



Chapter: Property, Evidence, and Forfeiture
Subject: 12-14 – Stamping Serial Numbers on Unnumbered Firearms
Effective: April 19, 2022
Supersedes: Official Order 62, Section 62.4, dated October 27, 2020
Distribution: Department Members

PURPOSE: This Order establishes department policy related to stamping serial numbers on unnumbered firearms.

12-14-1 GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The Federal Gun Control Act of 1968 requires that serial numbers be stamped on all firearms manufactured for sale in the United States since 1968.
 - (1) A factory-assembled pistol normally will have a serial number. When a factory-assembled pistol does not have a number, the number probably was eradicated.
 - (2) Long guns manufactured for sale in the United States prior to 1968 may not have serial numbers stamped on them.
- B. In most other instances, prosecution under MCL 750.230 may be appropriate based on probable cause that a person willfully altered, removed, or obliterated the name of the maker, manufacturer's number, or other mark of identity. Mere possession of such a firearm is not presumptive evidence the possessor has altered, removed, or obliterated the firearm.

12-14-2 INITIAL POST RESPONSIBILITY

When a request is made for serial number stamping, the weapon shall be screened at the post level using the criteria in this Order. Department work units recovering or confiscating firearms without serial numbers or with altered serial numbers shall complete an incident report documenting the following steps:

- A. The firearm shall be submitted to a department forensic laboratory to ascertain whether the serial number has been removed. If it is determined the firearm was manufactured without a serial number, proceed to steps E through I.
- B. If a serial number is located or restored by the laboratory, query the serial number in LEIN/NCIC.
- C. Circumstances surrounding the alteration shall be documented.
- D. If the serial number was altered at the time the firearm was acquired by the present owner, document how the owner came into possession of the firearm.

- E. Past ownership shall be documented, including a copy of the Safety Inspection Certificate, License to Purchase, Dealer Purchase Record, or Pistol Sales Record and other ownership documentation, if any.
- F. Indicate the recommendations of the investigative officer whether a serial number should be stamped or re-stamped by the laboratory and returned to the owner.
- G. A background check on the owner, using purpose code and a NICS purpose code of 22 (Return of Handgun), 23 (Return of Long Gun), or 24 (Return of Other), shall be included to ascertain whether they meet the state and federal qualifications to possess a firearm.
- H. Copies of the incident report and supporting documentation shall be submitted to the Forfeited Weapons Unit at the Training Division for review and authorization by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.
- I. Pistols that have been stamped or re-stamped with a serial number shall be released only to the registered owner.
- J. If ownership of a pistol was not previously reported to the pistol entry database due to the absence of a manufacturer's serial number, the owner must obtain a License to Purchase or Pistol Sales Record prior to release of the pistol.
- K. The work unit shall advise the affected person of the outcome of the investigation.

12-14-3 LABORATORY RESPONSIBILITY

- A. When a department work unit or law enforcement agency submits a firearm, which has had the manufacturer's serial number or other mark of identity removed, altered, or obliterated, the laboratory shall attempt to restore the information that has been removed.
- B. The laboratory shall complete a lab report, indicating the results of the investigation, and forward a copy of the report to the submitting agency.
- C. On written authorization from the Forfeited Weapons Unit at the Training Division, obtained from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms the laboratory shall stamp the firearm with the new serial number provided.
- D. The laboratory shall release the firearm to the submitting agency.

12-14-4 FORFEITED WEAPONS UNIT AT THE TRAINING DIVISION RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Forfeited Weapons Unit at the Training Division shall authorize serial numbers to be stamped or re-stamped only if approved by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.
 - (1) There is no charge for serial number stamping by the department.

DIRECTOR

Annual Review Responsibility: Field Operations Bureau

Accreditation Standards: CALEA 84.1.4