

Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory

NIBIN Quality Manual

Version: 5.0

Effective: 2/1/2024

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is to describe how the State of Alaska Department of Public Safety Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory (ASCDL) management system meets the [Minimum Required Operating Standards for National Integrated Ballistic Information Network \(NIBIN\) Sites](#). **The laboratory employees involved in the NIBIN program** are responsible for notifying a member of **Top Management** if changes need to be made to the program, policies, and/or procedures to continue to meet the standards of the NIBIN document if/when it is updated. Authorizations for personnel to use the NIBIN system at ASCDL are documented in the [quality assurance records](#).

DEFINITIONS, ACRONYMS, AND INITIALISMS

See the [Quality Assurance Manual](#) for an up-to-date list of laboratory-wide definitions, acronyms, and initialisms.

See the [Minimum Required Operating Standards for National Integrated Ballistic Information Network \(NIBIN\) Sites](#) for other definitions, acronyms, and initialisms used in this document.

APD: Anchorage Police Department

MROS: Minimum Required Operating Standards for National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Sites

MINIMUM REQUIRED OPERATING STANDARDS

STANDARD 1. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

The ASCDL maintains an accredited Management System as per the [ISO/IEC 17025:2017](#) standard. This includes documents, records, plans, and monitoring of the laboratory's goals and objectives, organization and management, personnel, facilities, evidence control, validation, equipment calibration, reports, reviews, corrective action, audits, training records, safety, and outsourcing. The laboratory does not currently have NIBIN listed on its [scope of accreditation](#). Policies and procedures for the acquisition, correlation, and NIBIN lead dissemination are in this manual to bring the NIBIN program into the laboratory's current Quality Assurance Program.

IBIS/NIBIN QUALITY CONTROL

All equipment directly related to IBIS, including BRASSTRAX, must be operated according to requirements set forth by the ATF and Ultra Forensic Technology. As outlined in the BRASSTRAX User Guide, the BRASSTRAX acquisition unit regularly executes validation tasks as part of its normal operation. The automatic validation tasks ensure proper maintenance of the hardware components of the acquisition unit, as well as to ensure the unit is obtaining high-quality images for entry.

If a component of the BRASSTRAX system is not performing correctly and was not automatically adjusted during a validation task, a critical error message (X) or warning message (!) will appear. If a NIBIN User receives a critical error or warning message, the user shall either:

- Follow steps outlined in the BRASSTRAX User Guide to perform the necessary tune-up or adjustment of that component until resolved, or
- Contact FT directly for assistance in resolving the error or warning message

The record of validation tasks made by the BRASSTRAX system is maintained electronically on the BRASSTRAX system. The maintenance of records is performed automatically by the system. The history of validation tasks made to the BRASSTRAX unit cannot be modified or deleted from the system.

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TRAINING

Training can either be given locally by a certified NIBIN trainer or at the [NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center](#) (NNCTC). The training manual and protocols are maintained by NNCTC. All training materials, to include a competency test, are provided by NNCTC. Certificates indicating successful completion of the NIBIN training program will be retained by the ASCDL.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

NIBIN proficiency tests are administered annually by [Ultra Forensic Technology](#). NIBIN Trainer proficiency tests are administered by Ultra Forensic Technology on a bi-annual basis. Results of the proficiency tests for all NIBIN users will be retained by the ASCDL.

STANDARD 2. ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

The ASCDL has an [organizational chart](#) that visually describes the management of personnel within the laboratory.

- The Laboratory has managerial staff with the authority and resources needed to discharge their duties and meet the requirement of the Standards in this document. The **Top Management of ASCDL** have overall authority of all testing activities that occur within the ASCDL.
- General duties and authority of the **NIBIN Program Administrator**, as well as minimum qualifications for the role, are outlined in the [Minimum Required Operating Standards for National Integrated Ballistic Information Network \(NIBIN\) Sites](#).
- **Top Management** designates who will be **NIBIN Program Administrator** at the ASCDL.
- **Qualified NIBIN Users** will meet the qualifications outlined in the [Minimum Required Operating Standards for National Integrated Ballistic Information Network \(NIBIN\) Sites](#).
- **Top Management** authorizes **Qualified NIBIN Users** to perform work at ASCDL upon recommendation from the **NIBIN Program Administrator**.

