



“A Message from the Inspector General: Report on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives’ Risk-Based Inspection Selection Processes and Administrative Actions Issued to Federal Firearms Licensees,” April 2023

Hello, I'm Michael Horowitz, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Today, my office released a report on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives', or ATF's, strategic management of its inspections program of federal firearms licensees, or FFLs. ATF's inspections of gun dealers, importers, and manufacturers are critical to ensuring that firearms are produced and sold in compliance with existing laws and regulations, helping to prevent the illegal diversion of firearms, and reducing the possibility that prohibited persons obtain firearms, thereby protecting public safety.

My office previously identified resource challenges at ATF that limited its ability to meet its goals of inspecting FFLs once every three years. Following our findings, ATF moved to a risk-based inspection selection process.

While ATF has worked to address our previous findings, today's review of the ATF's risk-based process identified several issues and areas for improvement. For example, we found that ATF hasn't evaluated the efficacy of its risk-based approach and risk indicators, and ATF didn't meet its projections to inspect FFLs with a high risk of noncompliance or exploitation by criminal activity.

We also reviewed over 10 years of inspections data and found that when ATF inspections do reveal violations by an FFL, ATF is not consistent with its subsequent administrative actions, including for serious violations that ATF policy suggests could be grounds for revoking an FFL's license. We found that a very small percentage of inspections identifying these serious violations resulted in a recommendation that a license should be revoked. And some FFLs with repeat, serious violations were allowed to continue their operations.

Our report makes 13 recommendations to help ATF improve its management and oversight over this important program.

To read our report, please visit our website oig.justice.gov, or go to oversight.gov.

Thank you for joining me today.

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