
Technical Procedure for Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS)

- 1.0 Purpose** – To outline the procedures for use of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS).
- 2.0 Scope** – This procedure applies to IBIS users, questioned evidence items, and known test fired items chosen for entry into IBIS.
- 3.0 Definitions**
- **Bullet** – A non-spherical projectile for use in a rifled barrel.
 - **Cartridge case** – The container for all other components which comprise a cartridge.
 - **Correlation** – An automatic process whereby two images are compared to determine their similarity.
 - **Land impression** – The impression on the bearing surface of a fired bullet created by the land of a rifled barrel.
 - **Primer** – The ignition component of a cartridge.
 - **Rifling** – Helical grooves in the bore of a firearm barrel to impart rotary motion to a projectile.
- 4.0 Equipment, Materials, and Reagents**
- IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System (located in the Raleigh laboratory)
 - IBIS Backup Tapes (located at the SBI in Raleigh)
 - NIST Standard Cartridge Case, Serial Number 166 (located in the Raleigh laboratory)
- 5.0 Procedure**
- 5.1 Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) BRASSTRAX™**
- 5.1.1** IBIS BRASSTRAX™ is a computerized system for acquiring and storing the images of cartridge cases of questioned origin and those fired from known firearms. IBIS captures digital images of the primer/firing pin area of fired cartridge cases using state-of-the-art optical and electronic technology. These images are then stored in databases and sophisticated algorithms are used to correlate the images against each other using filters such as caliber, rifling specifications, date of crime and date of entry. These correlations produce lists of possible associations with the highest scoring correlations at the top of the list. The IBIS Technician and/or Coordinator may then call up the images and compare side by side on a monitor. If a possible association is confirmed, the actual evidence items are compared by a Forensic Scientist on a comparison microscope for final determination.
- 5.1.2** When a possible association is confirmed between an item of evidence in the current custody of the Laboratory and a case no longer in the custody of the Laboratory, a request for resubmission of the associated item(s) shall be made to the appropriate agency via Laboratory report and phone/email. The agency will then have thirty (30) days to resubmit the pertinent item(s). If, at the end of the thirty days, the associated item(s) have not been resubmitted to the Laboratory, the original case may be returned.
- 5.1.3** The IBIS Technician shall have the following responsibilities:
- 5.1.3.1** Enter and correlate all IBIS entries.

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- 5.1.3.1.1** These procedures may be found in the IBIS Training Guide and Quick Reference Guide for IBIS Users. Copies of both guides are kept in the IBIS room of the Firearm and Tool Mark Section.
- 5.1.3.2** Report item entry information on a monthly, yearly, and ad hoc basis by using the report writer module of the IBIS system.
- 5.1.3.3** Perform backup of all IBIS information each week. At the beginning of each week, the back-up tape from the previous week shall be removed from the IBIS system. The next sequentially numbered tape shall be inserted into the tape drive. At the completion of a four (4) week cycle, the four tapes shall be taken to the designated off-site location, where they shall be stored and where the new four weeks set of backup tapes shall be retrieved. The new backup tapes shall be installed in the IBIS system for the following four (4) week period. Specific backup details and procedures may be found in the IBIS Procedures Manual. These backup procedures comply with the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and IBIS backup procedures.
- 5.1.4** All Forensic Scientists shall have the following responsibilities with respect to IBIS:
- 5.1.4.1** Know which calibers are acceptable for IBIS/BRASSTRAX™ entry:
- 25 Auto
 - 223 Remington/5.56 NATO
 - .32
 - 9mm
 - 7.62x39mm
 - 380
 - 357 Sig
 - 40/10mm
 - 44
 - 45
- 5.1.4.1.1** Cartridge cases fired in revolvers and rimfire firearms and fired shotshells are not currently being entered into IBIS/BRASSTRAX™. Specific cartridge case entries may be made for unique forensic circumstances or at the request of a court or a federal agency.
- 5.1.4.2** Know the preferred ammunition for test firing known firearms for entry of test cartridge cases into IBIS:
- 25 Auto - 50 gr. FMJ
 - 7.62 x 39mm – 123 gr. FMJ
 - 32 Auto - 71 gr. FMJ
 - 32 S&W - 88 gr. LRN
 - 32 S&W Long - 98 gr. LRN
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- 380 Auto - 95 gr. FMJ
- 9mm Luger - 115 or 124 gr. FMJ
- 38 Special - 158 gr. LRN, CCI - 158 gr. +P MJSP or 130 gr. FMJ
- 357 Magnum - Same as 38 Special
- 357 Sig - 125 gr. FMJ
- 40 S&W - 165 or 180 gr. JHP
- 10mm - 180 gr. JHP or 200 gr. FMJ
- 41 Magnum - 210 gr. LRN, 210 gr. JSP or 210 gr. JHP
- 44 Magnum - 44 Special 180 gr. JHP, 44 Special 180 gr. JHP, 44 Special 246 gr. LRN, 44 Special 246 gr. LRN
- 45 Auto - 230 gr. FMJ

