

ATF Outreach Programs



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ATF has had outreach programs in place for more than 10 years, beginning with the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program and expanding to include industry outreach and interaction with other professional organizations.

Outreach activities within ATF take a variety of forms: presentations to schoolchildren and the general public to promote public safety and prevent violence; partnerships with industry members and professional organizations to meet common goals; and training and other services offered to employees of other Federal, State, and local agencies to improve their ability to do their jobs.

School-Based Outreach.

The purpose of ATF's contacts with schools is multifaceted: to encourage positive relationships with law enforcement personnel; to inform students, educators, and parents about ATF programs in order to discourage violence and promote community safety; and to emphasize the importance of staying in school. Historically, ATF has participated in the Gang Resistance Education and Training Program; more than 10,000 officers and nearly 4 million children have received instruction in the program, and ATF expects his training will have a long-term impact on gang prevention. Other contacts with schools are more informal, and topics of discussion are at the discretion of the local offices. Common topics of discussion involve an overview of ATF's history and mission, safety issues involving firearms and explosives (including explosives detection training), terrorism awareness, gang activity, guns and drugs, and dealing with bomb threats. With respect to information about bomb threats, ATF and the Department of Education have developed a CD-ROM entitled "Bomb Threat Response: An Interactive Planning Tool for Schools." The CD-ROM is an interactive training and planning tool that schools use to develop their own bomb threat response plans, which include reaching out to local emergency response personnel, as well as to ATF, for assistance in planning.

Recruitment For Specialized Positions.

- ATF participates in job fairs and distributes information about ATF to educate the public about career opportunities. Specialized positions for which ATF actively recruits are special agents, industry operations investigators, chemists, and forensic specialists.
- ATF focuses on seniors at accredited colleges and universities, military personnel with college degrees, experienced law enforcement officers, and scientists and chemists within private industry.

- ATF also provides internship programs for high school and college students as part of the Student Educational Employment Program, which consists of two components, the Student Temporary Employment Program and the Student Career Experience Program. For further information, call 202-927-4770.

Community-Based Outreach.

Community based outreach consists of prevention and deterrence efforts, as well as services for the public.

- ATF Website. ATF maintains a website, <http://www.atf.gov>, where the public and industry members can obtain information about the Bureau and the laws it enforces, as well as publications and forms.
- ATF Hotlines. ATF operates several hotlines by which the public can contact the Bureau to report violations that fall within ATF's jurisdiction.
 - Firearms Violations: 1-800-ATF-GUNS (1-800-283-4867)
 - Arson Violations: 1-888-ATF-FIRE (1-888-283-3473)
 - Explosives Violations, and Theft or Loss of Explosives: 1-888-ATF-BOMB (1-888-283-2662)
 - Suspicious Activity Involving Explosives or Ammonium Nitrate; 1-800-800-3855
 - Stolen, Hijacked, or Seized Cigarettes: 1-800-659-6242
 - Other Criminal Activity: 1-888-ATF-TIPS (1-888-283-8477)
- Interaction with Public Groups. Individual field divisions interact with community groups to inform them about ATF's mission. Topics might include firearms and explosives safety, youth violence, terrorism awareness, etc.
- Boys and Girls Clubs of America. In 2004, ATF announced the renewal of the long-established partnership between ATF and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). The agreement between the two agencies is intended to help young people avoid negative influences and develop more positive attitudes toward police officers. ATF will work with the BGCA to assess existing resources and opportunities across the country and will develop local action plans to meet communities' needs.
- Law Enforcement Exploring. ATF is involved with Law Enforcement Exploring, a program for young adults between 14 and 20 that is designed to give them hands-on experience in the law enforcement profession. ATF participates in familiarization visits with groups of Explorers, providing information or demonstrations that involve canine detections, National Response Team (NRT) operations, simulated

situational firearms training, firearms in ATF custody, undercover operations, the Medic Program, and the role of industry operations in ATF's law enforcement investigations. The Bureau also participates in the biennial Law Enforcement Exploring Conference in coordination with other Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. Students are given the opportunity to participate in practical exercises, such as arrest and search techniques, bomb threat responses, crime prevention, and hostage negotiation, among others.

- Coordination With State and Local Regulatory Agencies. In support of ATF's regulatory mission, industry operations employees may meet with State and local agencies and zoning boards to discuss regulations and ordinances in order to determine whether licensee applicants can legally operate within their jurisdiction. Meetings must be held on a county-to-county basis because of substantial differences in laws and ordinances from one locality to another. ATF also closely coordinates with State regulatory agencies to detect and prevent diversion of firearms and explosives from legal commerce.
- Preventing Explosives Incidents. ATF and The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) are promoting an awareness program for vendors of ammonium nitrate, which can be used to make explosives. Vendors are advised to keep records, obtain identification from suspicious individuals who attempt to purchase ammonium nitrate, and report suspicious activity to ATF. They are also provided information about protecting their businesses from theft so that ammonium nitrate cannot be obtained by criminals. Media material such as posters, pamphlets, and a video produced by TFI and sponsored by ATF are distributed to the fertilizer dealers and are supplemented with "in person" meetings to raise awareness and elicit their cooperation. ATF also works with the explosives industry to identify risks that would allow products to be used for criminal or terrorist purposes.
- Victim/Witness Services. Through designated contacts in each field division, ATF provides assistance to victims and witnesses of crimes in accordance with congressional mandates and Department of Justice guidelines. ATF is mandated to identify all victims or witnesses; notify individuals of their status as a victim or witness and of the status of the applicable case; treat each person with respect and dignity; refer victims for appropriate services as needed and if requested, ensure reasonable security for any victim or witness who is threatened; and assist in the prompt return of any property used as evidence.
- Ombudsman Services. ATF provides services to the public and to other agencies through the Office of the Ombudsman.

