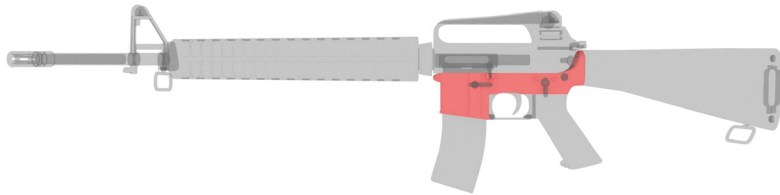


FIRSTRESPONDER'S TOOLBOX

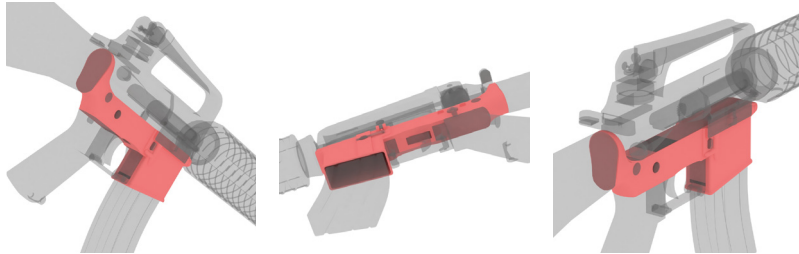
(U) First Responder Awareness of Privately Made Firearms May Prevent Illicit Activities

(U) Criminals and violent extremists continue to seek ways to acquire firearms through the production of privately made firearms (PMFs). PMFs can be easily made using readily available instructions and commonly available tools, require no background check or firearms registration (serial number) under federal law, and their parts have become more accessible and affordable. This, combined with the increase in law enforcement recoveries of nonserialized and counterfeit firearms in criminal investigations, will most likely create increasing challenges in law enforcement investigations, including weapon accountability access and tracking. PMF awareness and identification can aid PMF recovery, prevention of illicit activities including terrorism, and overall first responder and public safety.

(U) NOTE: Many of the activities described herein may involve Constitutionally protected activities and may be insignificant on their own. Action should not be taken solely based on the exercise of Constitutionally protected rights.



(U) The procurement of receivers (highlighted in red) or frame-shaped billets used in PMF manufacturing are not restricted at the federal level, though restrictions on exporting or importing firearms components would apply to PMFs.



- (U) In March 2021, a West Virginia man pleaded guilty to one count of possession of an unregistered firearm silencer. He also manufactured and transferred hundreds

(U) **SCOPE:** This product provides PMF identification and illicit manufacturing awareness.

(U) A **PMF**—also referred to as additive manufacturing, ghost guns, home-assembled firearms, or homemade firearms—is a firearm, including a frame or receiver, completed, assembled, or otherwise produced by a person not licensed to engage in the business of manufacturing firearms, and without a serial number placed on the frame or receiver by a licensed manufacturer or importer. These firearms may not bear any identifying markings.

(U//FOUO) **PMF RECOVERIES:**

According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the number of PMF recoveries from 2018 to 2019 doubled among prohibited persons and felons. In addition, more than 23,906 nonserialized firearms were reported recovered by law enforcement from potential crime scenes from 2016 to 2020, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

(U) **NOTICE:** This is a Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT) publication. JCAT is a collaboration by the NCTC, DHS and FBI to improve information sharing among federal, state, local, tribal, territorial governments and private sector partners, in the interest of enhancing public safety. This product is **NOT** in response to a specific threat against the United States. It provides general awareness of, considerations for, and additional resources related to terrorist tactics, techniques and procedures, whether domestic or overseas. Consider the enclosed information within existing laws, regulations, authorities, agreements, policies or procedures. For additional information, contact us at JCAT@NCTC.GOV.

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FIRSTRESPONDER'S TOOLBOX

(U) First Responder Awareness of Privately Made Firearms May Prevent Illicit Activities *(continued)*

of machinegun conversion devices for semiautomatic guns to hundreds of people, including those he believed had domestic violent extremist (DVE)^a ideologies.

- (U//FOUO) In December 2020, an instant messaging user of a possible Slovakia-based instant messaging channel—in which users often promote violence in furtherance of Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremist (RMVE)^b ideologies—posted electronic files containing instructions to create homemade firearms from 3D printing and machining. The first file contained a collection of improvised firearms designs containing numerous schematics to machine, including schematics for creating a fully-automatic submachine gun called a “Cheetah-9” using machining and 3D printing.

(U) **PMF-RELATED OBSERVABLE INDICATORS:** The following observable indicators may be related to PMF manufacturing and awareness of these indicators by law enforcement and security personnel will increase recognition of possible suspicious PMF use. This awareness, coupled with other factors, may enable the detection and prevention of unlawful violent activity. It is important to note that by themselves, some of the following indicators are lawful and Constitutionally protected and taken alone, would not warrant law enforcement action or additional investigation. Behavioral indicators and other relevant circumstances should be evaluated when considering any law enforcement response or action.

