

2022



NIBIN MROS

2022 GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)

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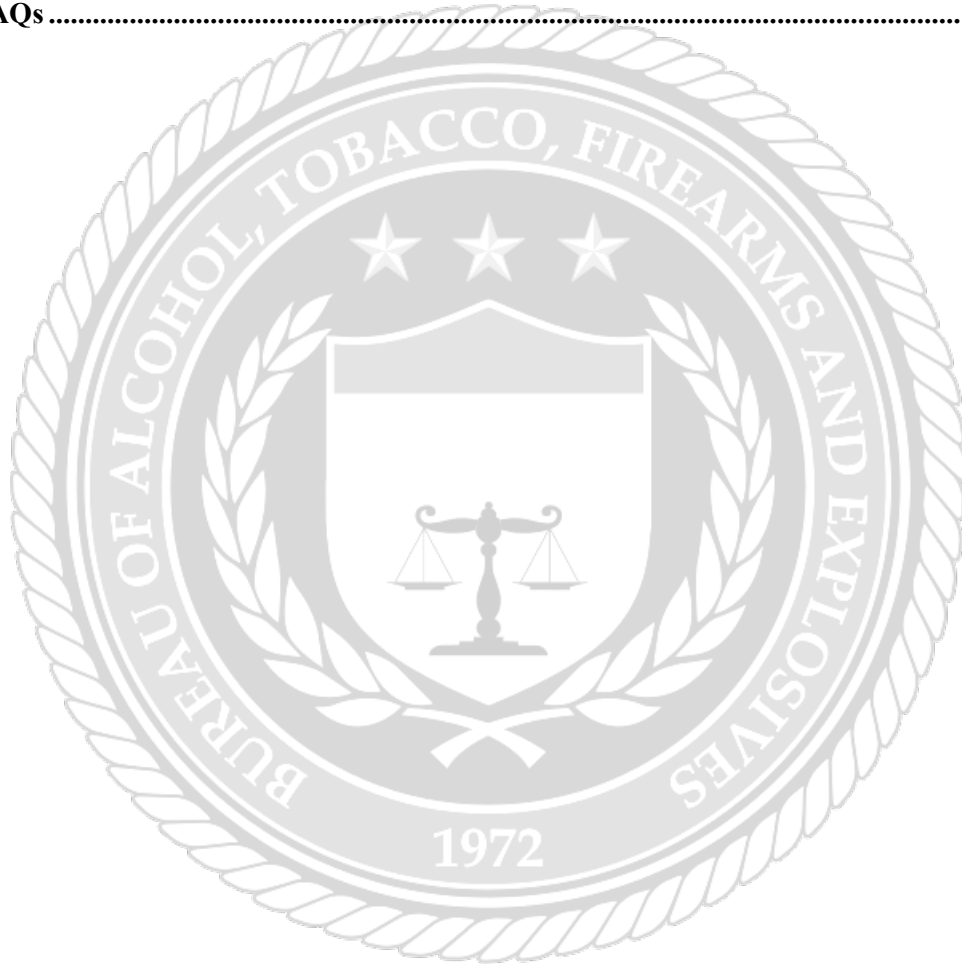
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OVERVIEW

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives (ATF), in conjunction with the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board (CGIGB), established the NIBIN Minimum Required Operating Standards (MROS) and compliance processes to assure the consistency, integrity, and success of NIBIN. These standards were implemented and issued to all NIBIN partner sites, who must be in compliance to retain access to NIBIN.

A Site must be in compliance with the MROS to retain access to NIBIN.

In order to ensure these standards are met, ATF will conduct Assessments every two years, with sites providing Self-Assessments during the alternating years.

The MROS Assessment is a comprehensive examination of the MROS Standards, as outlined in the MROS Assessment Document. The ATF Firearms Operations Division (FOD) conducts a query of all exhibits acquired by a given NIBIN Site during the 6-month timeframe immediately preceding the Assessment. The Site subsequently provides additional information, as requested.

