

TREASURY



NEWS

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TREASURY RELEASES REPORT ON CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

The Treasury Department on Thursday released a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) report on the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), which is designed to prevent potentially dangerous criminals from buying firearms from licensed gun dealers. The system enables law enforcement to conduct pre-sale background checks on gun purchasers to determine whether a purchaser is prohibited from possessing a gun under Federal law prior to the sale.

The NICS report details actions taken by ATF as part of the permanent provisions of the Brady law that became effective on November 30, 1998. ATF regulates Federal firearm licensees (FFLs) who access NICS and has authority to enforce the Gun Control Act including the Brady law.

"The instant background check program is one of the ways we're working with State and local law enforcement agencies to keep guns out of the hands of potentially dangerous people," said Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. Summers.

In implementing the permanent provisions of the Brady law, last year ATF issued regulations governing Federal firearms licensees (FFLs) participation in NICS. The law currently requires FFLs including pawnbrokers, to initiate a criminal background check through NICS prior to selling or transferring any firearm to an unlicensed individual. ATF implemented the Brady law with the FBI. The FBI administers the NICS system and conducts the background checks required under the Brady law while ATF enforces the law.

"The Treasury and Justice Departments are working to stop illegal gun purchases," Treasury Under Secretary for Enforcement James E. Johnson said. "NICS is critical to ATF's enforcement efforts."

ATF Director John W. Magaw said, "NICS is working. It is closing a loophole that allowed prohibited persons to unlawfully acquire firearms from licensed dealers."

The report shows that FFLs have generally been in compliance with the requirements of the law and have prevented prohibited persons from buying and/or redeeming firearms at gun stores and pawnbrokers.

- 30 -

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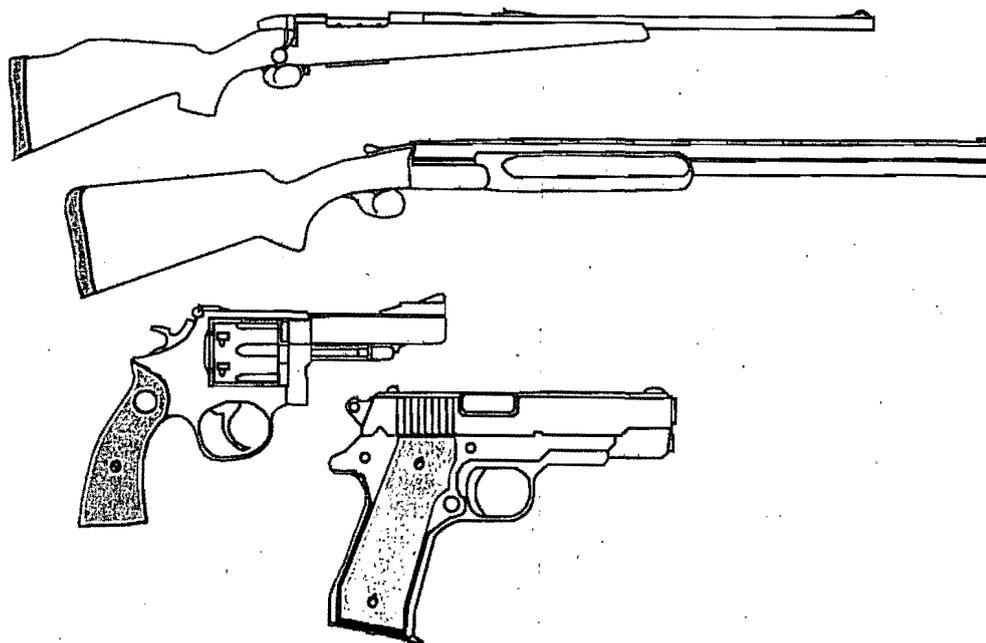


DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS



Guns - NICS

Implementation of the Brady Law



September 1999

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