

National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Section



On June 25, 2022, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) was signed into law. BSCA provided authority for federal firearms licensees (FFLs) to perform voluntary serial number checks in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Gun File for firearms previously reported as being stolen.

The FBI has three methods for FFLs to access stolen gun records in the NCIC Gun File.

1. Partnership with a state or local law enforcement agency—some states currently have processes in place to perform an NCIC query on behalf of FFLs due to state laws or programs.
2. Secure website or application offered by the state—state law enforcement agencies may develop a secure website or application based on an extract of active NCIC stolen gun records.
3. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) E-Check application—the FBI has developed a form on the E-Check application for all FFLs to submit NCIC Gun File searches and directly receive results from NCIC. This will be separate from the form used to submit firearm background checks.

The NICS Section has worked with state Criminal Justice Information Services Systems Officers to determine which methods are available in each state. The information regarding access options in your state are located on a map accessible on the NICS Section's FFL website at: www.fbi.gov/nics-ffl. Additionally, the NICS Section has developed a frequently asked questions document. The document is posted to the NICS Section FFL website mentioned above.

For the NICS E-Check application, responses will only be returned if there is an exact match based on serial number. Your state may have additional requirements. Firearm serial numbers can match different firearms, even firearms with different makes and models. If a response is received, especially with multiple firearms listed, the record information should be reviewed closely to ensure the firearm presented for sale and the firearm reported stolen in NCIC reflect the same identifiers, e.g., make and model. In the event the firearm presented for sale also reflects further identifiers provided in a positive response potential match, the FFL would promptly notify ATF and the law enforcement agency with jurisdictional authority where the firearm is located.

FFLs will receive the following fields corresponding to the firearm:

- Serial number
- Make
- Model
- Caliber
- Type

FFLs can also expect to receive the following caveat:

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*****THIS INFORMATION IS BASED ON SEARCHING AN EXACT GUN SERIAL NUMBER*** GUN SERIAL NUMBER INFORMATION SUBMITTED RESULTED IN A POTENTIAL MATCH TO AN NCIC STOLEN GUN RECORD. PLEASE REVIEW THE RECORD IN ITS ENTIRETY. TO CONFIRM THE NCIC STOLEN GUN RECORD, PLEASE CONTACT LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE.**

If no matching NCIC record is returned, the FFL will receive an NCIC “NO RECORD” response indicating there were no stolen gun entries in the NCIC Gun File that matched the submitted serial number.

FFLs not currently registered with the FBI NICS E-Check may do so at www.nicsezcheckfbi.gov and select “Register to use the NICS E-Check”. FFLs will select the option of Stolen Gun Only and complete the electronic registration. Once completed and submitted the user will receive an e-mail with a username and a separate e-mail with a temporary password. The FFL user will then go back to www.nicsezcheckfbi.gov and select “Log on to the FBI NICS E-Check” and complete the necessary steps for access. Any questions can be submitted to the FBI NICS at www.fbi.gov/nics-ffl and select “Ask the NICS Section for Assistance”.

This new process, Stolen Gun Query, will be listed at the bottom of the current processes list shown in E-Check.

If your business is located in a Point of Contact (POC) state, it is recommended to contact the POC designated agency to determine if additional state processes exist.

If you have any questions, please contact the NICS Business Relations Team at 844-265-6716 or nic liaison@fbi.gov.