The MROS Assessment evaluates a given NIBIN Site on all seven (7) Assessment Areas, which are categorized by the MROS Assessment Document as follows:

- ✓ #01 – Quality Assurance Program
- ✓ #02 – Organization & Personnel
- ✓ #03 – Facilities
- ✓ #04 – Evidence Control
- ✓ #05 – Procedures
 - 5.8 – Timely NIBIN Acquisition
 - Gold Standard: ≤ 2 Business Days
 - Silver Standard: ≤ 5 Business Days
 - Bronze Standard: ≤ 10 Business Days
 - Basic Compliance: ≤ 20 Business Days
 - 5.14 – NIBIN Lead Creation ≤ 2 Business days)
 - 5.17 – NIBIN Lead Dissemination ≤ 24 hours
- ✓ #06 – Improvement Plan
- ✓ #07 – Assessments

Please note, NIBIN Sites that have a partnership with the ATF NIBIN National Correlation & Training Center (NNCTC) are not evaluated on Standard 5.14 (NIBIN Lead Creation) or Standard 5.17 (NIBIN Lead Dissemination).

This **Guidance Document** is meant to provide some direction to our NIBIN partner sites pertaining to the FY2022 MROS Assessments and Self-Assessments, to include significant changes made during 2022.

MROS Assessment Areas

1 – Quality Assurance

2 – Organization & Personnel

3 – Facilities

4 – Evidence Control

5 – Procedures

6 – Improvement Plan

7 – Assessments

MROS 2022: INTRODUCTION


After conducting the MROS Assessments (previously termed “Audits”) during FY2019 and FY2020, the ATF Firearms Operations Division (FOD) received valuable feedback from our NIBIN partners.

The aforementioned feedback was presented to the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board (CGIGB) for further consideration, which ultimately resulted in revisions to the *MROS Assessment Document* and *MROS Standards*.

This **Guidance Document** is meant to provide an overview, highlight significant changes, provide direction pertaining to the upcoming FY2022 MROS Assessments, and address some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). If further detailed information is desired, it is recommended that our NIBIN partners thoroughly review the updated *Assessment Document* and *Standards*.

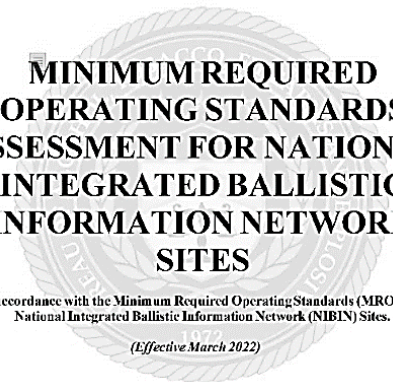
The updated MROS documents will be disseminated to all of ATF’s NIBIN partners in Summer 2022. Any NIBIN partner that has yet to receive these documents may obtain them by submitting a request to MROS@ATF.gov.

We look forward to working alongside our law enforcement partners to make NIBIN as efficient and successful as possible, thereby solving and potentially preventing violent gun crime in the process.



Department of Justice
Firearms Operations Division

MROS Assessment
Firearms Operations Division
Audit and Training Branch



MINIMUM REQUIRED OPERATING STANDARDS ASSESSMENT FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTIC INFORMATION NETWORK SITES

In accordance with the Minimum Required Operating Standards (MROS) for
National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Sites.
(Effective March 2022)

NIBIN Site:

Assessment Date:

Name	Signature
Assessor(s):	

As of March 01, 2022

operating standards that place specific requirements on all NIBIN Sites. Equivalent measures not outlined in this document may also meet the standard if determined sufficient through an assessment process.

EFFECTIVE DATE:
These standards shall take effect May 2022.

SECTION 1. SCOPE
The standards describe the minimum operating requirements that Sites accessing and utilizing NIBIN shall follow to ensure the quality and integrity of the ballistic data shared on the Network. These standards apply to all Sites accessing the NIBIN network.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS
As used in these standards, the following terms shall have the meanings specified:

- Accreditation** - Status achieved by an agency that indicates they meet a minimum level of performance mandated by the accrediting agency.
- Accuracy** - The degree of conformity of a measured quantity to its actual (true) value.
- Acquisition** - The digital imaging of various firearm-related markings present on cartridge cases into NIBIN.
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)** - ATF is the Federal agency administering the NIBIN network.
- Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners (AFTE)** - AFTE is the international professional organization for practitioners of Firearm and/or Toolmark Identification and has been dedicated to the exchange of information, methods and best practices, and the furtherance of research since its creation in 1969.
- Assessment** - An inspection used to evaluate, confirm, or verify activity related to quality.
- BRASSTRAX™ HD3D** - The current acquisition station developed by Forensic Technology that captures highly detailed images of cartridge cases, to include firing pin impressions on the primer, breech face, extractor and ejector markings. Also referred to as 'Trax' and 'Acquisition Station'.

