



**"A Message from the Inspector General: Report on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Firearm Disposal Practices," September 2022**

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, firearms disposal practices.

In August 2019, a former contract security guard was sentenced to 14 years in prison for stealing thousands of firearms, firearm parts, and ammunition from the ATF's firearm destruction facility- following a joint OIG, ATF, and DHS OIG investigation. These thefts also resulted in the OIG audit released today.

Our audit found that ATF staff at the destruction facility didn't follow security protocols that were in place to mitigate the risk of firearms being lost or stolen, including: propping open doors into secure areas, allowing visitors to enter through doorways other than the main entrance and drive their cars into the facility to unload firearms, and permitting unauthorized individuals to access vault storage spaces.

We also identified certain practices at the facility that violated ATF policy, but we determined that those policies were not reflected in the facility's standard operating procedures. Specifically, we found a lack of controls over firearms stored in temporary vaults, instances of employees handling firearms without a clear need to do so, and a lack of controls over keys used to unlock shipping cases containing firearms slated for disposal.

Finally, we found significant issues with the surveillance camera coverage at the facility. We found that one camera wasn't functioning, and that the low video resolution of some of the other cameras didn't allow the viewer to identify individuals or discern activities within secure areas of the facility. Additionally, we identified blind spots in coverage both inside and outside the facility.

We did find that ATF has since taken action to address recommendations from an internal ATF working group. However, two recommendations from the working group related to staffing levels and the storage of items at the facility unrelated to the mission remain outstanding.

It is critical that ATF takes additional steps to secure the firearms destruction facility to help ensure that firearms and firearms parts are properly inventoried, tracked, and destroyed; and aren't stolen or lost.

To read our report and our 10 recommendations, visit our website [oig.justice.gov](https://oig.justice.gov), or go to [oversight.gov](https://oversight.gov).

Thank you for joining me today.

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