INDIANA STATE POLICE LABORATORY DIVISION

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BULLETIN

NIBIN/IBIS ENTRIES

(National Integrated Ballistics Information Network)/ (Integrated Ballistics Identification System)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 NIBIN is an automated computer network developed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) which contains digital images and information of firearms related evidence pertaining to cartridge cases. NIBIN facilitates the sharing of information between forensic firearms laboratories in the State of Indiana and throughout the nation.

1.2 Indiana State Police (ISP) Laboratories currently using the IBIS Database are located at Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. However, both the Lowell and Evansville Laboratories accept IBIS cases and transfer the evidence for entry.

1.3 IBIS is the database used for the NIBIN network. Digital images are entered into the database, transmitted to the network, then are correlated to other images in the database. This prompt dissemination of information allows for tracking of firearm specific information and possible connection of a particular firearm component to multiple crimes regardless of geographic location.

1.4 When an entry is made in an ISP Laboratory IBIS database the information is correlated (compared) to similar images within the State of Indiana. Other areas within the United States, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands can be searched upon request.

1.5 To ensure the evidence is properly examined, it first must be properly identified, preserved, and packaged. This bulletin is designed to assist you in these areas. Please contact a Firearm Examiner in your area with any questions. Phone numbers are listed at the end of this document.

2.0 FIREARMS

2.1 General considerations and precautions:

2.1.1 Always render a firearm safe to handle before proceeding with further investigation, examination, and packaging. All firearms should be submitted to the ISP Laboratory unloaded. If a firearm cannot be unloaded or if it is unknown if it is loaded, it may be brought to the ISP Laboratory upon appointment with the Laboratory Manager and a Firearm Examiner.

2.2 Unloading the Semi-Automatic pistol

2.2.1 Note the positions of any manual safety devices or cocking indicators. Carefully disengage the magazine and remove it from the firearm. Open the action and visually check the chamber for a cartridge or cartridge case. If possible, lock the slide to the rear keeping the action in the opened position, if not, let the action close, then engage any manual safety devices that may be on the firearm. (Make sure no unfired cartridge is left in the chamber.

NOTE: If fingerprinting is requested the cartridges may be left in the magazine but should not be left in the chamber.

2.3 Unloading Rifles

2.3.1 These are handled in similar manner to the handguns listed above. Safety and preservation of physical evidence should always be considered.

NOTE: Rifles should not be dismantled before packaging as this could alter their evidentiary value.

3.0 MARKING OF FIREARMS

3.1 For IBIS submissions only, the ISP Laboratory recommends not marking the firearm. As an alternative to engraving on the firearm, use the serial number for later identification.

4.0 PACKAGING OF FIREARMS AND DELIVERY TO THE LABORATORY

4.1 Postal regulations prohibit shipment of explosive substances through the mail. Unfired ammunition must be personally delivered to the ISP Laboratory or shipped via a commercial delivery service.

4.2 If the firearm must be shipped, it is imperative that it be properly packaged. It should be placed in a heavy corrugated container and secured in place to prevent shifting within the container. It should be wrapped securely with heavy paper, sealed, and marked.

4.3 All firearms (both pistols and rifles) shall be packaged upon submittal to the ISP Laboratory. Suitable packaging for firearms include: boxes, manila envelopes, and paper wrapping.

4.3.1 The use of plastic bags should be avoided whenever possible. Plastic bags trap moisture which will possibly rust and corrode firearms which may alter the forensic characteristics of the firearm. Also, if the firearm is to be analyzed for biological or fingerprint evidence, plastic bags are unacceptable.

4.4 Firearms recovered in water should be submitted in the same water in a watertight container. However, a Firearm Examiner shall be contacted prior to submission if it is unknown whether the firearm is loaded.

5.0 SUBMISSION CRITERIA

5.1 **No shotguns, revolvers, or derringers** will be accepted for entry into IBIS.

5.2 Firearms that have been in the possession of a law enforcement agency for over a year will not routinely be accepted for IBIS entry. A request in writing to the Unit Supervisor detailing the reason in which entry is needed may waive this provision.

5.3 The only rifles which will be accepted for entry will be 7.62 X 39mm caliber rifles (SKS type weapons), .223 Remington (5.56 X 45mm), and .22 caliber rifles.

5.4 Pistols and evidence cartridge cases will be accepted including carbines that fire pistol-type cartridges.

5.5 Neither evidence nor test fired bullets will be accepted for IBIS entry.

6.0 CARTRIDGE CASES SUBMISSIONS

6.1 Cartridge cases should always be handled with the utmost care to avoid destroying the microscopic striations on the cartridge case. They should

be packed in soft cotton or tissue, sealed in a paper envelope or pillbox and the container marked for identification. The cartridge case should not be marked due to the possibility of destroying valuable evidence.

6.2 Due to extremely low success rates, the Laboratory will not examine cartridges or cartridge cases for the presence of fingerprints and/or DNA except in extenuating circumstances with the approval of the Laboratory Manager or Unit Supervisor.

7.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 A contributor need not submit the firearm(s) to the laboratory if they wish to participate in an IBIS shoot with their local ISP Laboratory Forensic Firearms Identification Unit. Contact a Firearm Examiner for more information if this method of submission is preferred.

7.2 A contributor need not submit a firearm to the ISP Laboratory if they have the facilities to safely test fire the firearm themselves. In this instance, the cartridge cases (minimum of three) may be submitted with documentation describing the firearm (make, model, caliber, serial number, etc.), and the firearm may be promptly returned to the owner, if appropriate.

7.2.1 For best results, “factory new” ammunition shall be utilized. Reloaded ammunition is unacceptable for IBIS testing.

7.2.2 Federal Cartridge Company and/or Winchester Ammunition are recommended.

7.2.3 Inspect all primers and cartridge case heads before test firing to ensure there are no marks impressed in these areas before firing.

7.2.4 Contact a Firearm Examiner for more information if this method of submission is preferred.

NOTE: All test fires submitted or generated by the ISP Laboratory, will be returned to the contributor. It is recommended that they be retained for at least five years.

8.0 HIT NOTIFICATIONS

8.1 If a Firearm Examiner views a potential hit in IBIS he/she will generate a “High Probability IBIS Hit” notification memorandum. This memorandum will be sent either via email or USPS to the contributor.

8.2 If a contributor is notified of a potential hit, it is the responsibility of the contributor to return the evidence to the ISP Laboratory for confirmation of the hit.

8.3 Before this “High Probability IBIS Hit” can be used to establish probable cause to obtain an arrest warrant, search warrant, or for any other use in court, a Firearm Examiner must microscopically compare the submission(s) to determine if, in fact, they were fired in the same firearm. This information will only be provided to advise you of a possible link between submissions.

9.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

9.1 Evidence shall be returned to the contributing agency. Any deviations to this policy shall be communicated to the contributor in the Certificate of Analysis.

9.2 In IBIS cases, you may wish to consult with a Firearm Examiner at the ISP Laboratory serving your area. The phone numbers of these laboratories are:

Evansville:	812-867-3157	Toll Free - 800-852-3970
Fort Wayne:	260-436-7522	Toll Free - 800-552-0976
Indianapolis:	317-921-5300	Toll Free - 866-855-2840
Lowell:	219-696-1835	Toll Free - 877-874-0009