



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BUREAU OF FORENSIC SERVICES
PHYSICAL EVIDENCE BULLETIN



NIBIN Program - Automated Firearms Evidence Imaging

INTRODUCTION

NIBIN is a computer-based image comparison system. This system allows for the intercomparison at local, state and national levels of fired cartridge cases and expended bullets (in some laboratories). This nationwide network is supported and maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). All of the field labs in the Bureau of Forensic Services are connected to this network allowing real time interchange of data with other NIBIN users. Figure 1 illustrates a typical database comparison

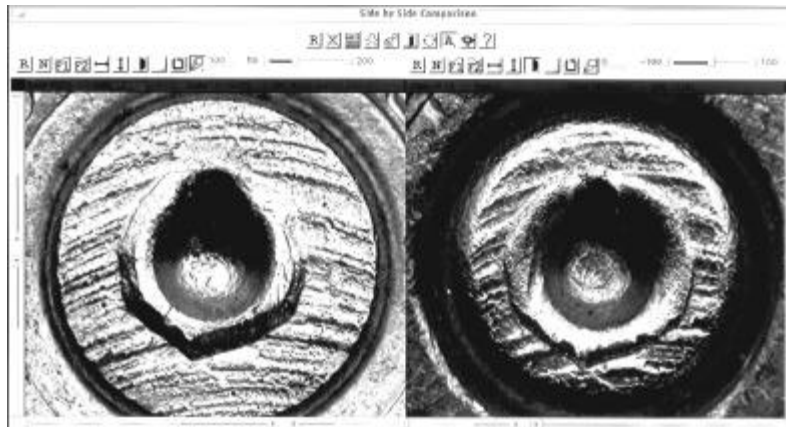


Figure 1. A comparison, on the NIBIN system, of two fired cartridge case breach face marks recovered from different localities

EVIDENCE ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

Firearms evidence from cases that have the potential for NIBIN linkage include:

- Homicides
- Attempted homicides
- Gang type shootings
- Drug related shootings
- Drive-by shootings
- Officer involved shootings (suspect's weapons)
- Robberies
- Subject's illegally carrying concealed weapons

Cartridge cases from revolvers and 22 caliber firearms are not normally suitable for NIBIN entry.

The Fresno, Riverside and Sacramento BFS laboratories will also have the capability of entering expended bullets into the database for comparison purposes.

**EVIDENCE
SUBMISSION**

Each case submitted specifically for NIBIN must be accompanied by a completed "PHYSICAL EVIDENCE SUBMISSION AND EXAMINATION request" form.

All firearms must be submitted unloaded and locked open if possible. Wire or other hard objects should not be inserted into the barrel or chamber. The firearm can then be placed into an envelope or box. The container must be tape sealed with initials across the seal, marked UNLOADED, and have the AGENCY NAME, CASE NUMBER, and the NAME OR INITIALS of the person who certified that the firearm was unloaded.

Whenever possible, magazines should be submitted along with the firearm. Magazines that have been removed from a firearm do not need to be unloaded.

Firearms that cannot be placed in a container will be accepted in an unwrapped condition. The firearm should be tagged with the appropriate case information.

Fired bullets and cartridge cases should be placed into a container that is tape sealed (with initials across the seal). The container must be labeled with the agency name and agency case number.

**CRIMINALISTICS
CASE EVIDENCE**

All relevant firearms evidence submitted as a criminalistics case will be routinely evaluated by the laboratory to determine the suitability for NIBIN entry. The relevant information and images will be entered and searched against the NIBIN database.

**NIBIN
REPORT**

Upon completion of the examination a NIBIN report will be issued.

NIBIN HIT

Confirmation of matching images can only be confirmed by direct microscopic comparison of the actual evidence. When the NIBIN system has potentially linked two cases the laboratory will obtain the evidence to confirm the NIBIN "hit". When this occurs a Physical Evidence Examination Report will be issued by the Laboratory.

**DISPOSITION
OF EVIDENCE**

All evidence (e.g. firearms, casings and bullets) will be returned to the submitting agency. Firearms, casings and bullets, if entered into the NIBIN system, should be retained by the submitting agency for future comparison if a "hit" is obtained.

All test fired evidence (casings and bullets) generated by the laboratory will be retained in the lab indefinitely for future reference.

**If you have any questions regarding the NIBIN program
Please call your local Bureau of Forensic Services Laboratory.**