5.1.4.2.1 Test fires are considered only as reference items in the Laboratory.

5.1.4.3 Screen all questioned evidence cartridge cases to determine suitability for entry into IBIS. If found suitable for entry according to the specifications herein, questioned cartridge cases shall be entered into IBIS.

5.1.4.3.1 Any evidence cartridge case selected for entry into IBIS shall have sufficient individual characteristics within the firing pin impression and/or within the breechface marks on the primer to effect a match. In addition, an evidence cartridge case with an ejector mark having sufficient individual characteristics may be entered into IBIS. Ejector mark image entry is currently limited to caliber 7.62 x 39mm cartridge cases.

5.1.4.3.2 Any information about the identification of evidence cartridge cases to each other and the selection of certain specimens for entry into IBIS shall be noted in the case notes in Forensic Advantage (FA).

If there are more than one matching evidence cartridge case suitable for entry into IBIS, the Forensic Scientist shall select the one bearing the most or the clearest individual characteristics for entry or more than one if different individual characteristics are found to have reproduced better on different evidence items.

5.1.4.3.3 For each evidence item selected for entry into IBIS, the Forensic Scientist shall provide the IBIS Technician with the following information: Laboratory Case Number, Q number, caliber, offense and date of offense, submitting agency and agency file number.

5.1.4.4 Verify test fired cartridge case selections for IBIS. This information shall be noted in the case notes. If found suitable for entry according to the specifications herein, test fired cartridge cases shall be entered into IBIS. If a questioned cartridge case has been identified to a firearm for which a test fire will be entered, the Forensic Scientist may choose to also enter the questioned cartridge case into IBIS based on the Forensic Scientist's training and experience.

5.1.4.5 Import the IBIS Correlation Results page into the Case Record Object Repository for cases in which a possible IBIS association has been confirmed.

5.1.5 The IBIS Coordinator, the IBIS Technician, or any Forensic Scientist with current IBIS certification shall have the following responsibilities with respect to IBIS entries:

5.1.5.1 Be responsible for screening the correlations of all test fired and evidence cartridge cases entered into IBIS. Cartridge case entries may be correlated outside the Default Correlation Region (NC, SC, TN, KY) by entering a manual correlation request and selecting specific geographical locations for correlations. A manual correlation request is done in cases where an investigative lead points to a specific location outside the Default Correlation Region.

5.1.5.2 In the BRASSTRAX™ database, mark the test or evidence cartridge case correlated against the database as the reference cartridge case.

5.1.5.2.1 Compare at least the top ten (10) entries on the correlation sheets.

5.1.5.2.2 If a possible association is found, advise those Forensic Scientists whose cases are involved and coordinate the examination of the reference cartridge case against the possible association cartridge case.

5.1.5.3 Be responsible for entering information into the IBIS Hit List (BRASSTRAX™).

5.1.5.4 Generate a report in FA for the case or cases involved which will notify the agencies of the possible association and request the return of the pertinent evidence. If the hit is a result of test fires submitted by an agency on an IBIS Test-Fire Submission Form, the agency shall be notified by phone and/or email to have the firearm submitted for examination.

5.2 IBIS Protocol

5.2.1 All evidence shall be submitted by using a Request for Examination Form with only one (1) agency case or incident per Request for Examination Form.

5.2.2 Test fired cartridge cases created by the submitting agency shall be submitted on an SBI-21. All mandatory fields (Case #, Incident/Recovery Date, Information on firearm) shall be completed. Multiple cases may be submitted on one IBIS Test-Fire Submission Form.

5.2.3 A firearm submitted as an "IBIS only" case that does not function and cannot be quickly repaired or that is not a crime weapon or cannot be linked to an individual (safe keeping, found property, no suspect, etc.) shall not be test fired for IBIS entry. An exception to this policy must be requested by the appropriate District Attorney, US Attorney, Judicial Official, or Federal/State Official and shall be approved by the Firearm and Tool Mark Section Forensic Scientist Manager.

5.2.4 If the date of offense is older than two (2) years, it shall be left to the discretion of the IBIS Coordinator or Section Forensic Scientist Manager as to whether evidence cartridge cases are entered into IBIS.

