



AUSTRALIAN  
**CRIMINAL  
INTELLIGENCE  
COMMISSION**

# National Firearms Identification Database Public Website

Reference guide

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## Purpose

This guide is for persons using the National Firearms Identification Database (NFID) to identify a firearm and allocate it's NFID firearm template identification number.

## Introduction

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) hosts the NFID, its purpose being to identify a firearm and then allocate standard descriptors by which firearms within both the eight Australian states and territories and Commonwealth agencies are identified.

The NFID identifies a firearm by the manufacturer's markings, chambering and action type, supported by references included in industry material and if necessary, the physical inspection of a firearm.

The NFID does not attempt to create a database of every firearm manufactured, but focuses upon those firearms known to have been sold and possessed within Australia. As new examples are identified within Australia, the NFID will have the additional template added in a timely manner.

The NFID does not record after-market customised variations of factory models, and only when necessary does the NFID include a template for a factory manufactured firearm frame or receiver.

The NFID does not create templates for which there is no adequate reference material available.

The NFID templates are created after extensive research of the make name, and who the actual manufacturer is. With the globalisation of the firearm industry some very well-known manufacturers have their products made by other identities.

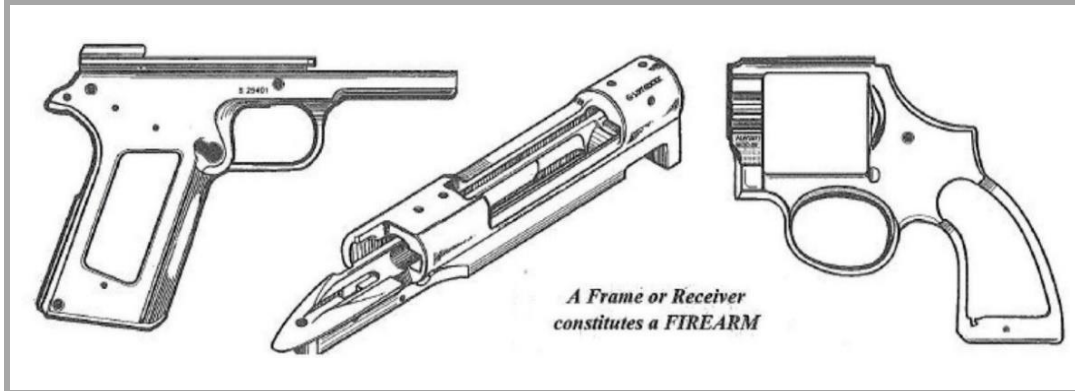
## Frame or receiver?

Firearms are normally assembled around a major structural component commonly called the frame or receiver and in the modern period they should be the component to which the unique factory serial number is applied. The terminology 'frame' is used in relation to revolvers, pistols and break-action firearms. It is noted that some firearms have a barrel and receiver manufactured from one piece of steel<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Winchester Model 1902, 02 and 1904 rifles.

Figure 1. Firearm frames and receivers (Source: BATFE)



## Identification criteria

The NFID determines the frame or receiver as the base component in the identification of a firearm. If all other components are removed, then the frame/receiver remains as the firearm.

The identification of a firearm relies heavily upon the factory markings applied to it at time of manufacture. Many of the modern firearms in the Australian market use the same basic action coupled with cosmetic/chambering variations. Many of these model variants are listed on manufacturer's websites and in catalogues, but the firearm itself does not carry the variant marking, only the base model marking.

Figure 2. Model XT Rifle with variations (source: Marlin website)



Cosmetic differences such as stock material, barrel weight, barrel length, magazine type and if stainless or blued finish can easily and quite legally <sup>2</sup> be changed by the owner. A reference to the appearance of a firearm at import may be meaningless within days after purchase, so the identification emphasis should always be on factory markings and the serial number placed (if present) on the firearm frame or receiver (Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3).

## Markings

Many of the factory model (and variant) markings are applied to the barrel of the firearm and not the frame or receiver. If the barrel is removed or replaced then any reference to the model is removed. If model identification is important, then the only way to progress the firearm identification is to supply the factory the serial number on the receiver and request assistance through the ACIC to the manufacturer.

The rifle below (Figure 3) is a recently manufactured Remington Model 700 ADL Tactical in 22-250 Remington chambering. No longer listed on the Remington web-site as at August

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<sup>2</sup> Within local legislative limitations.

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2018, the receiver of the rifle is stamped only with 'Model 700', with no other reference anywhere on the firearm as a 'Model 700 ADL Tactical'.