Records of **NIBIN Program Administrator** and **Qualified NIBIN User** [authorizations](#) and any [supporting documentation](#) are retained in the Quality Assurance Records.

STANDARD 3. FACILITIES

The ASCDL is a secure facility that is designed to ensure the integrity of the NIBIN analyses.

ATF, by allowing the NIBIN instrument to be located at the ASCDL facility at 4805 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. AVE Anchorage, AK 99507, indicates that the Laboratory follows all ATF, DOJ, and/or other federal security requirements related to the NIBIN program, network, or systems to ensure the integrity of the program.

The NIBIN equipment is housed in the firearm laboratory space. This space has secured, limited access that is monitored by the building's automated door system. The security of the Laboratory, in addition to the key policy and visitor procedures, are described in the laboratory's [Quality Assurance Manual](#).

Facility personnel will monitor security alarms on at least a quarterly basis. Access to the ASCDL is controlled and limited.

STANDARD 4. EVIDENCE/REFERENCE MATERIAL CONTROL

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All items associated with NIBIN testing will be submitted through the **ASCDL Evidence Section** and treated as evidence while in the laboratory's possession, requiring a complete chain of custody. This includes firearms, cartridge cases from a scene, and test fires obtained off-site. Submitted test fires will not be destroyed by laboratory personnel. Instead, they will be returned to the agency.

Items submitted are subject to the policies and procedures listed in the laboratory's [Procedure for Evidence Management Manual](#) and [JusticeTrax LIMS-Plus 3.8 Manual](#).

Test fires created on-site will not be retained after NIBIN entry.

STANDARD 5. PROCEDURES

EQUIPMENT

- BRASSTRAX™
- MATCHPOINT™
- Stereomicroscope

NIBIN SUITABILITY

Firearms meeting the following parameters are suitable for NIBIN entry

- All semi-automatic or fully automatic pistols
- Semi-automatic or fully automatic rifles chambered for 7.62X39 and 5.56X45 (.223 Remington)
- Shotguns chambered for 12 gauge
- Long guns chambered for pistol cartridges (to include .22 Long Rifle)

Recovered evidence cartridge cases that are a caliber that would be fired in the above listed firearms are suitable for NIBIN entry.

Evidence that is typically not suitable for NIBIN include firearms that are revolvers, single shot or bolt action rifles, and shotguns chambered for other gauges and recovered evidence cartridge cases that would not be fired in the listed suitable firearms. Special request from a submitting agency is required for evidence that is not typically suitable.

Safe-keep firearms are NOT suitable for NIBIN entry.

TEST FIRING

Firearms received in the laboratory that are suitable for NIBIN entry will be test fired by a **Qualified NIBIN User** or **Firearm Examiner** authorized to do so by ASCDL.

The ATF's [Standard Protocol for NIBIN Test Fires](#) and any ASCDL firearm safety and test firing procedures contained within the [Firearm and Toolmark Quality Procedure Manual](#) shall be followed when creating NIBIN test fires. This includes a pre-firing safety examination.

Any firearm submitted for NIBIN that is deemed inoperable or unsafe shall not be test fired. The **Qualified NIBIN User** will place a "Firearm Inoperable" sticker on the firearm packaging. Consultation with a **firearms examiner** will occur when necessary.

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- A firearm that can be made operable with minimal manipulation may still be test fired given that the required manipulation does not inhibit safe operation of the firearm. Any manipulation performed on the firearm shall be documented in the NIBIN bench notes.
- If a firearm is determined to be unsafe or cannot be made operable with minimal manipulation, the **submitting Detective** or appropriate **Detective Supervisor** shall be notified. A separate lab request can be submitted to the ASCDL for a firearm function test to determine the operating condition.