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MROS 2022: WHAT'S NEW?

Several changes have been made to the MROS *Assessment Document* and *Standards* for 2022, some more significant than others.

The two most significant changes (Standard 5.8 – Timely Acquisition, and Standard 6 – Improvement Plan) are summarized in the sections below, followed by a detailed list of all revisions that were made.

Standard 5.8: Timely Acquisition

Timely Acquisition (MROS Standard #5.8) previously required IBIS acquisitions to be conducted within two (2) business days. After receiving feedback from the NIBIN Sites, the CGIGB opted to change this requirement to a Tiered Standard as follows:



		YES	NO	N/A
5.8	Does the site conduct timely acquisition of ballistic evidence, as follows:			
5.8.1	Gold Standard: Does the site perform acquisitions of all suitable ballistic evidence within two (2) business days of receipt at the site?			
5.8.2	Silver Standard: Does the site perform acquisitions of all suitable ballistic evidence within five (5) business days?			
5.8.3	Bronze Standard: Does the site perform acquisitions of all suitable ballistic evidence within ten (10) business days?			
5.8.4	Basic Compliance: Does the site perform acquisitions of all suitable ballistic evidence within twenty (20) business days?			



While Basic Compliance is achieved if acquisitions are conducted within twenty (20) business days, it's still important for NIBIN Sites to strive towards conducting acquisitions within two (2) business days, as previously required.

Please keep in mind, timely acquisitions contribute towards the efficiency of NIBIN and value of Investigative Leads for solving and preventing gun crime.

Standard 6: Improvement Plan

Standard No. 06, previously termed “Corrective Action Plan,” is now termed “Improvement Plan.” The Improvement Plan is, of course, only applicable once a NIBIN Site has undergone an MROS Assessment and found to be in noncompliance.

If found to be in noncompliance, a site has until the next MROS Assessment (Self-Assessments excluded) to achieve compliance.

STANDARD 6. IMPROVEMENT PLAN		YES	NO	N/A
6.1	Does the NIBIN Site establish and follow an improvement plan that addresses processes and procedures when the MROS are not met?			
6.2	Prior to implementation do all improvement plans have the documented approval of the NIBIN Program Administrator?			
6.3	Does the improvement plan, at a minimum, address the following:			
6.3.1	Identify possible causes for noncompliance with MROS?			
6.3.2	Address plans and measures to meet MROS?			
6.4	In reference to any findings of noncompliance, has the NIBIN Site conducted the following:			
6.4.1	First MROS Noncompliance: Did the site complete a written improvement plan and submit to ATF within thirty (30) days of receipt of Assessment report?			
6.4.2	Second (consecutive) MROS Noncompliance: Did the site participate in a NIBIN partnership conference with the ATF FOD Chief?			
6.4.3	Third (consecutive) MROS Noncompliance: Has the site been scheduled for an annual MROS Assessment cycle?			

Discussion
 This standard addresses only those improvement plans resulting from NIBIN analysis. The elements listed may be assessed through a review of existing site documentation. Moreover, this Standard does not preclude the site from having additional levels of approval of the improvement plan in addition to the NIBIN Program Administrator.

To successfully satisfy **Standard 6**, the site must demonstrate compliance with all of the subcategories of **Standard 6**.

Improvement Plan Stages

First MROS Noncompliance:

The NIBIN Site must complete a **Written Improvement Plan** on agency letterhead and submit via email (ATF Assessor and/or MROS@ATF.gov) within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Assessment Report. This document must address each area of noncompliance, as well as actions the site will take to achieve compliance.

