

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 24-32**—sHB 5280

*Public Safety and Security Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTIC INFORMATION NETWORK**

**SUMMARY:** This act conforms law to practice by requiring the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's (DESPP's) Division of Scientific Services to participate in the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) databank, rather than the computer-based firearms evidence databank that prior law required the division to establish. (NIBIN is an interstate automated ballistic imaging network that automates ballistics evaluations and is maintained by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.)

Additionally, the act changes prior law's testing provisions, which allowed handguns in a police department's custody that pertained to a criminal investigation to be tested. The act instead requires all firearms that pertain to a criminal investigation, not just handguns, to be tested.

The act also subjects additional law enforcement agencies, not only police departments, to the databank-related provisions. It also requires law enforcement units that recover any spent cartridge case from a crime scene or an improper firearm discharge to submit an exam of the cartridge case to the NIBIN databank as soon as practicable.

Lastly, the act makes various minor, technical, and conforming changes to implement its provisions, including requiring laboratory personnel to use the NIBIN database following federal procedures and state regulations the act requires the DESPP commissioner to adopt.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2024

**FIREARMS TESTING FOR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

Prior law generally allowed a police department to submit any handgun that came into its custody during a criminal investigation to the division's forensic science laboratory or its own qualified firearms section for testing. The act instead requires law enforcement units (1) to submit firearms that come into police custody during a criminal investigation, or fired components of ammunition from the firearms, to the laboratory or (2) if allowed by the laboratory, test fire the firearm as soon as practicable and submit the results to the NIBIN database.

As under prior law for handguns, the act allows the laboratory to test fire any submitted firearm and collect fired components of ammunition from the test fires. The laboratory must label the fired components of ammunition with the firearm manufacturer, weapon type, serial number, test fire data, and name of the person who test fired the firearm and collected the ammunition.

## OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

### LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS

For the databank-related provisions, the act replaces the term “police department” with the more expansive term “law enforcement unit.” In doing so, the act extends existing law’s databank-related provisions for police departments to all law enforcement units as defined under the act. This includes:

1. allowing units to ask the forensic science laboratory to verify any matching result of cartridge cases, bullets, or other projectiles and to produce a report on the results; and
2. requiring units, before issuing a handgun, to (a) test fire it and collect the fired ammunition (the department may ask the State Police or the laboratory to assist) and (b) seal the fired ammunition in a tamper-evident way, label the package with certain identifying information, and submit it to the laboratory along with two intact cartridges.

Under prior law, a “police department” included the State Police and an organized local police department. Under the act, a “law enforcement unit” is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime.