



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
A Nationally Accredited Laboratory

700 NORTH 5TH STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219  
(804) 786-2281 FAX (804) 786-6857

### NOTICE OF DFS POLICY CHANGE

To: All Law Enforcement Agencies Served by DFS  
From: Linda Jackson, Department Director *LJT*  
Date: June 17, 2021  
RE: New NIBIN Case Acceptance Policy

The Firearms & Toolmarks Section utilizes the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to potentially associate criminal events through the search of digital images of cartridge cases and shotshell cases recovered from crime scenes and test fired firearms. Other examinations performed by the section include examining firearms for operability and comparing bullets, cartridge cases, and shotshell cases to determine if they were fired from the same firearm, multiple firearms or a specific firearm, if submitted, among others.

Over the past two calendar years, the Department has continued to experience year-over-year increases in overall firearms submissions, resulting in longer case turnaround times and growing backlogs.

The ATF provides guidance to NIBIN users on best practices that will result in timely investigative information. Although sites may not generally restrict NIBIN submissions of suitable ballistic evidence, they are not required to accept such evidence if more than one year has passed between evidence recovery and evidence submission.

In order to focus our resources on cases most likely to yield investigative leads, the Firearms & Toolmarks Section has implemented the following case acceptance policy:

- **Effective immediately, DFS will no longer accept cases for NIBIN examination(s) that were collected more than one calendar year prior to potential submission.**
- **Previously submitted evidence that is currently in the laboratory for NIBIN entry only, where more than one year had passed between evidence recovery and evidence submission, will be terminated and the evidence returned to the submitting agency without analysis.**

Please contact the Firearms & Toolmarks Section Supervisor at the DFS Laboratory that provides service to your agency if you have questions or wish to discuss extenuating circumstances:

Central (Richmond)    Stephen Atkinson    (804) 588-4141

Eastern (Norfolk)    Allison Milam    (757) 355-5965

Northern (Manassas)    Cara McCarthy    (703) 334-9723

Western (Roanoke)    Wendy Gibson    (540) 283-5932