Second MROS Noncompliance:

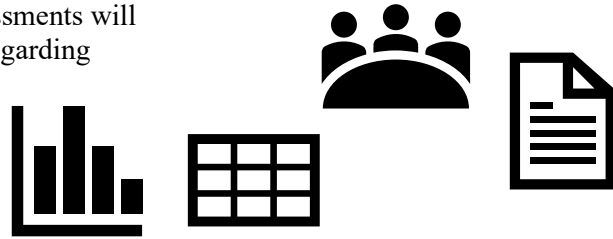
The NIBIN Site must participate in a **NIBIN Partnership Conference with the ATF FOD Chief** to discuss any areas found to be in noncompliance for consecutive Assessments.

Third MROS Noncompliance:

The NIBIN Site will be scheduled for an **Annual MROS Assessment Cycle** if found to be in noncompliance for a third consecutive Assessment.

MROS 2022: ASSESSMENTS

The 2022 MROS Assessments and Self-Assessments will commence in Summer 2022. Information regarding what to expect, which sites will be assessed, and the data assessment process can be found below. Assessment Agendas can be located in the pages that follow.



Assessment vs Self-Assessment

NEW for 2022, NIBIN partner sites will be expected to complete either an MROS Assessment or an MROS Self-Assessment. These two types of evaluations will alternate every other year.

An **MROS Assessment** is a comprehensive examination of the MROS *Standards*, as outlined in the MROS *Assessment Document*. This will be conducted in-person or virtually by an ATF Assessor.

The **MROS Self-Assessment** is limited in scope, as compared to the in-person Assessment. The NIBIN Site will complete a *Self-Assessment Worksheet*, which will be returned to ATF as a means by which to gauge site performance.

Which Sites will participate in an MROS Assessment, and which Sites will complete an MROS Self-Assessment?

Sites that conducted an MROS Self-Assessment (previously termed “Baseline”) in 2020 will participate in a 2022 MROS Assessment conducted by an ATF Assessor, either in-person or virtually.

Sites that conducted an MROS Assessment (previously termed “Audit”) in 2020 will complete a 2022 MROS Self-Assessment.

New sites that have operated for at least twelve (12) months will complete a 2022 MROS Self-Assessment.

New sites that have operated for less than twelve (12) months will conduct an MROS Self-Assessment during the year following twelve (12) months of operation.

What Data will be used?







ATF will conduct an IBIS Data Pull for the six (6) month timeframe immediately preceding the scheduled Assessment or Self-Assessment for a given NIBIN Site.

An ATF Assessor will subsequently send a **Data Request**** to the NIBIN Site, requesting the Date of Lead Dissemination for twenty-four (24) exhibits randomly selected by ATF FOD.

The combined data will be utilized to assess a Site’s performance with regards to the MROS Standards.

**NIBIN Sites partnered with the NNCTC or another agency pertaining to Correlations and Lead Disseminations do not need to complete the *Data Request*.








MROS 2022: ASSESSMENT AGENDA

1.  An ATF Assessor will **call** and/or **email** the NIBIN Site pertaining to notification and scheduling of the 2022 MROS Assessment, as well as provide copies of the *Assessment Document*, *Standards*, *Appendix D – List of Personnel*, and *Data Request* (if necessary).*
2.  The NIBIN Site will **review** the *Assessment Document* and *Standards*. No further action regarding these documents is necessary at this time. Please retain these documents for your reference.
3.  The NIBIN Site will **complete** the *Data Request* and *Appendix D – List of Personnel* and email the completed documents to MROS@ATF.gov and/or the assigned ATF Assessor within five (5) business days.
4.  The ATF Assessor will utilize the completed *Data Request* to create an *MROS Compliance Spreadsheet* to assess site performance.
5.  The ATF Assessor will conduct an **MROS Assessment** in-person or virtually, dependent upon NIBIN Site availability and/or current agency protocol.
6.  The ATF Assessor will complete the *MROS Assessment Document* and email the finalized document to the NIBIN Site within thirty (30) days.

* NIBIN Sites that are partnered with the ATF NNCTC or an outside agency with regards to Correlations and Lead Disseminations do not need to complete the *Data Request*.

