West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory

NIBIN By Appointment Program

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NIBIN BY APPOINTMENT SERVICES DETAILED:

NIBIN is an acronym for the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network. NIBIN is a program that is run by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). NIBIN is a computerized system used for acquiring, storing, and searching images of known and unknown fired ammunition components entered from various local, state, and federal agencies. The mission of NIBIN is to identify, target, and prosecute shooters and their sources of crime guns. This mission is accomplished through the development of timely crime gun intelligence with respect to shooters in locations supported by NIBIN. The WVSPFL hosts a NIBIN site and therefore aids NIBIN in this mission.

NIBIN hardware at the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory (WVSPFL) allows the user to acquire digital images of different marked areas on fired cartridge cases. These images are converted into digital "signatures" that can then be compared, through an automated process, with other stored digital signatures. These searches can result in possible leads between cases that may not have been previously realized by law enforcement to have been related. For every item that is entered, a list will be prepared by the NIBIN software to review. The BAFT National Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC) will review the images and determine if there are any leads. If any **potential** leads are developed based on this review then NNCTC will notify the involved agencies. These leads are meant to be for investigative purposes only. You may request that a NIBIN lead be confirmed by submitting your evidence to WVSPFL for a full forensic examination. If a NIBIN lead is confirmed, it is then considered to be a 'Hit'.

The WVSPFL established this appointment program in order to more efficiently enter evidence into NIBIN. This program will allow law enforcement to have test fires from seized firearms and/or evidence cartridge cases from crime scenes entered into NIBIN quickly. It is known that the greater the time between the date of the crime and the date an investigating officer is provided a new lead, the less useful the lead becomes. Due to this, we are working hard to make sure that our appointment program is as quick and efficient as possible while not sacrificing any accuracy. If you choose to use the appointment program, then you can essentially skip the backlogged evidence that is present at the WVSPFL. Entry of your evidence will be made into NIBIN on the same day with all efforts made to review database searches of that evidence within 48 hours. When a potential lead is developed, your agency will be notified of the potential link and provided the relevant case information. Using this program could dramatically reduce the time between the crime and when an investigator can use information from a lead to benefit their case. There are many more benefits if you choose to participate.

Agencies that choose to participate will **NOT** have to do the following:

- Fill out submission paperwork for the traditional laboratory process (WVSP Form 53, 53A, 53B)
- Go through the submission process in our Central Evidence Receiving Section
- Wait for evidence to be processed in our traditional laboratory process to get a lead
- Wait to have your evidence returned to you
- Enter into an additional chain of custody for your evidence. Your evidence and/or test fires will be entered in your presence, while you wait. Your evidence never leaves your custody.

HOW YOUR AGENCY CAN PARTICIPATE?