Identification problems occur if the manufacturer web-site no longer displays the firearm. The owner presents the rifle for registration and the markings indicate it is a Remington Model '700'. That is what will be recorded despite the manufacturer records (serial number on receiver) indicating the rifle was shipped by the factory as a Model '700 ADL Tactical'.

Figure 3. Remington Model 700 ADL Tactical Rifle factory markings



This indicates that the factory produces (assembles) multiple variants of the Model 700 rifle using the basic Model 700 receiver coupled with the cosmetic features that create the variant. Whilst the advertising, packaging material and catalogues indicate a 700 ADL Tactical, the rifle (receiver) is in reality, a Remington 700. Remove the ADL stock and barrel and what remains is a Model 700 receiver.

In light of the above the NFID may, when appropriate, only use the base model name as the sole search name within the 'model' field. This applies when the firearm in question does not carry variant markings and/or if variant markings are present, they are only applied to the barrel and not the frame/receiver (Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3).

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Figure 4. The Remington Model '700 SPS Tactical' like the '700 ADL Tactical', only has 'Model 700' stamped on the receiver.



When using this manner of recording models, the NFID will display all factory chambering's for the base model, factory magazine capacities and barrel lengths. The user can then select the base model, choose the appropriate chambering, magazine capacity and barrel length<sup>3</sup> and locate the NFID template number.

If required, enquiries with the owner/dealer/investigator should be made to ascertain exactly what is being identified. Digital cameras and e-mail should assist in this process. NFID templates include images (where available) to indicate the markings on known firearms, and requests for the creation of a NFID template shall be accompanied by clear digital images.

The NFID allows a search of the 'Markings' field by any geographical/manufacturer/importer markings that appear on known samples. As an example, a search of the word 'Adelaide' will return those firearm templates referring to the Sporting Arms Limited (Sportco) of Adelaide South Australia.

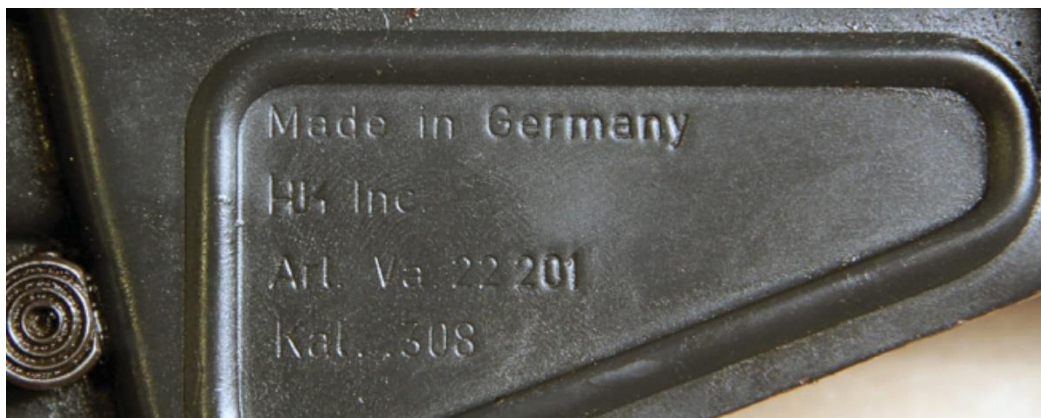
Some firearms imported into the United States of America (USA) are marked with what is known as import markings. Required by USA Federal Law and Regulations, the markings will indicate the importers name and city of business and should not be regarded as manufacturer markings.

Figure 5. Geographical marking on a Sportco Model Hornet Rifle





Figure 6. USA import markings 'HK Inc Arlington Virginia USA' on a German manufactured HK91 rifle



## No model markings on firearms

Many antique firearms and even those made in the past few decades are not marked with an identifiable model designation. You may attempt to identify the country of manufacture by observing country, proof or manufacturer markings stamped on the barrels of the subject firearm. The NFID electronic library has a document indicating proof markings and the relative country.

Shotguns with no model markings should primarily be identified as having either externally exposed hammer(s) or internal hammer(s). The existence of external hammers (or not) will normally only apply to side by side or single barrel shotguns, rifles, pistols or revolvers.

'Model' markings normally<sup>3</sup> indicate a cosmetic change to a basic variant. The identification of key descriptors of a firearm such as make, chambering, magazine (if any) type and capacity and barrel length are in no way diminished by using, when necessary, a generic model name.

NFID will describe a side by side shotgun with exposed hammer(s) as a 'Field Hammer Gun' and those without exposed hammers a 'Field Hammerless'. Both terms are recognized within the firearm industry.

