

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.

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 and can be e-mailed to the NFEATraining@atf.gov mailbox. 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.

Individuals who can complete the PDF form online, will be able to sign the form digitally and email it to the NFEA Training e-mail inbox, thereby providing for a completely paperless and electronic method of submission alongside other existing methods of submission. Digital signature and e-submission capability is expected to positively impact the public burden for this collection.

Once the form has cleared the public comment period and is approved by OMB, electronic version of this forms it will be made fully 508 compliant, and available for completion, electronic submission by individuals with disabilities.

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

No public comments were received for the 60-day or 30-day notices that were published in the Federal Register notice.

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

Cost is non-existent as the form can be emailed to the NFEA Training mailbox. 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