

NIBIN Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where do I start?
 - Start with timeliness at the NIBIN site. Getting the NIBIN site (often a forensic lab) to accept they need to change is the biggest challenge for NIBIN Programs in many areas. The NIBIN Branch defines timeliness as 48 hours from incident to NIBIN hit/lead dissemination.
2. How do I request additional NIBIN resources or a site visit from NIBIN Branch Experts?
 - The first step is for the local ATF Field Office to complete a NIBIN Self-Assessment 2 Part Form. Field Division leadership should then coordinate the request through the NIBIN Branch.
3. How do I address the backlog?
 - Don't focus the backlog... Develop processes so you can remain current, implement the processes starting with the most recent evidence and work backwards. The backlog will eventually take care of itself.
4. Should we investigate every NIBIN hit?
 - There is no way ATF or even the local police department can or should investigate every NIBIN hit. The key is to triage, focusing on the NIBIN Hits that can provide you information to arrest shooters.
5. Do I need to confirm every hit?
 - Confirmation is not required by ATF. You can confirm every hit if you have the resources, but if not, treat it like a presumptive drug test in the field. Have the hits confirmed when needed. Of course, you have to train your personnel to a point that you can trust them to provide the unconfirmed hits.
6. What shootings do we prioritize for entry?
 - Prioritize all shootings equally. You don't know which shootings are going to solve the big cases. Also, you have witnesses at lesser shootings. Even more important is addressing the shooters before they commit the murder. Everything goes in immediately. Cases can be made even when no gun is ever recovered.
7. Do we put solved shootings into NIBIN?
 - Yes... just because your case is already solved, doesn't mean you can't solve other crimes or even reinforce your current case.
8. Are historical cases the way to go?
 - RICO investigations are great, but they are not the only option. Determine what will work in your area to quickly identify shooters and get them off the streets before they commit serious crimes tomorrow.
9. How important is timeliness?
 - Timeliness is everything! Shots fired cases go cold when they hit the ground. Aggravated Assault with Bodily injury goes cold in less than a week. Murders go cold in a few weeks. We need to jump on these before the shooter commits another shooting and possibly kills an innocent. We owe this to the public.
10. Will my lab lose accreditation?
 - There is nothing in the base accreditation guidelines that would prohibit a change in approach that would allow for comprehensive data collection and timeliness. Accredited laboratories at local and state levels have been successful in making changes to their processes that has allowed them to be much more successful in NIBIN and at the same time, protecting the integrity of the evidence and maintain their accreditation.