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3 Barrel length on long-arms may not be a critical factor under Australian legislation as like handguns.

Figure 7. Field Hammer Gun and (right) Field Hammerless



The NFID will describe an over and under shotgun without model markings as a ‘Superposed<sup>4</sup> variation’. The term superposed is recognised within the firearm industry.

Figure 8. Browning FN ‘Superposed variation’



If the model cannot be identified then use the terminology as described above. The NFID staff will assist in the identification of a firearm if required and share that advice to the requesting agency for their own use.

The NFID shall identify a single shot bolt action rim-fire rifle with no model markings as a Model ‘Standard’.

## Magazine capacity

The NFID identifies ‘capacity’ as that of the magazine, cylinder or feeding device and does not include any extra cartridge in the chamber. The NFID only records the magazine capacity as that advised by the manufacturer and does not record after-market non-factory magazines or feed devices which may be available.

<sup>4</sup> In some cases, model names indicate an action type or chambering variation.

<sup>5</sup> Superposed means one on top of the other—used specifically by Belgium manufacturer Browning FN (Fabrique Nationale) to describe their over and under shotguns first commercially sold in 1931.

## Magazine types

Magazine or feeding devices can be described as:

- Detachable Box Magazine<sup>5</sup>
- Integral Box Magazine<sup>6</sup>
- Tube Magazine Front
- Tube Magazine Rear
- Belt
- Clip

## Firearm category

The National Firearms Agreement (NFA) of 2017 indicates the category of firearm is dependent upon its action type, cartridge type and magazine capacity. Those firearms which fall outside the NFA Category types are identified within a NFID template as 'Consult Your Local Registry'. These may include machine guns, gel-blasters or paint-ball guns.

## Appearance-based controls

Some state and territories apply appearance-based controls (ABC) on the ownership of firearms. To inform all jurisdictions of those firearms which may be subject to ABC the NFID includes a searchable field (Markings and Other Information) which will retrieve all those firearm models which may be subject to ABC.

## Make, manufacturer and the Australian Gun Code (AGC)

The NFID records both the common 'Make' and 'Manufacturer' name of a firearm and links these two identities by using the AGC. The AGC reflects the manufacture, not the make name.

The AGC code has a maximum length of five characters and can be alpha numeric. The AGC preceding characters generally reflect the preceding characters in the manufacturers name e.g. Sako = SAK. There are exceptions to this rule however, and the best way to find out what make and manufacturer names are linked to each other is to search within NFID for the AGC.

The NFID has identified many firearms that have 'Make' names which are not the name of the actual manufacturer. The 'Make' name may be that of a firearm distributor, a firearm importer or a trade name used by an unknown manufacturer. Because of the proliferation of these products, NFID will create templates for these firearms, with the proviso that the actual manufacturer will be identified as 'Manufacturer Unknown/Various/Importer', with an AGC code of 'ZZZ'.

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<sup>5</sup> Includes drum and rotary magazines.

<sup>6</sup> It is now common practice by owners to fit after-market detachable box magazine assemblies to long-arms factory fitted at manufacture with integral box magazines.

## Country of manufacture

The country recorded within any the NFID firearm template reflects the country of firearm manufacture. Be aware that some manufacturers' pre-date changes to a country's name, such as Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, the USSR and the Russian Federation and Yugoslavia and Serbia. NFID attempts to reconcile country name changes where possible. If a country of manufacturer cannot be identified, but a make name is identified, then the country will be recorded as 'Country Unknown'.

## Serial number location

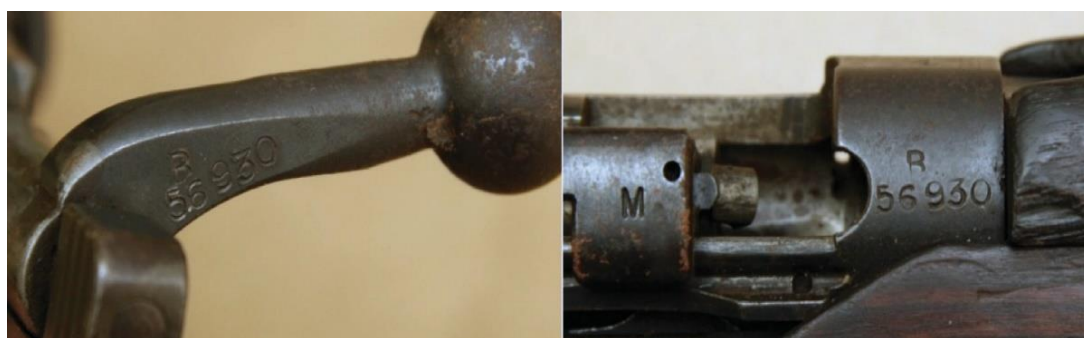
Identification of the firearm can be assisted by the identification of the factory serial number located on the frame or receiver<sup>7</sup>.