After test fires are complete, a “NIBIN Test Fired” sticker will be placed on the firearm packaging for APD submitted firearms. This is done to alert **APD Evidence Technicians** and prompt them to contact the **Qualified NIBIN User** when a firearm is scheduled to be released back to its owner. The **Qualified NIBIN User** will change the BRASSTRAX entry information to “Test Fire Returned” before the firearm is released.

ACQUISITION

All APD evidence that is suitable for NIBIN shall be acquired into the NIBIN system. No policies shall exist that inhibit or restrict NIBIN submissions of suitable firearm evidence.

NIBIN acquisitions shall be made utilizing the BRASSTRAX system in accordance with the procedures and guidelines established through ATF-approved NIBIN User Training Programs, [MROS](#), and the BRASSTRAX User Guide. Copies of the BRASSTRAX User Guide are provided by Ultra Forensic Technology on the BRASSTRAX system and MROS information is maintained on [SharePoint](#).

If a **submitting Officer/Detective** contacts a **Qualified NIBIN User** and indicates that they believe that a firearm has been used outside the Alaska regional area, the **Qualified NIBIN User** will then contact the [National Correlation Center](#) and request a search of other areas.

TRIAGE

For submissions containing multiple cartridge cases, the cartridge cases shall be grouped either by class or by both class and individual characteristics. If there is more than one cartridge case suitable for entry into NIBIN, the examiner shall select the one bearing the most pronounced or the clearest individual characteristics for entry. More than one may be selected for entry if different characteristics are found to be more pronounced on different items.

When the **Qualified NIBIN User** takes possession of evidence cartridge cases and triage is complete, the **Qualified NIBIN User** will place a “casings analyzed” sticker on the evidence packaging.

CORRELATION

Correlations are typically performed for APD and the ASCDL by the [NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center \(NNCTC\)](#).

Correlations may also be performed by **Qualified NIBIN Users** that have completed an ATF-approved correlation training program or have been authorized by the ATF to perform correlations. Correlations performed by **Qualified NIBIN Users** may be performed on an as-needed basis and shall be conducted on the IBIS MATCHPOINT system and in accordance with the [ATF’s MROS guidelines](#).

INITIAL FINDINGS AND NIBIN LEAD NOTIFICATION REPORTS

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Initial NIBIN triage and acquisition notes (bench notes) documented on the approved NIBIN forms will be retained at the laboratory in the [LIMS](#).

NIBIN correlation results (lead and no-lead reports) will be retained in the [LIMS](#). For APD Lead Notifications, the notifications will be distributed to the **assigned Detective** and the **Detective Unit Supervisor**. If no detective is assigned, then the notification will be distributed to the **Detective Unit Supervisor**. The **Supervisor** will triage the case for assignment to a Detective. Lead Notifications received for ATF submitted evidence are distributed by NNCTC to the **local ATF Resident Agent in Charge**.

STANDARD 6. CORRECTIVE ACTION

The laboratory's [Quality Assurance Manual](#) describes the processes to follow relating to non-conforming work and corrective action.

STANDARD 7. AUDITS

The Laboratory will perform [internal audits](#) of the NIBIN component of testing in accordance with the laboratory's [Quality Assurance Manual](#). In addition, the Laboratory will participate in the ATF audit program as described in the [MROS-NIBIN](#) document. The **NIBIN Program Administrator** will coordinate with the laboratory **Quality Assurance Manager** to facilitate the planning, implementation, documentation, and follow-up of regular ATF audits at the basis set by ATF. All records will be stored and maintained in the laboratory's [Records library on SharePoint](#).

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REVISION HISTORY

Section	Changes
Standard 4. Evidence/Reference Material Control	Added "Submitted test fires will not be destroyed by laboratory personnel. Instead, they will be returned to the agency."