****Please complete the *Data Request* (if necessary) and *Appendix D – List of Personnel*, and email the completed document to MROS@ATF.gov and/or the assigned ATF Assessor within five (5) business days.****

MROS 2022: SELF-ASSESSMENT AGENDA

1.  An ATF Assessor will **email** the NIBIN Site pertaining to the MROS Self-Assessment, to include copies of the *Assessment Document, Standards, Self-Assessment Worksheet, Appendix D – List of Personnel*, and *Data Request* (if necessary)*.
2.  The NIBIN Site will **review** the *Assessment Document* and *Standards*. No further action regarding these documents is necessary.
3.   The NIBIN Site will **complete** the *Self-Assessment Worksheet, Appendix D – List of Personnel*, and *Data Request*.* These completed document(s) must be emailed to MROS@ATF.gov and/or the assigned ATF Assessor within thirty (30) days.
4.  The ATF Assessor will utilize the completed *Data Request* to create an *MROS Compliance Spreadsheet* to assess site performance.
5.   The ATF Assessor will prepare an *MROS Self-Assessment Report* and email this report to the NIBIN Site within thirty (30) days.

* NIBIN Sites that are partnered with the ATF NNCTC or an outside agency with regards to Correlations and Lead Disseminations do not need to complete the *Data Request*.

****Please complete the *Self-Assessment Worksheet, Appendix D – List of Personnel*, and the *Data Request* (if necessary), and email these documents to MROS@ATF.gov and/or the assigned ATF Assessor within thirty (30) days.****

MROS: FAQs

While conducting the FY2019 & FY2020 MROS Assessments and communicating with our NIBIN partners, ATF FOD encountered some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) pertaining to the MROS. We would like to address these common questions and issues in the section that follows.



If you have any additional questions and/or concerns, please email: MROS@ATF.gov.

Second Correlation Review

Multiple NIBIN Sites inquired about the term “Second Correlation Review” (or “Secondary Review”), as required by MROS Standard 5.14:

5.14 Are both the initial and secondary correlation reviews of NIBIN Leads completed within two (2) business days of the acquisition of the ballistic images of the item of evidence?

****A Second Correlation Review is not a microscopic confirmation by a Firearms Examiner (ie., “NIBIN Hit”)****

Secondary Review – The process that ensures the work performed meets quality standards, and **requires two qualified individuals to concur on the finding.** For NIBIN, ATF defines secondary review as a second correlation review or examination by a trained IBIS Technician and/or Firearms Examiner using MATCHPOINT™.

-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 10

NIBIN Lead vs. NIBIN Hit

There is still some confusion with regards to a NIBIN Lead vs. NIBIN Hit, and how to properly document each in IBIS. The information that follows can be located in the MROS *Assessment Document*. If further clarification is needed, please email: MROS@ATF.gov.

NIBIN Lead – An **unconfirmed**, potential association between two or more pieces of firearm ballistic evidence based on a correlation review of the digital images in the NIBIN database by either a Firearms Examiner or a trained NIBIN Technician. A NIBIN Lead is intended to provide a lead for investigative purposes.

-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 09

NIBIN Hit – The result of two or more firearms ballistic evidence acquisitions that have been **confirmed** as a match by a Firearms Examiner. NIBIN Hits are based on correlation review of digital images using MATCHPOINT PLUS™ and **microscopic confirmation by a Firearms Examiner**. This information/intelligence can be used for investigative purposes and is suitable for court purposes.

-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 09

Creating Leads/Hits in NIBIN:

A **NIBIN Lead** is created when the “**crosshairs**” icon is activated and the user clicks “OK.” This should be completed upon concurrence from the secondary correlation review, which Standard 5.14 states must occur within two (2) business days of acquisition.

A **NIBIN Hit** is documented when the confirmation date is recorded in the “**Date**” field.

-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 32



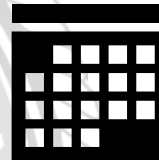
Receipt Date

During the FY2019 and FY2020 MROS Site Assessments, multiple sites expressed confusion pertaining to the “Receipt Date.” In many instances, the wrong date was being utilized by the NIBIN Site.