It is noted that in some instances a firearm may have been assembled by using components from different manufacturers, creating some confusion in naming the final product. Refer to any markings that can be located on the frame/receiver and also the serial number on that component.

In particular, semi-automatic pistols (PSA) are well known for the addition of different slides and barrel assemblies. With the demise of patents, many manufacturers are now making components that fit on a firearm made by the original patent holder. If a PSA has no markings on the frame, be cautious in identifying it by any apparent factory name that appears on the slide or barrel. Whilst these major components may have been used to assemble the firearm, they cannot be identified as the manufacturer of the frame.

Be aware that serial numbers which are stamped on the bolt assembly of a bolt action rifle, may not match that which appears on the firearm receiver. In this case always use the receiver serial number to assist identify and record the firearm.

Figure 9. Matching factory serial numbers on both bolt and receiver of a Lithgow SMLE 3



<sup>7</sup> Some firearms have a unique serial number structure applied to them by manufacturers.

Figure 10. Sportco Model 62S has the factory serial number only placed on the barrel



It is noted that some factory serial numbers are applied to the barrel assembly only, leaving the receiver/frame without any unique identifier. If the barrel is removed then the receiver/frame is left un-numbered.

## No factory serial number (NFSN)

For many years some countries did not require serialisation of the firearm by the manufacturer. There do exist some same make and model firearms that may and may not have a factory serial number. This is because the model was produced before and after serialisation was required. When identifying a firearm, the stock may have to be removed to see if a factory serial number has been placed under that component. Registries will supply a registry serial number to be applied to a firearm that has no factory serial number. The NFID identifies within the template those firearms which carry no factory serial number as 'NFSN', notwithstanding the possible addition of a non-factory serial number (preferably on the frame or receiver) post-manufacture at the request of authorities.

## Ammunition description

The NFID records common cartridge names using the *5th Edition of Ammo Encyclopaedia* (as amended) by Michael Bussard. ISBN 10:1-936120-55-0. This reference book is available on-line.

The NFID (as a preference) uses imperial measurements in its ammunition data. The incorrect designation of cartridges by generic metric designations rather than specific dimensions continues to be a major inhibitor of the correct identification of exactly what cartridge a firearm is chambered for. When no other imperial alternative to a metric designation exists, the latter will be used, with two exceptions, the 5.56MM NATO and 7.62MM NATO cartridges, which have both the metric designation and their imperial counterparts 223 Remington and 308 Winchester listed.

## Searching within NFID

Users will predominantly search for a firearm by a common make name e.g. "Colt", "Winchester" "Sportco" etc. Whilst this appears to be a sensible place to start, the sheer volume of responses will require that the search is enhanced by querying other available search fields.

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With many well-known brand name firearms now being manufactured in other countries the capacity for the NFID to identify a firearm by make and manufacture has led to the creation of some new make names. For example, Winchester firearms are known to have been manufactured in nine countries other than the United States of America (USA). Searching for Winchester in the 'Make' field will bring a response of the nine manufacturer names conjoined and preceded by the name 'Winchester'. By choosing a specific conjoined make name, only the models and other associated information relating to that manufacturer will be retrieved.

This naming convention is necessary because it has been identified that there are examples of a 'make' of firearm being manufactured in various countries by different industry identities. e.g. Weatherby manufactured in Germany both by J G Anschutz and J P Sauer.

Figure 11. The AGC is used to identify the actual manufacturer of a common make name

AGC	Make name	Markings	Country of manufacture
ANS	Weatherby Anschutz	Made in Germany	Germany
ATM	Weatherby ATA		Turkey
ATEK	Weatherby ATEK		Turkey
BER	Weatherby Beretta	Made in Italy	Italy
FSO	Weatherby Fausti		Italy
FNB	Weatherby FN		Belgium
HWA	Weatherby Howa		Japan
KTG	Weatherby KTG		Japan
NKK	Weatherby Nikko		Japan
SAK	Weatherby Sako		Finland
SSS	Weatherby Sauer		Germany
SCL	Weatherby Schultz & Larsen		Denmark
SKB	Weatherby SKB		Japan
WEA	Weatherby USA		USA
ZOI	Weatherby Zoli		Italy

It has been observed that there are many variations by which law enforcement, firearm owners and industry describe a particular firearm model. If the model name is not known, then a robust query function will include searching by country of manufacture, action type and chambering. This process will narrow down the options of accessing the correct model name within the NFID.

