



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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October 03, 2019

New NIBIN Standards and Crime Laboratory Response – **Amended**  
**This letter is to replace the letter previously sent on September 17, 2019**

Dear Valued Crime Laboratory Partner,

The Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL) are committed to providing our submitting agencies with quality, reliable and unbiased forensic science testing results. In order to ensure not only timeliness for our customers, but also sound scientific testing services, we are implementing a change for the Firearms/Toolmarks unit, which will go into effect September 30, 2019. **To be clear, the WSCL will continue to provide Firearms and Toolmark analysis services moving forward.**

For several years the WSCL has maintained a National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) program within the Firearms/Toolmarks unit at the Milwaukee Laboratory. NIBIN is an automated database that looks for similarity in digital images of fired cartridge cases and creates a list of potential matches for downstream correlation and investigative leads across cases. Since 1999, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has administered the NIBIN program and has successfully coordinated with many state, local, and federal law enforcement and forensic partners nationwide. The WSCL Firearms/Toolmarks Examiners primary focus is to forensically examine firearms for operability and to perform scientific comparative examinations on fired bullets and cartridge cases. In addition to this complex analysis, the examiners also spend a smaller portion of their time utilizing NIBIN and issuing investigative leads.

A shift in mindset for ATF occurred in 2012, when the NIBIN program became one of a real-time intelligence tool under the Field Operations directorate and placed emphasis on quickly disseminating reliable leads to investigators. With this change came new standards administered by the ATF and the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board which will go into effect in 2020. By December 31, 2020, the ATF will complete initial audits of NIBIN program sites, and each site must be in full compliance with the standards to maintain access to NIBIN. The Minimum Required Operating Standards (MROs) include, but are not limited to:

1. Enter all fired or test fired cartridge cases from serviced law enforcement agencies and/or departments through a NIBIN acquisition machine within two business days of receipt; and
2. Disseminate NIBIN leads within 24 hours.

The WSCL supports the new direction of the ATF and the NIBIN program, but will not be able to responsibly and reasonably sustain the program under the Division of Forensic Sciences. Effective September 30, 2019, the WSCL will no longer be receiving NIBIN cases, and will focus on sending results from NIBIN cases in house by the end of 2019. If an agency has a public safety threat or violent case that is necessary to be submitted from now

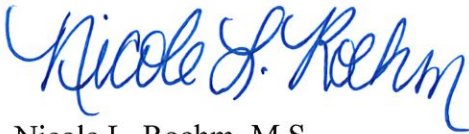
until the end of 2019, we will accept and process those NIBIN cases that have been discussed with the WSCL Forensic Case Manager.

Please feel free to contact us directly at any time regarding your questions about NIBIN or Firearms/Toolmarks analysis. It is our goal to ensure your understanding and to work collaboratively to ensure the citizens of Wisconsin are served at the highest possible level.

We appreciate your continued support and look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Kathy Mahnke – WSCL Forensic Case Manager at (608) 609-6125 or [mahnkeka@doj.state.wi.us](mailto:mahnkeka@doj.state.wi.us).

Sincerely,



Nicole L. Roehm, M.S.  
Administrator  
Wisconsin Division of Forensic Sciences