, etc. Accurately record/document cylinder chamber and magazine contents. Package the ammunition separately.
- d. If the firearm is to be processed for fingerprints or trace evidence, this process should be performed before the serial number restoration is attempted. First record/document important aspects such as

halos on the revolver cylinder face or other relevant evidence that might be obscured by the fingerprinting chemicals.

### 611.3.2: PROPERTY BOOKING PROCEDURE

- a. Any employee taking possession of a firearm with removed/obliterated serial numbers shall book the firearm into property following standard procedures. The employee booking the firearm shall indicate in the property module that serial numbers have been removed or obliterated.
- b. If an officer completes [Form 49](#), the property and evidence technician receiving a firearm when the serial numbers have been removed or obliterated shall arrange for the firearm to be transported to the crime lab for restoration and maintain the chain of evidence.

### 611.3.3: DOCUMENTATION

- a. Case reports will be prepared for booked firearms in order to document the chain of custody and the initial examination and handling of evidence from the time it is received/collected until it is released.
- b. This report must include a record of the manner in which and/or from whom the firearm was received. This may appear on the request form or property report depending on the type of evidence.

### 611.4: FIREARM TRACES

After the serial number has been restored or partially restored by the crime laboratory, the property and evidence technician will enter the data into the [ATF eTrace system](#).

### 611.5: BULLET AND CASING IDENTIFICATION

Exemplar bullets and cartridge cases from the firearm, depending upon acceptance criteria and protocol, may be submitted to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), which uses the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) technology to digitize and compare unique markings made by a firearm on bullets and cartridge casings recovered from crime scenes.