Why Mark Firearms?

• Society: Enforce accountability
• Police: Trace crime guns
• Manufacturer: Inventory control/warranty
• User: Establish ownership
• Institutional: Inventory control
• Collector/Museum: Confirm provenance
• Courts: Evidentiary chain of custody
Types of Firearms Marks

- Serial Number: Uniqueness/Traceability
- Make/Model/Manufacturer: Branding
- Calibre: Safety/Consumer Information
- Country of Origin: Trade regulation
- Import Marking: Enhance tracing
- Unit/Agency Mark: Inventory control
- Proof Marks: Reliability/Safety
- Assembly/Other: Manufacturing process
Serial Number

- Primary determinant of uniqueness
- Usually assigned by the manufacturer
- May contain encoded information
- Not synchronized between manufacturers
- Often duplicated across model lines
- 10 to 20% of firearms never marked
- Usually on frame or receiver
- Various marking technologies
Make/Model/Manufacturer

- Applied at manufacturer’s discretion
- Often needed to make serial numbers unique
- Colt model 1903
  - Serial Number range: 16,001 to 572,215
- Colt model 1908
  - Serial number range: 1 to 409,061
- Smith & Wesson model 1902
  - Serial number range: 33,804 to 62,449
  - Duplicated (16,001-409,061) and (33,804-62,449)
Physical Characteristics

• Type of firearm (Rifle, Handgun etc.)
• Calibre
• Barrel length
• Surface finish (blued, nickel etc.)
• Occasionally needed to establish model
• Model often needed to establish serial number uniqueness
Marking Technologies

- Hand stamping
- Roll stamping
- Dot matrix stamping
- Stylus marking
- Mechanical engraving
- Laser engraving
Martini Sporter

Serial No./No. de série
Hand Stamped

Fully formed letters and numbers
Cheap and easy to do
Usually irregular, sometimes resembling false marks
Suitable for forensic restoration
Remington model 700
Roll Stamped

Fully formed numbers and letters
Applied through heavy pressure
Ideal for forensic restoration
Smith & Wesson model 10-10
DOT MATRIX

Smith & Wesson model 10-10

Composed of individual indented dots
Applied by an impact process
Shallow indentation but can be forensically restored
Beretta model 92
Stylus Marking

Improved high resolution version of dot matrix stamping
SaskSten MP3008

Serial No./No. de série
Mechanical Engraving

Hand engraved with an electric pencil
Very light and easily removed
Not readily restorable
Smith & Wesson SW40V
Laser Engraving

Lightly engraved, difficult to restore forensically
Can do logos, bar codes etc.
Import Marking

• Identifies country of import on the firearm and thus where to send the tracing request
• Speeds up firearms tracing, no need to trace prior legal international transactions
• Firearms from non-participating nations become traceable
• Resets the record-keeping clock
• Can be applied post manufacture or at time of manufacture
• Opportunity to inspect/upgrade markings on old firearms
Rossi model 31
US import mark - Interarms
Erma model EP555
Canadian import mark - Ruko
Daewoo Max II

Make/Marque
Manuf./Fabr.

Calibre
Serial No./No. de série
Stoeger USA

IMPORTED BY STOEGER IND.
S. HACKENSACK, N.J.
Stoeger Canada
Viewpoint of Manufacturer

• Mark at last possible stage of production
• Minimum markings, minimum parts
• Cheapest technology
• Avoid accounting for waste
• Minimum regulatory oversight
• Apply markings prior to final finish
Viewpoint of Regulator

- Mark as early as possible in production
- Thorough marking, as many parts as feasible
- Most effective and resistant technology
- Full accounting of damaged waste firearms
- Transparent process with full disclosure
- Allow for post manufacture markings for import marks and upgraded marks
UN Required markings

• Manufacturer’s mark including: serial number, country or place of manufacture, name of manufacturer
• Import mark which identifies the country of import, and year (optional)
• Re-mark firearms on import or on transfer from Government stocks (if needed)