

Criminalistics Section

Louisiana State Police Crime Lab

NIBIN

Firearms Unit



WHAT

The firearms unit houses one of the busiest National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) acquisition sites in the country. The NIBIN Program automates ballistics evaluations and provides actionable investigative leads in a timely manner. NIBIN is the only interstate automated ballistic imaging network in operation in the United States and is available to most major population centers in the United States.

HOW

When firearms are manufactured they go through several machining processes. As a result of these machining processes, markings are left behind within each firearm. Microscopically, these markings are very unique. The NIBIN system captures images of these markings on cartridge cases and uses software encoding and algorithms to identify potential matches.

WHY

Prior to the NIBIN Program, firearms examiners performed this process manually which was extremely labor intensive. To use NIBIN, firearms examiners or technicians enter cartridge case evidence into the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS). These images are correlated against the database. Law enforcement can search against evidence from their jurisdiction, neighboring ones, and others across the country. This program is one investigative tool accessed by law enforcement that allows information sharing easily, making the investigative agencies more effective.

NIBIN Hit: The result of two or more firearms ballistic evidence acquisitions that have been microscopically identified as a match after microscopic examination by a firearms examiner.

NIBIN



Staffing

The firearms unit currently has five part time employees whose primary focus is to test fire and function check guns and enter the test fired cartridge cases into NIBIN. Additionally, the LSP Crime Lab has Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) allowing other agencies to access the NIBIN system housed at the LSP Crime Lab. The agencies who have been authorization to use the database are:

- Baton Rouge Police Department
- East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office
- Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office
- St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office
- Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office
- Lake Charles Police Department

Case Load

The NIBIN Unit enters approximately 650 cartridge cases every month and is consistently one of the leading NIBIN sites in the country. To date, the NIBIN Unit has established over 5,000 hits linking shootings across the state.

Interesting Facts

The LSPCL NIBIN Unit has been used as a model of good practices by the ATF, especially when it comes to working with local agencies for comprehensive collection and entry.

On a National level:

- 5.7 million pieces of ballistic evidence are currently stored in NIBIN.
- 640,000 NIBIN Leads were generated and over 145,000 NIBIN hits have been generated during the 25 year history of the program.
- There are a total of 301 NIBIN Acquisition sites in the nation.