1. **Fill out the WVSPFL NIBIN Information Request Form**. This form can be found on the WVSP website under the Forensic Laboratory page. This form must be completed and sent to the WVSPFL Firearm & Toolmark Identification Section to schedule an appointment. If a tentative appointment has been set and the NIRF has not been received 48 hours prior to the appointment, the appointment will be cancelled.
    - Multiple agency cases can be filled out on a single form.
    - Make sure that all information is correct and that you have provided your contact information. Please do not use a generic office line if possible, if questions arise it is best if we can contact you directly. For communication of generated leads, a valid email address MUST be provided.
    - When you can produce your own test fires you should do so. When you are bringing your own test fires, pre-printed envelopes are available at our Central Evidence Receiving Section and in our NIBIN room. These envelopes should be used to package your NIBIN test fires.
    - If you think DNA evidence may be needed at a future point in your investigation, make sure to collect swabs from your evidence prior to arriving for an appointment.
2. **Contact our NIBIN program and request to schedule an appointment**. The WVSPFL is open from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Laboratory staff are not available for appointments on state holidays.
    - Remember, you must call or email to make an appointment. Customers who show up with no appointment will not be guaranteed access to NIBIN entry. This may be due to other appointments, insufficient staff, the equipment requiring service, etc. Please schedule an appointment prior to arriving.
    - We will make every effort to accommodate your requested appointment time. Times may be determined based on other already scheduled appointments, the number of cases and items you have for entry, and the availability of staff.
    - It is critical you accurately relay the number of items you will bring for your appointment so we can schedule an appropriate amount of time for your visit. The WVSPFL NIBIN site is only equipped with one entry machine.
    - If you cannot make your appointment time, please notify us at the earliest convenience. Two to three days' notice is preferred so we may potentially fill the appointment with another agency who is requesting service.
3. **Travel to the WVSPFL for your appointment**.
    - Once you arrive, you will be escorted to the NIBIN room where you will sign a visitor log.
    - The evidence you bring to your appointment will remain in your custody and control the entire time you are in the laboratory.
    - If you were unable to do so prior to the appointment, you will be escorted to the range where you may perform your own test fires.
    - Once in the NIBIN room, you will also witness the entry of any suitable evidence into NIBIN.
    - Once completed, you and the NIBIN user will complete the rest of the NIRF and a copy will be provided to you. This form will serve as your notification that items were entered into NIBIN.
    - You will package and seal your evidence to take with you, no evidence will remain at the laboratory.
4. **You will be notified if any NIBIN leads are determined**.
    - The BAFT National Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC)will notify your agency through the

contact information on the NIRF.

- The notification of a lead is a potential link between cases. This is for investigative purposes only. Your agency can decide if a confirmation of the lead is needed.
- If a confirmation is needed, then evidence from both cases will need to be submitted for a full forensic examination by a firearms examiner. This may require you to coordinate with other agencies to submit the necessary evidence. Without a confirmation, an examiner cannot testify if items were fired in the same firearm.
- Make sure to retain the items that were entered into NIBIN for future comparisons.
- If your agency decides to dispose of a firearm, or return it to the public in any capacity, this information must be entered into the database. It is critical that you contact the WVSPFL NIBIN Program and let them know of this status change to the firearm. This will affect database searches.

REMEMBER THAT THIS PROGRAM IS ONLY FOR FIREARMS EVIDENCE THAT DOES NOT NEED A FULL FIREARMS EXAMINATION AT THE TIME. FUTURE FIREARM EXAMINATIONS MAY BE REQUESTED IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY IN THE CASE.

AFTER EVIDENCE GOES THROUGH THE APPOINTMENT PROGRAM IT WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR FUTURE TESTING FOR DNA OR LATENT PRINTS! THESE REQUESTS NEED TO BE MADE PRIOR TO THE APPOINTMENT.

If you prefer to bring test fires to your appointment instead of the firearm(s), here are some recommendations for providing good quality test fire specimens for NIBIN entry:

- Make sure to test fire the firearm a minimum of two (2) times.
- Do NOT bring the fired bullets if you recover them.
- Use commercial brass or nickel case ammunition with nickel (silver) primers. Brass primers are also acceptable.
- Avoid using ammunition that has primers with manufacturing marks, such as symbols or pre-marked parallel lines. (This can be commonly seen on some Magtech / CBC brand ammunition)







- The most commonly entered calibers for NIBIN can be seen below:
  - 25 Auto / 6.35mm Auto / 25 ACP
  - 380 Auto / 9x17mm / 9mm Kurtz / 9mm Browning Court / 380 ACP
  - 9mm Makarov / 9mm Mak / 9x18mm
  - 9mm Luger / 9x19mm / 9mm Parabellum / 9mm NATO

- 40 S&W / 40 Auto
- 10mm Auto
- 45 Auto / 45 ACP
- 223 Remington / 5.56x45mm NATO
- 7.62x39mm

If you have questions, please contact the WVSPFL NIBIN Program at 304-746-2241 or NIBIN@wvsp.gov.