



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 A.T.F. 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 IBIS is the database used for the NIBIN network. Indiana State Police Laboratories currently using the IBIS Database are located at Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. However, both the Lowell and Evansville Laboratories are accepting IBIS cases and transferring the evidence for entry. 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.
- 1.3 When an entry is made in an Indiana State Police IBIS database the information is correlated (compared) to like images within the Area V Region. This region includes IBIS servers in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. Other areas within the United States, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands can be searched upon request.

- 1.4 To ensure the maximum value of this evidence is obtained, it first must be properly identified, preserved, and packaged. This bulletin is designed to assist you in these areas. Any situation not sufficiently explained to your specific needs may be handled on an individual basis by contacting a Firearm Examiner in your area. Contact phone numbers are listed at the end of this document.

2.0 FIREARMS

2.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS:

- 2.2.1 As important as physical evidence may be, safety is of greater concern. Always render a firearm safe to handle before proceeding with further investigation, examination and packaging. There is no instance in which a loaded firearm will be accepted by the laboratory. If a firearm cannot be unloaded by the contributor, it may be brought to the laboratory upon appointment with 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 live 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, we recommend 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 Personal delivery is the preferred means of transportation to the laboratory. However, if it is impossible to hand carry the evidence to the laboratory the U.S. mail or a commercial delivery service with traceable shipping (UPS, FedEx, etc.) can be used. (Live ammunition must be 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 labeled.
- 4.3 All firearms (both pistols and rifles) shall be packaged upon submittal to the 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 must 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 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.
- 5.3 Pistols and evidence cartridge cases will be accepted including carbines that fire pistol-type cartridges.
- 5.4 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 Indiana State Police Laboratory Firearms 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 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.....), and the firearm may be promptly returned to the owner, if appropriate.
 - 7.2.1 For best results it is requested that “factory new” ammunition be utilized.
 - 7.2.2 Federal Cartridge Company and/or Winchester Ammunition are recommended.
 - 7.2.3 Reloads are not to be used for test-firing.
 - 7.2.4 Inspect all primers and cartridge case heads before test firing to ensure there are no marks impressed in these areas before firing.
 - 7.2.5 Contact a Firearm Examiner for more information if this method of submission is preferred.

NOTE: All test fires submitted or generated by the laboratory, will be returned to the contributor and it is recommended that they be retained for a period of 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 US Mail 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 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 In IBIS cases, you may wish to consult with a Firearm Examiner at the laboratory serving your agency or area. The phone numbers of these laboratories are:

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