
Restoration of Firearm Serial Numbers

804.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The primary purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the proper and safe handling of firearms as evidence.

804.2 PROCEDURE

Any firearm coming into the possession of the Urbana Police Department as evidence, found property, etc., will be processed in the following manner:

804.2.1 PRELIMINARY FIREARM EXAMINATION

- (a) Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Be sure the firearm is in an unloaded condition. This includes removal of the ammunition source (e.g., the detachable magazine, contents of the tubular magazine) as well as the chamber contents.
- (b) If the firearm is corroded shut or in a condition that would preclude inspection of the chamber contents, treat the firearm as if it is loaded. Make immediate arrangements for a firearms examiner or other qualified examiner to render the firearm safe.
- (c) Accurately record/document the condition of the gun when received. Note the positions of the various components such as the safeties, cylinder, magazine, slide, hammer, etc. Accurately record/document cylinder chamber and magazine contents. Package the ammunition separately.
- (d) If the firearm is to be processed for fingerprints or trace evidence, process before any serial number restoration is attempted, if needed.
- (e) Take photographs of the firearm to record the condition and any other marking(s) that may be destroyed after subsequent handling.

804.2.2 PROPERTY BOOKING PROCEDURE

Any employee taking possession of a firearm shall book the firearm into property following standard procedures. The employee booking the firearm shall indicate on the property form if serial numbers have been removed or obliterated.

804.2.3 EVIDENCE TECHNICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

The evidence technician receiving a firearm may arrange for the firearm to be transported to a state or federal crime lab for processing as needed. Exemplar bullets and cartridge cases from the firearms, depending upon acceptance criteria and protocol, may also be transported to a state or federal crime lab for processing as needed. Proper chain of evidence shall be maintained and observed at all times.

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804.2.4 DOCUMENTATION

Case reports are prepared in order to document the chain of custody and the initial examination and handling of evidence from the time it is received/collected until it is released.

This report must include a record of the manner in which and/or from whom the firearm was received. This may appear on the request form or property form depending on the type of evidence.

804.2.5 FIREARM TRACE

[ETrace](#), which is an Internet based firearms tracing and analysis website offered by ATF, may be used to trace firearms information depending on the circumstances of the case.