

Department of Justice
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Information Collection Request
1140-0050 Supporting Statement

Identification Markings Placed on Firearms

A. Justification

1. Necessity of Information Collection

Section 923(i) of the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA), as amended, (18 U.S.C. Chapter 44), requires licensed importers and licensed manufacturers to identify by means of a serial number, each firearm imported or manufactured. The serial number must be engraved, cast or stamped on the receiver or frame of the weapon, in such manner as the Attorney General prescribes by regulation. With respect to certain firearms subject to the National Firearms Act (e.g. machineguns), 26 U.S.C. 5842 requires each manufacturer and importer and anyone making a firearm to identify each firearm by a serial number. The serial number may not be readily removed, obliterated, or altered. Section 5842 also requires the firearm to be identified by the name of the manufacturer, importer, or maker, and other such identification as the Attorney General may prescribe by regulation. Regulations that implement the above provisions of the law are set forth in 27 CFR 478.92 for Title I firearms (e.g., pistol, revolver, rifle shotgun) and 27 CFR 479.102 for NFA firearms (e.g., machine guns, silencers etc.). In general, these sections require each licensed manufacturer, or licensed importer of firearms, to legibly identify each firearm by engraving, casting, stamping (impressing), or otherwise conspicuously placing on the frame or receiver, an individual serial number. The serial number must be placed in a manner not susceptible of being readily obliterated, altered or removed.

To reduce the problem of incorrect record entries by licensees, and to make identification marking less susceptible to being readily obliterated, altered, or removed, ATF amended the regulations to prescribe minimum height and depth requirements for identification markings placed on firearms. Specifically, manufacturers and licensed importers must cast, stamp (impress) or engrave serial numbers to a depth of at least .003 inch and in a print size no smaller than 1/16 inch. All other required markings, including the special markings for semiautomatic assault weapons must be cast, stamped (impressed), or engraved to a depth of at least .003 inch. A minimum height requirement of 1/16 inch for all identification markings is not required, since such a requirement would be impractical. However, ATF believes that these minimum standards will ensure that firearms are properly identified in accordance with the law. In addition, minimum standards will facilitate ATF's ability to trace firearms used in crimes.

2. Needs and Uses

The requested information - supports Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials in crime fighting by facilitating the tracing of firearms used in criminal activities. . This

is accomplished due to requirement for a serial number, along with other required markings such as caliber, model, name and manufacturer, and city and State of the manufacturer or importer; which will make any firearm uniquely identifiable and traceable. The systematic tracking of firearms from the manufacturer or U.S. importer to the retail purchaser, also enables law enforcement agencies to identify suspects involved in criminal violations, determine if a firearm is stolen, and provide other relevant information to a criminal investigation.

3. Use of Information Technology

The use of information technology does not apply to this information collection because the manufacturer making the firearm must physically place the required marking on the firearm.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

There is no duplication of this information collection. The prescribed minimum height and depth requirements for the identification markings place on firearms are not available elsewhere, although they are in accordance with the law.

5. Minimizing Burden on Small Businesses

This information collection has no specific impact on small businesses other than the requirement for business owners to follow the guidelines to gain access to the electronic filing system.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting or Less Frequent Collection

The lack of specific minimum standards for identifying firearms will result in licensees' improperly recording identifying information such as serial numbers in their required records. In addition, serial numbers that are stamped very lightly on the frame or receiver of the firearms are more susceptible to being easily obliterated, altered or removed. ATF's efforts to trace firearms would be hindered without this information collection.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances with regard to this information collection requirement conducted in a manner consistent with 5 CFR 1320.6.

8. Public Comments and Consultations

No public comments were received during either the 60-day or 30-day Federal Register Notice period for this Information Collection.

9. Provision of Payments or Gifts to Respondents

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is not assured. This information collection only requires licensed importers and licensed manufacturers to place minimum height and depth requirements on firearms for identification purposes.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

No questions of a sensitive nature are associated with this information collection.

12. Estimate of Respondent's Burden

Under the definition of "burden" in 5 CFR 1320.3, the regulations state that "The time, effort, and financial resources necessary to comply with a collection of information that would be incurred by persons in the normal course of their activities (e.g., in compiling and maintaining business records) will be excluded from the 'burden' if the agency demonstrates that the reporting, recordkeeping, or disclosure activities needed to comply are usual and customary." (5 CFR 1320.3 (b) (2)).

ATF believes that stamping firearms with serial numbers, make, model, manufacturer, etc., is usual and customary" for domestic manufacturers. However, ATF believes that the requirements of 478.92 and 479.102 are not usual and customary for importers of firearms. For this reason, the burden hours for this IC will only be calculated for importers of firearms. However, both importers and manufacturers will be counted as respondents.

Currently there are 12,525 licensed manufacturers of firearms and 1,343 licensed importers. As such, the total number of respondents for this collection is 13,868. The total number of firearms that were recently imported into the United States is 5,137,771. Since all imported firearms must be marked (stamped), the total number of responses is 5,137,771. The time it takes to mark the firearm is 5 seconds, as well as an additional 55 seconds to transport firearm to machinery, load machinery, and unload machinery. Therefore, the total time taken to transport, load, mark, then unload the machinery is 1 minute. The total number of burden hours for this information collection is 85,630 hours, which is equal to 5,137,771(total responses) divided by 60 (1 minute), which is the time taken for each response.

13. Estimate of Cost Burden

Firearm manufacturers must mark firearms in accordance with the Gun Control Act of 1968. These licensed manufacturers are required by regulation to mark a firearm with a unique serial number, make, model, caliber/gauge and city and state of manufacturer. The cost burden to the manufacturer is not the same between all manufacturers. However, the average direct and overhead cost to mark a firearm in accordance with the regulation is approximately .92 cents per firearm. The information used to develop this cost average was obtained from various firearm manufactures in the United States. Therefore, the total cost burden to the respondent of this collection is 5,137,771 (total responses) x .92 cents (total cost per response); which is equal to \$4,726,749.

14. Cost to the Federal Government

There is no Federal Government cost associated with this information collection.

15. Reason for Change in Burden

Although there is an increase in the total respondents by 2,654, there is a reduction of both the total responses and burden hours by 401,768, and 6,696 respectively, due to a decrease in the total number of imported firearms since 2015. Consequently, the total cost burden for this collection was also reduced by \$ 369,627.

16. Anticipated Publication Plan and Schedule

ATF does not plan to publish this information collection.

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

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.