To isolate one manufacturer from another and thus accurately identify the firearm, users will need to have knowledge of the markings on the firearm. The NFID in most cases will not include firearm templates that do not have ample reference material available to substantiate their creation.

Some models have a hyphen included in the factory designation, and it is advised that a search by model name include both a hyphen and no hyphen to achieve a complete search.

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## Search for physical aspects of a firearm

To allow a more inquisitive search function NFID has additional search fields which allow the user to query the database for high profile physical aspects of the firearm:

- The NFID 'External Hammer' field indicates a firearm which has a clearly visible external hammer within its design. Firearms such as the Colt Model 1911 semi-automatic pistol, the Winchester Model 94 lever action rifle and the Harrington & Richardson single barrel shotgun have visible external hammers. Firearms such as any Glock, a Sportco Model 63A rifle, a Remington Model 700 do not have external hammers. This search field will narrow the search criteria when attempting to locate the correct firearm template.
- The NFID search field 'Polymer' enables the user to locate those firearms which have a polymer frame.
- The NFID search field 'Left Hand' enables the user to retrieve only those firearms which are designed and promoted by the manufacture as being suitable for left handed operation. Left hand criteria shall not include lever action or pump action firearms.
- To assist in the identification of those firearms which are manufactured with interchangeable barrels the NFID displays a 'Modular Design' field which retrieves firearm templates indicating this design. This feature will generate a greater awareness of the possibility of the presence/availability of barrels of greater or smaller length and chambering linked to the subject firearm.

## Key word search within the NFID

**Markings and general information**

The 'Markings and general information' field contains various key words which will enable an extraction of those templates associated with that word. Key words will be added as required.



Figure 12. Key words which will enable an extraction of those templates associated with that word

Key words	Responses
1911	Any firearm that is of a Colt 1911 style in appearance or function.
ABC	Any firearm which may be subject to appearance-based controls.
AFP	AFP opinion on imported firearm type and appropriate Customs schedule.
AK style	Any firearm that is of an AK-47 style in appearance or function.
AR-15 style	Any firearm that is of an AR-15 style appearance or function.
Attachment	Template has a reference document available for download and viewing.
Item 5	Firearm subject to NSW Firearm Regulations—Schedule 1 Item 5.
Item 6	Firearm subject to NSW Firearm Regulations—Schedule 1 Item 6.
Magazine curved	Any detachable box magazine of a curved appearance.
Magazine straight	Any detachable box magazine of a straight (or angled) appearance.
Mauser 98 style action	Any firearm built on what appears to be similar to a Mauser 1898 style action.
Pre 1900	Firearm proven to be manufactured before 1900.
Post 1899	Firearm proven to be manufactured post 1899.
Reproduction	Any firearm which is a modern-day copy or variant of an original.
Span 1800-1900	Firearm proven to be manufactured spanning 1800–1900.
Take Down	Any firearm other than break action shotguns and rifles which can be taken apart into two major components. For example, a Browning FN Model Trombone.
Walther PPK style	Any firearm that resembles a Walther PPK pistol.

Figure 133. The SAKO Quad P04R rifle comes with 4 barrels of different chambering and all serialised differently to the factory receiver



## Creation of a firearm template

To maintain a high level of accuracy in the identification of firearms, the NFID will not produce templates for firearms which do not have relevant reference material.

Before a request is made for a new firearm template clear digital images should be obtained of:

- The firearm (left and right hand views in a horizontal position)
- Close up of the factory serial number located on the firearm frame/receiver
- Close up of **all** markings on the barrel and receiver (including cartridge designation, proof markings and any year code)

Failure to send such images will delay production of a template, and may result in the request being dismissed if no other reference material is available from other sources.

## Reference material

The NFID on-line document library where possible will store any pdf files of firearm reference material used in the creation of a NFID firearm template.

The search function within the library will enable a search of key words created when the documents are stored, and the documents can be downloaded by the user.

## Anomalies

There will always be anomalies in what is generally regarded as the naming conventions for firearm makes, manufacturers and models. With the development of the NFID there will be a greater requirement for dialogue between firearm owners and registry staff to accurately identify the firearm.

## Summary

Identification of a firearm make and manufacturer is achieved from viewing the markings on the firearm. The NFID administrator will request clear digital images of all firearm markings if assistance is required.

## Contact

NFID Administrator [NFID@acic.gov.au](mailto:NFID@acic.gov.au)