

October 10, 2023

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**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****SUBJECT: POLICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES INVOLVING
STOLEN FIREARMS**

The purpose of this informal report is to discuss the Police Department's investigative procedures as they pertain to stolen firearms, releasing firearms, and the intelligence function.

Stolen Firearms

When a firearm is abandoned or potentially involved in a criminal offense, the firearm will be run through the Police Information Center (PIC) to determine whether the firearm has been reported stolen. If the firearm is reported to be stolen, then an investigation will be conducted, and the firearm will be confiscated. All firearms received will be entered into E-Trace, an ATF-managed database that attempts to identify the history and original purchaser of the gun. The firearm is also run through the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). NIBIN matches fired cartridge casings to the guns from which they were fired and attempts to link them to shootings. After a thorough investigation, cases that involved a stolen firearm with an identified owner will be returned. If the firearm is labeled as evidence, then it will be kept in the property room until the case is fully adjudicated through the courts.

Releasing Firearms

The property room staff will send a certified letter to the lawful owner. When the owner arrives to claim the firearm, he/she will be identified by a current government identification card, and a criminal history check will be completed by PIC before the firearm is released. Prior to any firearm being released from the property room, the property room staff will check that the firearm is not the subject of any other pending criminal case. If a stolen and recovered firearm is not claimed by the owner after a certified letter has been sent and attempts have been made to contact the owner, then it will be destroyed after 90 days.

Intelligence Function

The recent approval of two NIBIN analysts will better assist the department in handling cases where a firearm was discharged. The two new analysts will be tasked with researching NIBIN and E-Trace leads to create workable intelligence for officers and detectives working on shooting investigations. For example, a NIBIN lead can provide the investigator with information that a particular firearm was used in multiple offenses or identify individuals linked to a group of gun offenses. The police department also has a Gun Violence Unit that is assigned to the majority of cases where a firearm has been discharged and a person was hit. This is to improve our ability to link shootings together that occur throughout the city.

If you have any questions about the procedures involving the department investigating and handling stolen firearms, or the budget for gun intelligence, please contact Chief Neil Noakes at Neil.Noakes@fortworthtexas.gov or 817-392-4212.

**David Cooke
City Manager**