5.2.5 If the seizure date of a firearm is older than two (2) years, it shall be left to the discretion of the IBIS Coordinator or Section Forensic Scientist Manager as to whether test fires from that firearm are entered into IBIS.

5.2.6 Only the following calibers shall be accepted as IBIS ONLY cases:

- 25 Auto Pistol
- 7.62 x 39mm Rifle
- 223 Remington/5.56 NATO
- 32 Pistol
- 38/357 Pistol
- 9mm Pistol
- 380 Pistol
- 357 Sig
- 40 S&W Pistol
- 10mm Pistol
- 41 Pistol
- 44 Pistol
- 45 Pistol

5.2.6.1 At the discretion of the IBIS Coordinator or Section Forensic Scientist Manager, any unspecified caliber fired from a semiautomatic firearm may be entered.

5.2.7 Cartridge case-only cases and firearm cases that are submitted where the offense listed is IBIS ONLY (note: the submitting OCA # must be completed and the correct offense listed in the Additional Analyses Requested/Instructions block) may be assigned to the IBIS Technician.

5.2.8 Internal chain of custody

5.2.8.1 If evidence is turned over to the IBIS Technician and/or the entry is completed out of view of the Forensic Scientist, the transfer of evidence shall be documented.

5.2.8.2 Once the evidence item has been entered into the IBIS system, the technician shall then turn the evidence back over to the Forensic Scientist and the return transfer of evidence in the FA System shall be completed.

5.3 IBIS Report Wording

5.3.1 The suggested report wording listed below may be modified at the Forensic Scientist's discretion to reflect more accurately his/her conclusions. Any such modifications to report wording shall be reviewed and approved with the technical review.

5.3.2 Test Fired Cartridge Case Entered

- “A cartridge case test fired in the K-1 firearm will be entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). The IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System in operation at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Firearm and Tool Mark Section does not accept entry of fired bullets. Additional reports will follow if any forensic leads are developed.”

5.3.3 Test Fired Cartridge Cases Unsuitable for Entry

- “No test items were entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). Cartridge cases test fired in the K-1 firearm were unsuitable for IBIS entry. The IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System in operation at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Firearm and Tool Mark Section does not accept entry of fired bullets.”

5.3.4 Test Fired Cartridge Cases Not Entered, Unacceptable Caliber

- “No test items fired by the K-1 firearm were entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). Cartridge cases fired in caliber 22 Long Rifle firearms are not currently being entered into IBIS. The IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System in operation at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Firearm and Tool Mark Section does not accept entry of fired bullets.”

5.3.5 Revolvers

- “No test items were entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). Cartridge cases fired in revolvers are not entered into IBIS. The IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System in operation at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Firearm and Tool Mark Section does not accept entry of fired bullets.”

5.3.6 Evidence Bullet Not Entered

- “The Q-1 bullet was not entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). The IBIS BRASSTRAX™ System in operation at the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Firearm and Tool Mark Section does not accept entry of fired bullets.”

5.3.7 Evidence Cartridge Case Entered

- “The Q-1 fired cartridge case was entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). Additional reports will follow if any forensic leads are developed.”

5.3.8 Evidence Cartridge Case Not Entered, Unsuitable

- “The Q-1 fired cartridge case was unsuitable for entry into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS).”

5.3.9 Evidence Cartridge Case Not Entered, Unacceptable Caliber

- “The Q-1 fired cartridge case was not entered into the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS). Cartridge cases fired in caliber 38 Special firearms are not currently being entered into IBIS.”

5.3.10 IBIS Indicated a Possible Association

- “The Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) has indicated a possible association between North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Case R201299999 (Anytown PD Case 12-88888) and North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Case R201199999 (Anytown PD Case 11-88888). The item(s) in these cases should be resubmitted under the original North Carolina State Crime Laboratory Case numbers for comparison.”

