

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

CRIME LABORATORY SERVICE  
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July 30, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Lab Service has decided to voluntarily withdraw from its participation within the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) and will cease accepting new cases for NIBIN entry on August 1, 2018. We expect that our existing systems will be removed on or about September 1, 2018. The NIBIN Program is administered by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (commonly referred to as ATF) and is a national database of images of fired cartridge cases used to link different shooting events together. The Department and many of you have each seen success with the NIBIN Program; however, the ATF is switching the focus of the program from using NIBIN as a purely forensic tool to leveraging its capabilities to generate rapid and actionable investigative leads. Instead of doing NIBIN as one of the last steps in the analytical process, the ATF has seen success in entering cartridge cases within 48 hours of an offense.

By rapidly entering cartridge cases, the NIBIN system is able to give investigators potential links to other crimes as part of a holistic gun crime intelligence collection before the investigative trail goes cold. In order to accomplish this, NIBIN units are being taken out of crime labs and put into investigative units that are best postured to use this technology to their advantage. The Texas DPS Crime Lab Service is not equipped, resourced, or optimized to provide such a rapid turnaround on NIBIN entries and our NIBIN equipment may be relocated to other agencies and/or units that are capable of taking advantage of these new opportunities. Our agency is working with the ATF to ensure that you have access to NIBIN going forward, but this may take time to implement during which agencies may expect limited or no access to the database. Our crime labs will continue to offer full service firearm/toolmark comparisons, functionality determinations, and a variety of other related forensic analyses that you have come to rely upon over for over 80 years.

As part of our support to you during this transition period our Firearms/Toolmarks Laboratory Reports will include investigative leads indicating any potential exhibits/items or test fires from firearms that may be suitable for entry into the NIBIN Database. Firearms that are suitable for entry will have test fires returned with the evidence for your use and possible NIBIN entry. We understand that this will be a strain on some of your agencies during this transition process, but we and the ATF believe that in the long term this approach will better prevent future firearm related crimes. Thank you for your service and support, and if you have any questions, please contact your nearest Texas DPS Crime Lab Firearms/Toolmarks Section or local ATF field office.

Sincerely,

Brady W. Mills  
Assistant Division Director  
Crime Laboratory Service  
Law Enforcement Support

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