

Department of Justice
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Information Collection Request
Supporting Statement
1140-0049
Application for National Firearms Examiner Academy
ATF F 6330.1

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity of Information Collection

The Office of Science and Technology, Forensic Services offers the National Firearms Examiner Academy (NFEA) training program for entry level firearms and toolmark examiners. This program is designed in part to address the critical law enforcement needs of the services provided by firearms and toolmark examiners. The examiners themselves are a finite and dwindling population across the country. Yet, all law enforcement organizations that rely on ballistic and forensic firearms examinations require the services of this technical expertise. This course is designed to be offered qualified applicants from state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies and to newly appointed ATF firearms and toolmark examiners. In order for an agency outside of ATF to request enrollment at this academy, an application form would be necessary to transfer pertinent data to ATF for the purpose of planning as well as determining compliance with established prerequisites.

The following changes (identified in red) were made to the form):

- a. **Corrected:** “Date of birth” to read: **Date and place of birth**
- b. **Deleted:** “Are you a Permanent Resident Alien? With yes/no checkboxes” and added the statement “If yes, submit documentation to prove your status.”

Non- US Citizens cannot participate in the firearm manufacturing tours during the NFEA training due to their contractual restrictions with the Department of Defense. Therefore, ATF must ensure respondents are U.S. Citizens.

- c. **Added:** **Have you been the subject of a background investigation with your agency? If so submit verification from your agency. -**

In order for the ATF laboratories to maintain their ASCLD certification all employees and those with unescorted access are required to be the subject of a background investigation. Verification from the applicant's agency is required as part of the review process.

- d. **Corrected:** "Are you Assigned a Training Officer?" to read:

Are you Assigned a Training Officer? If yes provide name, phone and e-mail address.

ATF reviews all applications during the selection process. It is necessary at times to contact either supervisor or training officer during this process for additional information. Once selections are made it is also necessary to correspond with trainers and supervisors during the training program.

- e. **Corrected:** "How many qualified full-time Firearms Examiners are in your lab?" to read:

How many qualified full-time Firearms Examiners are in your lab and actively working cases?

Laboratory need is one of the criteria utilized to determine the applicant's acceptance into the NFEA once it has been determined that the applicant meets minimum qualifications. This will assist with that determination.

- f. **Corrected:** Contact Number on form should read: **202-648-6061**

The phone number for ATF point of contact for program has changed.

- g. **Deleted:** Fax number 202-648-6065

An e-mail box was set up for ease of submission.

- h. **Added:** E-mail address NFEATraining@atf.gov for submission of applications

An e-mail box was set up for ease of submission.

- i. **Corrected:**

Spelling of “Firearms” in the Paperwork Reduction Act Notice

2. Needs and Uses

The information from the application form would be collected and maintained by ATF’s Office of Science and Technology, Forensic Services for planning purposes as well as determining compliance with established prerequisites. Meeting or exceeding threshold requirements is critical in that recognition in this field comes not from ATF but from an independent professional organization known as the Association of Firearms and Toolmark Examiners (AFTE). In order for an Academy program to be valid it must be in line with the governing body that recognizes and certifies the work of the examiners. Prerequisites established for the NFEA are in accordance with those of AFTE standards. Prerequisites include completion of a four year college degree as well as permanent assignment to a law enforcement forensic laboratory for the purposes of conducting the types of examinations related to this field.

3. Use of Information Technology

This fillable form is available on the ATF website however the application process will necessitate manual submission through normal postal means. Those that are capable may fax or e-mail the completed form to ATF. Recognizing that interest in this Academy will be found throughout all areas of the country, we cannot exclude those areas where agency funding would prevent internet access on behalf of the prospective student. Additionally, a signature would be required on the application form since we are requesting compliance with established prerequisites to attend the NFEA.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

ATF uses a uniform subject classification system for forms to identify duplication and to ensure that any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose of this information collection.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Businesses

The collection of information has no impact on small businesses.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting or Less Frequent Collection

The consequences of not conducting this information collection would result in critical information that would not be available during the

investigation of criminal cases. All law enforcement organizations that rely on ballistic and forensic firearms examination require the services of this technical expertise. The collection is necessary for ATF to process prospective NFEA applicants, plan future training sessions, and verify eligibility of candidates.

7. Special Circumstances

This information will be collected in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. Public Comments and Consultations

The ATF Office of Science and Technology consulted with the Association of Firearms and Toolmark Examiners regarding the creation of the application. Prerequisites established for the ATF Academy are in accordance with those of Association. A 60-day and 30-day Federal Register notice was published in order to solicit comments from the general public. No comments were received.

9. Provision of Payments or Gifts to Respondents

ATF will not provide any payment or gift of any type to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

The information regarding this information collection is kept in a secure location at the ATF National Laboratory Center. Also, the information on the form is reviewed only by ATF employees who determine the eligibility of the applicant. Confidentiality is not assured.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

The respondents' social security number is requested to verify the identity of the applicant, verify the applicant's citizenship and/or immigration status, and track training progress and completion. The National Firearms Examiner Academy can only accept applications from U.S. citizens due to Department of State and Department of Defense regulations regarding who is allowed to enter firearms manufacturer's facilities in the U.S.

12. Estimates of Respondent's Burden

The number of respondents associated with this collection is 75. The total annual responses are 75. The time it takes to complete the form is 12 minutes. The total annual burden associated with this collection is 15 hours (75 respondents x .20 (12 minutes) = 15 hours).

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

The only cost associated with this collection is postage. Because of the low number of respondents, the cost of postage is way under a thousand dollars. Therefore, number 14 on the 83-I will be reported as 0.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

There is no cost to the Federal Government.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

There are no changes associated with this submission.

16. Anticipated Publication Plan and Schedule

The results of this collection will not be published.

17. Display of Expiration Date

ATF does not request approval to not display the expiration date of OMB approval for this information collection.

18. Exception to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

None