

*Our Vision:
To create an America free
from gun violence, where
all are safe at home,
at work, at school,
and in our communities.*

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California AB 1471 (Feuer) Crime Gun Identification Act of 2007

Questions and Answers:

Question: Will Assembly Bill 1471 make handguns without microstamping technology illegal?

Answer: AB 1471 only applies to newly designed handguns sold after 2010. Existing handguns and existing handgun models would not be affected.

Question: Will AB 1471 impact law-abiding gun owners?

Answer: This law would not impact law-abiding gun owners. The process for purchasing a handgun will be the same as the current process. No new registration or permitting will be required. In addition, routine maintenance and cleaning of a firearm will have no effect on the technology. AB 1471 is just another tool for law enforcement to use in solving handgun crimes and preventing gun trafficking.

Question: Can criminals defeat the microstamping technology?

Answer: Tests have shown the technology, now in its third generation, to be highly tamper resistant. The microscopic engravings are on both the firing pin and other interior gun parts. Even if a criminal were able to remove the markings off the tip of the firing pin, the redundant back-up markings would still imprint the casing and the criminal would risk disabling the firing pin by reducing its length. Most criminals would not know how to find the technology, which is invisible to the naked eye, let alone defeat it. In the event that the firing pin was replaced, the redundant markings would transfer the information to the cartridge casing.

Question: Will the technology wear down over time or with repeated use?

Answer: Independent testing by a forensic examiner has shown that the engraved characters on the firing pins and other gun parts are extremely durable and will not wear down over time.¹

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Question: Will microstamping reduce crime even when criminals get guns illegally?

Answer: Criminals frequently obtain their firearms from straw buyers. Once straw buyers in California understand that a crime committed with a trafficked gun could be easily traced to them, they will think twice before buying new handguns for gun traffickers. This will help cut off an important source of crime guns. By reducing the illegal flow of handguns into the black market, criminals may have reduced access to guns. Microstamping is a valuable tool, like fingerprinting and DNA testing, to help police investigate, arrest and convict people who use semiautomatic handguns in crimes and to deter straw buyers who supply gun traffickers. Microstamping will provide law enforcement with more robust crime gun data, which will help them identify crime gun trafficking channels.

Question: Would criminals implicate innocent people by putting casings fired by other handguns at the scene of a crime?

Answer: There is nothing to stop criminals from taking such measures now to fool the existing ballistics identification systems, but they rarely do, according to law enforcements officials. Experience shows that most criminals fail to take even modest precautions, such as removing license plates from a stolen car or wearing gloves during burglaries.

Question: Is microstamping a sole-source technology that would create a government-sanctioned monopoly for a single company?

Answer: The patent holder of microstamping technology has announced that a royalty-free license will be provided to every manufacturer in the United States on guns sold in California.

Written by:

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¹Forensics expert Lucien Haag conducted tests of the technology and concluded that the microstamp was easily readable on all types of bullet casings tested after many hundreds of rounds.

Revised 3/10/07