- Through its Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Support and Chaplain Programs, ATF provides support to family members of Bureau employees, as well as for employees of State and local agencies and their families who have experienced critical incidents. Requests for State and local outreach services are initiated by ATF field division supervisors, and may include one-on-one and/or group crisis interventions, and referral resources for additional assistance.
- The Office of the Ombudsman participates in collaborative efforts and offers consultation with other Federal agencies to either initiate or enhance their programs or CISM responses. ATF assists other Justice agencies with death notifications and support for survivors when necessary.
- The Office of the Ombudsman serves as a clearinghouse for external problems that are brought to the attention of the agency and refers inquiries or complaints to appropriate offices for resolution.

Industry Operations.

ATF works in partnership with the regulated industries to prevent firearms and explosives from being diverted to individuals who are prohibited from possessing them.

- Firearms and Explosives Seminars. ATF periodically holds seminars for industry members. These seminars are usually held during or after normal business hours in large metropolitan areas, where ATF can draw attendees not only from the host city but from surrounding communities and counties as well. There are typically representatives from the division or field office, as well as members of ATF's Office of Chief Counsel, and a representative for the State or Chief Law Enforcement Officer.
- National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). ATF has partnered with the NSSF and sponsored a "Don't Lie For The Other Guy" campaign. The campaign targets the problem of illegal diversion of firearms through educational materials, such as posters, signs, and videos. For example, videos provide examples of qualifying questions that salespeople can ask purchasers to deter straw purchases. These materials are distributed free to Federal firearms licensees (FFLs) and are provided by the NSSF.
- Auctioneering Seminars. Auctioneering schools will often invite an ATF representative to give a presentation as part of their course curriculum. The issues that involve whether an auctioneer is required to be an FFL can be complex. Rather than having the faculty from the auctioneering school try to interpret the regulations, an inspector may

be requested. Additionally, there are several professional auctioneering associations that have sought ATF representation at their annual conventions.

- Retailer Specific Seminars. ATF has been called upon to present seminars for single licensees or groups of licensees under the same ownership. Industry operations inspectors will usually conduct the seminar at the retailer's premises or at another location arranged by the licensee and will discuss adherence to laws and regulations in areas such as storage and record keeping. These seminars can also occur when a retailer opens a business in a new area and new salespeople are hired.
- Conventions. Some organizers of gun shows and pawnbroker conventions, as well as those associated with the explosives industry, have invited ATF to provide an informational booth at their conventions to promote goodwill and deter illegal activity. These booths are run by experienced inspectors who answer a variety of questions (e.g., concerning collectors' licensees, National Firearms Act weapons, and regulations pertaining to the firearms and explosives industries). ATF attends the annual Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show, where the Bureau provides an information booth in order to establish contacts and answer questions from exhibitors and attendees. ATF also holds seminars on current issues during the show and takes part in panel discussions and question and answer sessions.
- Continuing Education for Explosives and Fireworks Licensees/Permittees. Some States require licensees and permittees to acquire continuing education credits as a condition of their State license. To satisfy the requirements of the continuing education, many States will hold seminars and award credits for attendance. ATF is often requested to give presentations during these seminars.
- Tobacco Industry Partnerships. ATF has partnered with tobacco product manufacturers to help identify and stop contraband cigarette trafficking activity. Current investigations have identified several instances of terrorist groups that use the profits from cigarette trafficking to support their organizations and activities. Working with the tobacco product manufacturers, ATF helps train State and local law enforcement in identifying counterfeit cigarettes and tax stamps in order to thoroughly investigate the interstate trafficking of tobacco products.

Law Enforcement and Regulatory Agencies, Industry Trade Associations, Scientific Organizations, and Universities.

ATF continues to partner with many Federal, State, and local organizations and intends to pursue future beneficial partnerships with different agencies to meet common goals.