Receipt Date – The date evidence for NIBIN entry is **first accessible** by a laboratory/NIBIN Site for **any** forensic analysis (i.e, DNA, Latent Fingerprints, NIBIN, etc.)

-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 10

****The Receipt Date is not the date first accessible by the NIBIN/Firearms Section.****



The receipt date is defined as the date ballistic evidence (recovered firearm or fired cartridge case) is initially submitted and/or delivered, to the NIBIN Site or its parent laboratory, in the case of those sites that are a component of a larger forensic system, for any forensic analysis (e.g. DNA, Latent Fingerprints, NIBIN, etc.)

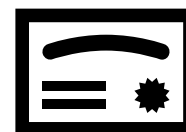
-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 27

IBIS Minimum Training Requirements

This section is intended to provide further clarification as it relates to MROS Training Requirements.

Qualified NIBIN User – A Technician and/or Firearms Examiner trained by either ATF, Forensic Technology, or a NIBIN Authorized Trainer (NAT) program to perform acquisition and/or correlation reviews of ballistic images on the national network.

-MROS Assessment Document, Pg. 10



Acquisition Training Requirements?

- ✓ IBIS Acquisition Training by ATF
- ✓ IBIS Acquisition Training by *Forensic Technology, inc.*
- ✓ IBIS Acquisition Training by a NIBIN Authorized Trainer (NAT)
- ✓ IBIS Acquisition Training Waiver from ATF FOD

Qualified NIBIN Users must fulfill at least one of the above training requirements.

Correlation Training Requirements?

- ✓ IBIS Acquisition & Correlation Training by ATF
- ✓ IBIS Acquisition & Correlation Training by *Forensic Technology, inc.*
- ✓ IBIS Correlation Training Waiver from ATF FOD

Qualified NIBIN Users must fulfill at least one of the above training requirements.

Exemptions?

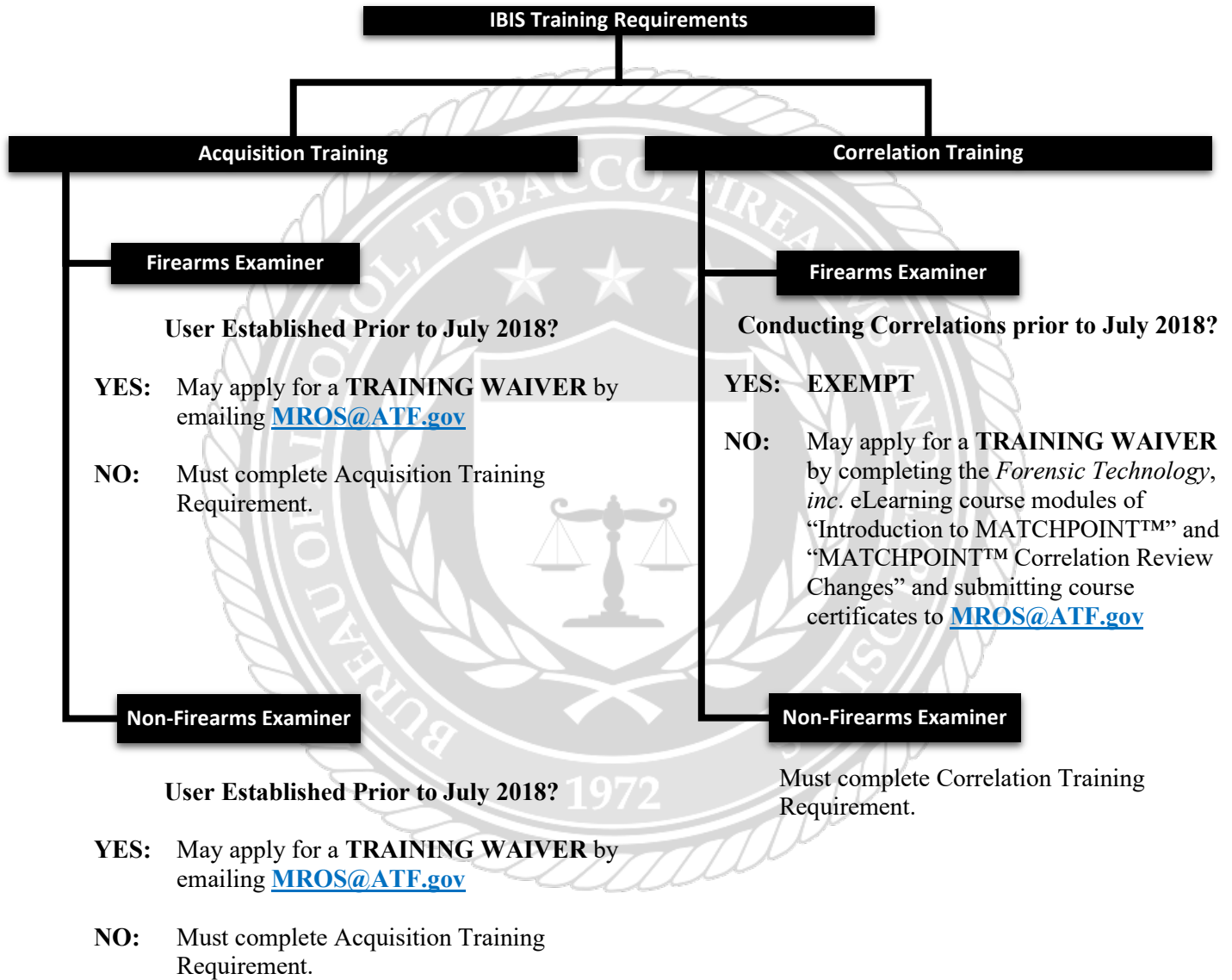
Current and experienced **Firearms Examiners** that commenced performing correlations **prior to July 2018** are **exempt** from the **Correlation Training** requirement.