5.4 IBIS Quality Control

- 5.4.1** The following describes the IBIS proficiency test program that shall be administered annually to each employee authorized to make entries into the IBIS system. This proficiency test program shall adhere to the Laboratory Procedure for Ensuring the Quality of Test Results.
- 5.4.2** The purpose of acquiring images of a National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Standard Cartridge Case, minimally on a yearly basis (calendar year), is to address two issues: (1) ensuring that the IBIS hardware and software is calibrated and performing properly, and (2) ensuring that authorized personnel are acquiring data according to established training and protocols. Over a period of time, the correlation scores of the NIST Standard Cartridge Case may be evaluated for trends in performance of the technician and IBIS system.
- 5.4.3** The NIST Standard Cartridge Case shall be entered into IBIS on a yearly basis, the correlation results of which shall be maintained in the employee’s proficiency test file.
- 5.4.4** Having obtained the NIST Standard Cartridge Case, the cartridge case shall be entered into IBIS as the IBIS “Benchmark” Cartridge Case. The entry shall be completed by all personnel authorized to use IBIS.
- 5.4.5** Having entered the “Benchmark” cartridge case into IBIS, the NIST Standard Cartridge Case shall be correlated against other BATFE IBIS sites.
- 5.4.6** The correlation results shall then be evaluated to determine the success of the entry. A successful proficiency test entry is one for which the previous year’s QC entry appears in the top ten of the correlation result list. An unsuccessful proficiency test shall be discussed with the IBIS Coordinator and possible solutions shall be agreed upon prior to any further data acquisitions. If, upon assessing the entry, the IBIS Coordinator determines that the problem arose from the entering employee, the IBIS Coordinator shall inform the employee of the issue and the employee shall reenter the QC sample. If it is determined that the problem arose from a system change or failure, Forensic Technology Inc. (FTI) shall be contacted and made aware of any issue.

5.4.7 For the purpose of proficiency testing, the IBIS Coordinator shall do the following:

5.4.7.1 Review the entry of the NIST Standard Cartridge Case to ensure that proper Laboratory and IBIS (user manual) procedures are followed.

5.4.7.2 Evaluate the image quality and correlation results of each item entered.

5.4.7.3 Review documentation and results with the IBIS Technician.

5.4.8 Results of the proficiency test shall be documented and maintained in the appropriate proficiency test file.

5.5 IBIS Computer Security and Incident Response Procedures

5.5.1 The IBIS system is part of a computer network run and maintained by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives as part of the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN). Because of this participation in the NIBIN network all possible precautions shall be exercised in preventing any unauthorized access of the IBIS system and any damage to the system that could affect the network. These precautions include reporting any security incidents to the BATFE as soon as possible. Access to the Database is limited to the IBIS Technician and those Forensic Scientists who have current IBIS Certification through the BATFE.

5.5.2 The IBIS Technician shall have the following responsibilities:

5.5.2.1 Notifying the IBIS Coordinator of any security problems or suspected security problems as well as any problems with the IBIS equipment, especially any equipment involved in network communications.

5.5.3 The IBIS Coordinator shall be the designated IBIS security officer and shall have the following responsibilities:

5.5.3.1 Notifying BATFE of any security issues or problems through the use of a Computer Security Incident Report Form. The form shall be faxed to the appropriate BATFE representative. The IBIS Coordinator shall keep a copy of any security form submitted to BATFE. The IBIS coordinator shall be responsible for following up with BATFE on any security incidents.

5.5.3.2 Notifying BATFE of all IBIS users through the use of a BATFE Information Access form (See Appendix I). This form shall be completed for each user of the IBIS system and faxed to BATFE for processing. The original of each form shall be kept on file with the IBIS Coordinator.

5.6 Standards and Controls – N/A

5.7 Calibration – N/A

5.8 Maintenance – For NIST Standard Cartridge Case maintenance information, see the Firearm and Tool Mark Section Technical Procedure for Instrument Calibration and Maintenance.

5.9 Sampling – N/A

5.10 Calculations – N/A

5.11 Uncertainty of Measurement – N/A

6.0 Limitations – N/A

7.0 Safety – Examinations performed in the Firearm and Tool Mark Section are inherently dangerous. These procedures involve hazardous chemicals, firearms, and ammunition. All hazardous procedures shall be performed in compliance with the State Crime Laboratory Safety Manual. If the examination involves a biohazard, the Forensic Scientist shall use proper personal protective equipment, such as eye protection, a lab coat, and/or gloves.

8.0 References

Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners. *Procedures Manual*. 2001.

IBIS Training Guide

IBIS Quick Reference Guide

IBIS Procedures Manual

9.0 Records

- FA Worksheets: Main, IBIS, Firearm, Bullet, Cartridge Case, Shotshell, and Disposition/Results
- Report from report writer module
- IBIS Maintenance Log
- Computer Security Incident Report Form

10.0 Attachments – N/A

Revision History		
Effective Date	Version Number	Reason
09/17/2012	1	Original Document
02/15/2013	2	Removed Raleigh from the header; 4.0 – added text in parentheses
11/15/2013	3	Added issuing authority to header; removed references to SBI-5 and SBI-21