- Federal, State, and local partnerships include the following organizations:
 - Department of Defense Technical Support Working Group
 - Federal Aviation Administration
 - Consumer Product Safety Commission
 - Department of Homeland Security
 - Department of Transportation
 - Mine Safety and Health Administration
 - Department of Defense
 - Occupational Safety and Health Administration
 - Department of State
 - Transportation Security Administration
 - Central Intelligence Agency
 - U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service
 - Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigations Board
 - U.S. Forest Service
 - U.S. Coast Guard
 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection
 - Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
 - Department of Education
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency
 - Canadian Police College
 - University of Maryland – Department of Fire Protection Engineering
 - John Hopkins University
 - National Institute of Standards and Technology
 - Firearms Importers Roundtable
 - National Firearms Act Trade and Collectors Association
 - State and Local Police Departments Nationwide
 - State firearms and regulatory agencies
 - Other Department of Justice agencies (e.g., Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Marshals).
- The following are some of the professional organizations with which ATF partners:
 - American Pyrotechnics Association
 - Institute of Makers of Explosives

- Pyrotechnics Guild International
- International Society of Explosives Engineers
- The Fertilizer Institute
- Association of American Plant Food Control Officials
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Association of Bomb Technicians and Investigators
- National Fire Protection Association
- International Physical Security Forum
- Women in Federal Law Enforcement
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association
- National Native American Law Enforcement Association
- National Asian Peace Officers Association
- National Shooting Sports Foundation
- International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors

Professional Training Services.

ATF provides training and services for professional organizations, including Federal, State, local, and international agencies. Training is intended to familiarize participants with ATF's mission, expertise, and available resources related to the enforcement of alcohol, tobacco, firearms, and explosives laws and regulations. This familiarization with ATF capabilities, techniques, and practices also helps facilitate collaboration during joint investigations and ensure more effective use of resources.

- Ballistics Comparison. The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Program combines advanced forensic ballistics imaging and analysis capable of identifying and matching evidence from one or more crime scenes. The NIBIN Program consists of ATF and Federal, State, and local agencies working together against violent crime. NIBIN data, which is searchable in minutes, provides invaluable information to law enforcement authorities and ultimately contributes to the solving of firearms-related shooting incidents by providing investigative information not obtainable by other means.
- Federal, State, Local, and International Training and Services. ATF provides various training opportunities and services for Federal, State, local, and international agencies. Some of the services provided include postblast and other explosives training, firearms familiarization skills and nomenclature training, legal training on Federal firearms and explosives laws, arson investigation training, training canines for State and local law enforcement agencies, assistance at various State and local

investigation scenes, tracing techniques for local and State agencies, laboratory services (ballistic comparison, toolmark examination and training, and trace evidence), firearms technology services (e.g., National Firearms Act determinations), explosives and arson training for local fire departments and State fire marshals, and use of ATF resources such as the National Response Team vehicle.

- Summary of Courses. Courses that are routinely offered to professional organizations and Federal, State, and local agencies are listed below, either exclusively or in conjunction with ATF training. ATF also provides international training through the International Law Enforcement Academy via a continuing partnership with the Department of State.
 - Advanced Cause and Origin/Courtroom Techniques. The program is designed to enhance the origin and cause investigative skills of the public service fire investigator.
 - Advanced Explosives Destruction Techniques. The training was developed to reduce the number of injuries and deaths resulting from the destruction of various explosive materials.
 - Advanced Explosives Investigative Techniques. The course is designed to enhance student proficiency in conducting explosives investigations and coordinating investigative activities.
 - Alcohol and Tobacco Diversion. This course examines the common indicators of alcohol and tobacco diversion and highlights common schemes employed to divert taxpaid products.
 - Arson for Prosecutors. This course is designed to strengthen the cooperation between investigators and prosecutors involved in the investigation of arson and related crimes.
 - Canine Training Programs. The explosives and accelerant detection canine training programs offered at the Canine Training Center in Front Royal, Virginia, provide a 16-week training program for State and local law enforcement, international law enforcement agencies, as well as other Federal agencies. Trained canine teams (dogs and handlers) help combat the explosives threat in the United States and abroad, and the arson threat domestically.
 - Cognitive Interviewing. This course presents fundamental principles of the cognitive interview, an innovative method used to enhance the recollection of victims and witnesses in an investigative interview.
 - Complex Arson Investigation Techniques. This program is designed to enhance the investigative skills of public service officials actively involved in profit motivated and complex arson investigations.

- Critical Incident Management Training. This course is designed to provide students with command and control and resource management skills needed in emergency situations.
- Firearms Trafficking Techniques. This course is designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and resources to identify, investigate, and aid in the prosecution of persons who unlawfully divert firearms to juveniles or criminals.
- National Firearms Examiners Academy. This rigorous year long training was designed for apprentice/entry level firearm and toolmark examiners from Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. The curriculum is composed of the fundamentals of firearms and toolmark examinations and serves as a basis for the trainee, under supervision, to develop into a qualified examiner. This course of instruction has become the benchmark for training in this field.
- Postblast Investigative Techniques. This course was designed to provide basic bomb blast investigative training to State and local investigators, outline the resources available from ATF, and promote a cooperative response to explosives incidents.
- Project Safe Neighborhoods. This is a multifaceted training approach that combines focused onsite training with larger conference events. These conferences provide instructional support to law enforcement managers, investigators, prosecutors, and uniformed officers. It also provides a collaborative opportunity to gain new insights into techniques and trends associated with the fight against violent crime.
- Serial Number Restoration. This class supports the identification and tracing of firearms recovered in firearms investigations and trains students to utilize various methods for raising obliterated serial numbers from firearms.

Information

For more information on ATF's programs, please refer to the ATF Web site (www.atf.gov), or contact the Office of Public Affairs at 202-927-8500.