(U) **PMF KITS:** A gun assembled from parts, such as the 80-percent lower, can be easily obtained through a gun dealer or the Internet. Some states have enacted laws regulating or prohibiting such guns and banning PMF kits.

- (U) Assistance on making “undetectable firearms.”
- (U) Discussion on ways to avoid detection at security checkpoints while carrying a firearm as well as making low to nonmetallic content firearms.
- (U//FOUO) Queries by known violent extremists seeking people with experience with computer-assisted design, or 3D printing.
- (U//FOUO) Inquires on ways to sell or purchase a finished, wholly plastic 3D firearm.
- (U) The presence of 3D printers or materials during calls to service, warrant executions, or other such encounters related to suspected firearms.
- (U//FOUO) Reports from federal firearms licensees identifying people suspected of manufacturing PMFs or converting them from semiautomatic to fully automatic based on customer purchases, conversations, and questions.
- (U) Acquisition of other commercial firearm-related items that are known PMFs.
- (U//FOUO) Abnormally large number of orders from Internet firearm suppliers to a single address in states with more regulations.

^a(U) DVEs are individuals based and operating primarily within the United States or US territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign powers who seek to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence.

^b(U//FOUO) RMVEs are individuals, collectives, or organizations who seek to further their social or political goals through force or violence. The RMVE threat includes threats deriving from bias, often related to race, held by the actor against others, including against a given population.



FIRSTRESPONDER'S TOOLBOX

(U) **First Responder Awareness of Privately Made Firearms May Prevent Illicit Activities** *(continued)*

- (U//FOUO) An increase in the number of unsuccessful traces (confirmed hits) on recovered firearms.
- (U) Recovery of unconventional firearm designs and firearms that look innocuous as opposed to the standard handgun profile or caseless ammunition.
- (U) PMFs may have a homemade appearance (indentions, scratches, attempts to drill out holes) or frame destruction.
- (U//FOUO) Inquiries to 3D printing service providers to produce firearms, weapons, or other potentially dangerous items.
- (U//FOUO) Use of false identification to obtain 3D printing services.
- (U//FOUO) Accessories such as 3D printing medium (plastic, ceramic, or metal spools), scanner, or 3D printers, along with bombmaking and weapons production materials encountered by emergency responders during an incident.
- (U) Presence of homemade gun kits.

(U) **LAW ENFORCEMENT PMF CHALLENGES:** Illicit actors may seek PMFs to circumvent security, avoid some state government regulations, and evade detection of and complicate law enforcement investigative efforts. PMFs do not have serial numbers, thereby severely degrading an investigator's ability to track the firearm through traditional methods, including owner and manufacturer date.

- (U) In October 2020, three men were charged with federal crimes related to conspiracy to illegally manufacture and ship firearms and firearm parts. During the course of the investigation, two of the individuals allegedly planned an attack on a protest and held a live-fire weapons training session to further their RMVE ideology.
- (U) In January 2020, FBI arrested three people who allegedly had RMVE ideologies on charges ranging from illegal transport of a machinegun to harboring noncitizens. Two of the men allegedly built a functioning illegal rifle using an upper receiver and other firearms parts, according to the affidavit.

(U) **TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:** Establishing policies underlining best practices for PMF evidence recovery can ensure proper handling and submitting of PMFs to improve investigations, as well as gun traces.

- (U) Trace (confirmed hit) all recovered crime guns, including PMFs.
- (U) Thoroughly inspect the frame or receiver for a serial number, and if there is no serial number on the frame or receiver, the firearm may be a PMF. NOTE: For firearms without a serial number, trace them as a machinegun, which will aid in the accuracy of tracing and also provide intelligence value for investigators.
- (U) Enter all visible firearm markings in applicable ATF Electronic Tracing System fields, including additional or questionable markings in the "Other Identifying Marks" field, while ensuring evidence is submitted with specific details (descriptors and colors).



FIRSTRESPONDER'S TOOLBOX

(U) **First Responder Awareness of Privately Made Firearms May Prevent Illicit Activities** *(continued)*

- (U) Become familiar with methods and technologies used by illicit actors to transport PMFs.
- (U) Consider investigating calls to service resulting in the encounter of PMF manufacturing. This can be a secondary result of an investigation.
- (U) Share PMF-related case information with outside agencies to raise awareness on PMF assembly and their illicit usage.
- (U) Do not disregard an item that appears to be a plastic or toy firearm.
- (U) Become familiar with common tools that can be used to manufacture PMFs, including but not limited to computer-numeric control machine mills, drill tools, files, flat pieces, fused-deposition modeling printers, hydraulic presses, items used to bend metal, and sterolithography printers.

