



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE PATROL

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August 5, 2020

TO: NIBIN Users  
FROM: Mr. Gene P. Lawrence, Crime Laboratory Division *GPL*  
SUBJECT: Revised Procedures for Handling NIBIN Cartridge Cases

The Washington State Patrol Crime Laboratory Division (WSPCLD) is changing the policy for handling cartridge cases for NIBIN entry effective August 17, 2020. Past policy required all cartridge cases for NIBIN entry to be processed as evidence. There was no distinction between evidentiary cartridge cases and exemplar cartridge cases. In order to simplify the submission process and expedite entry of all cartridge cases, the laboratory has revised these procedures as follows.

**Evidentiary cartridge cases**, those from crime scenes or those from firearms evidence submitted for analysis, will continue to be processed and handled as evidence. Agencies will submit them to the laboratory using the Request for Laboratory Examination (RFLE) form following normal WSPCLD evidence procedures. The evidence will be returned to the submitting agency following requested laboratory analyses. The WSPCLD will notify the submitting agency of the NIBIN entry, and of any leads that are developed.

Evidence cartridge cases may also be entered by the laboratory, or other trained NIBIN users, on a walk-in basis. For walk-ins, the cartridge case will stay in the custody of the agency during the entry process and will not be submitted to the laboratory. Agencies will be notified if a lead is developed.

**Exemplar test fires**, created by agencies from recovered firearms for NIBIN entry-only will no longer be handled as evidence upon submission to the WSPCLD. The firearm must be test fired two times and both cartridge cases submitted to the laboratory in a NIBIN test fire envelope, available at your local laboratory. The information required on these envelopes has recently been updated and must be fully completed upon submission. *An RFLE shall not be submitted* with the exemplar test fires. As exemplars, there will be no chain of custody maintained by the WSPCLD. NIBIN entry may be performed by WSPCL personnel or other trained non-WSPCLD NIBIN users, and these test fired cartridge cases will be discarded after entry. If an agency would like to retain exemplar cartridge cases, it is recommended they create additional test fires. A report will not be issued notifying the agency of NIBIN entry for exemplars, however, submitting agencies will be notified if a lead is developed.

Agencies should submit NIBIN entry cartridge cases, and all firearms analysis requests, to their local laboratory that offers firearms service-Seattle, Spokane, or Tacoma.

These changes are being made to simplify the submission process and will assist us in providing improved customer service. As always, if there are any questions or concerns, or for more information on the NIBIN system, please contact the Firearms section supervisor of the laboratory where cases are submitted.