Waivers?

Current and experienced **NIBIN Users** est. prior to July 2018 may be exempt from the **Acquisition Training** requirement and may submit a Training Waiver request to: MROS@ATF.gov


Firearms Examiners that began conducting correlations **subsequent to July 2018** may receive a waiver for the **Correlations Training** requirement by completing the *Forensic Technology, inc.* eLearning course modules of *Introduction to MATCHPOINT™* and *MATCHPOINT™ Correlation Review Changes*. Upon completion, please submit waiver request and course certificates to MROS@ATF.gov

Who must complete the Training Requirement? Who is Exempt? Who may apply for a Training Waiver?



Timely Acquisition (Standard #5.8) Waiver

There were some inquiries pertaining to the Waiver process reference **Standard No. 5.8 – Timely Acquisition**. The information that follows is derived from the *Assessment Document*.

	<p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">MROS Assessment Firearms Operations Division Audit and Training Branch</p> <p>NIBIN Sites that cannot comply with the Standard outlined above for the prescribed 80% due to reasonable circumstances (i.e., significant other forensic analysis, extraordinary hardships, etc.) may request a waiver through ATF from the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board (NCGIGB) to continue operating and accessing NIBIN. The waiver will require an explanation of the circumstances and a reasonable deviation proposal. Please note that the waiver is not intended to eliminate the requirement due to standard procedures or circumstances and will be reviewed by the NCGIGB. A waiver request must be on agency letterhead and addressed to the NCGIGB, thru the Chief, ATF FOD. The waiver request may be submitted via email to MROS@ATF.gov. A waiver issued by the NCGIGB is not transportable to another NIBIN Site and is determined on a case by case basis.</p> <p>In the event that a NIBIN Site has been granted a waiver, the assessment shall be based on the timeline described in the waiver. The waiver shall be noted in the comment section below and a copy of the waiver shall be included as an appendix to this document.</p> <p><u>Comment</u></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>
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Timely Acquisition Waiver Process

1. Waiver Request

A Waiver Request must be written on agency letterhead, addressed to the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board (NCGIGB), thru the Chief, ATF Firearms Operations Division (FOD).

This Waiver Request must include an explanation of the circumstances resulting in MROS noncompliance, and a reasonable deviation proposal.

Please submit the Waiver Request to: MROS@ATF.gov

2. Waiver Reviewed by NCGIGB

3. Waiver Issuance or Declination

Following a decision from the NCGIGB, ATF FOD will either issue a Waiver or Declination.