



Policy and Procedure

Policy Number

10.08

Chapter

Property and Evidence

Article

National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) - Firearms

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PURPOSE

The National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) is a database system that captures, stores, and correlates digital images of spent shell casings recovered from crime scenes and from test-fired firearms. The purpose of NIBIN is to assist law enforcement agencies in solving firearms related crimes through case linkage via automated electronic image comparisons. The NIBIN program is administered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) through the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

POLICY

All spent shell casings located at the scene of a criminal investigation, call for service, or located by a citizen and subsequently presented to LPD as found property will be collected according to applicable policies. Qualifying shell casings will then be submitted to Operation Hot Brass (OHB) for NIBIN entry (see OHB policy).

All qualifying firearms recovered during the course of a criminal investigation or recovered as found property will be entered into the BEAST as evidence or found property in accordance with applicable policies. Qualifying firearms will then be submitted to CBI for processing and test fired. The test fired shell casing will then be entered into NIBIN.

It is the goal of the Loveland Police Department (LPD) to submit all qualifying shell casings and firearms to the CBI for NIBIN entry in the timeliest manner possible.

DEFINITIONS

Qualifying firearms - Semiautomatic or automatic handguns that are recovered during the course of a criminal investigation or recovered as found property.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Firearms that are either found by officers or turned in by citizens that have no owner associated with them, will need to be entered as “found property” in the BEAST and submitted into property and evidence.

All found firearms that are held for the purposes of NIBIN analysis will be held for a minimum of 90 days. If a NIBIN “hit” is associated with any found firearm the item will be reclassified as evidence and held in accordance with an evidentiary classification. If no “hit” occurs for a found firearm then the item will be disposed of in accordance to standard practice after 90 days.

All firearms will be collected in accordance with applicable policies. All qualifying firearms that come into the custody of LPD and submitted as “evidence” will be stored evidence until a case disposition is reached.





Submitting Firearms to CBI

It is the responsibility of the submitting officer to complete the RFLE and cover letter and submit to the Forensic Services Unit (FSU) Supervisor. The property technician will then transport the firearm to the regional lab for processing and entry into NIBIN.

NIBIN Results

Reports generated by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation subsequent to NIBIN evaluation/entry will be forwarded to the FSU supervisor and then distributed to the case officer, Special Investigations Unit (SIU) Supervisor, and the Records Unit. Reports will indicate if submitted firearms produced shell casings of value for NIBIN entry, the search parameters, and the results of the search. NIBIN reports may indicate one of three results:

- The shell case evidence was entered into NIBIN and searched in the Colorado database with no correlations.
- The shell case evidence was unsuitable for entry into NIBIN.
- The shell case evidence was entered into NIBIN and a search in the Colorado database resulted in an associated hit.

Associated Hit

If the CBI report indicates there is a hit associated with a LPD case, the SIU Supervisor will identify the case and assigned detective when applicable.

The NIBIN hit will be sent back to the submitting patrol officer with it specified that there is no further action needed by the patrol officer and it is for their "information only".

NIBIN Results Processing

The SIU Supervisor will be responsible for processing results from CBI regarding NIBIN submittals. The SIU Supervisor will ensure the following tasks are completed:

- All NIBIN "hits" will be forwarded to the appropriate units/personnel identified above.
- If an item was originally submitted as "found property" and there is a NIBIN "hit" complete the following: Complete a supplement to the associated case for the "hit".
- Notify the property technician to update the BEAST entry from "found property" to "evidence" under the associated case.

Each detective/officer who is assigned a NIBIN hit for follow-up will be responsible for the following:

- Complete supplements to the associated case in a timely manner.
- Conduct appropriate follow-up investigation on the hit.