(U) **RESOURCES**

- (U) **ATF** is a law enforcement agency in the DOJ that protects our communities from violent criminals, criminal organizations, the illegal use and trafficking of firearms, the illegal use and storage of explosives, acts of arson and bombings, acts of terrorism, and the illegal diversion of alcohol and tobacco products. <https://www.atf.gov/>
 - (U) **Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division** is ATF's technical authority relating to firearms and their classification under Federal laws; to respond to law enforcement agencies' requests to test, evaluate, and provide expert testimony on firearms and ammunition; and to provide technical services to the firearms industry and other members of the public. For questions, email fire_tech@atf.gov or call 304-616-4300. <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/firearms-and-ammunition-technology>
 - (U) **Laws on Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/laws-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives>
 - (U) **National Tracing Center (NTC)**: All firearms recovered in criminal investigations, including those not marked with serial numbers or other identifying markings, should be submitted to NTC for tracing. Submission of trace requests for nonserialized and unmarked firearms is essential for tracking the frequency with which they are used in crimes and for identifying trends in the types of nonserialized firearms used and sought by criminals and criminal organizations. This data is crucial to enhancing public safety. For questions regarding PMF tracing, e-mail eTraceAdmin@atf.gov or call 304-260-1540.
- (U) **Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988** was passed in response to the manufacture of polymer-framed handguns that were proclaimed to be "undetectable" by walk-through metal detectors used to screen for weapons. This law was originally set to expire after 10 years but was renewed three times and is currently set to expire in 2023. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/100th-congress/house-bill/4445>



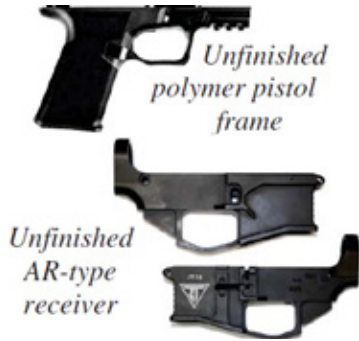
FIRSTRESPONDER'S TOOLBOX

(U) First Responder Awareness of Privately Made Firearms May Prevent Illicit Activities *(continued)*

(U) **APPENDIX**

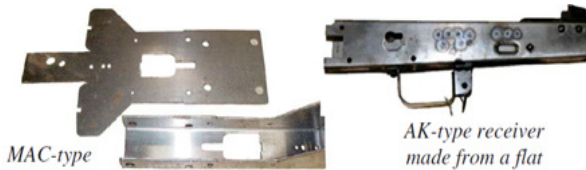
(U) OTHER COMMONLY USED TERMS

(U) **Unfinished or Non-Serialized Frames and Receivers**



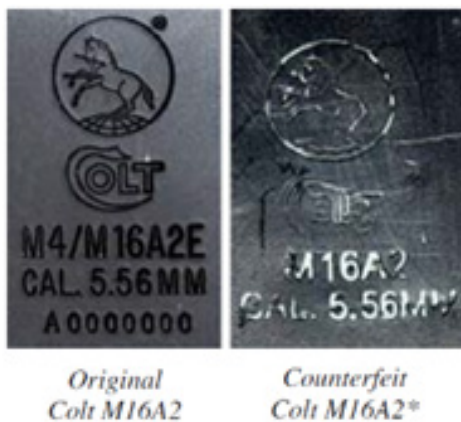
(U) A partially completed frame or receiver body made by forging, casting, extruding, molding, or machining that, while completed to the point it can be recognized as a “receiver-blank,” has not yet reached a stage of manufacture that it can be classified as a “frame” or “receiver.” Nonserialized machine bodies (frames or receivers) typically have not been finished to the point of being classified as a “firearm” under the Gun Control Act or National Firearms Act. These machined bodies are often referred to by the firearms industry as “80%” frames or receivers.

(U) **Flat**



(U) A stamped or cut receiver body formed from sheet metal (usually steel or aluminum) that usually must be bent into its final shape.

(U) **Counterfeit Firearm**



(U) A firearm manufactured, whether by licensee or individual, and designed to effectively resemble a trademarked or patented firearm. Counterfeit firearms often exhibit characteristics such as inaccurate logo forging and stamping methods, incorrect text typeface, inaccurate marking locations, invalid or fake serialization, misspelling, erroneous importer markings, inconsistent fire select switches, crude machine markings, and misplaced rivets or button head pins.

**(U) Counterfeit version has incorrect typeface, missing copyright symbol, double stamped “Colt,” and barely recognizable logo.*

