



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

Washington, DC 20226

October 15, 2003

Open Letter to All Massachusetts Federal Firearms Licensees

In the fall of 1998, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) sent an open letter to all Massachusetts Federal firearms licensees advising you of your responsibilities under the permanent provisions of the Brady law. The permanent provisions of the Brady law provide for the establishment of a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) that licensees generally must contact before transferring a firearm to an unlicensed individual.

In the 1998 open letter, ATF advised you of certain alternatives to a NICS check. Specifically, the letter stated that a Massachusetts license to carry issued prior to November 30, 1998, would be "grandfathered" as a Brady alternative for the duration of the license, not to exceed 5 years from the date of issuance. However, licenses to carry issued on or after November 30, 1998, would not qualify as alternatives to a NICS check.

Massachusetts's licenses to carry issued prior to October 21, 1998, were valid for 5 years. Licenses issued after that date were valid for 4 years. Accordingly, as of October 21, 2003, all previously grandfathered Massachusetts licenses to carry will have expired. Therefore, as of October 21, 2003, Massachusetts Federal firearms licensees no longer may accept a Massachusetts license to carry as an alternative to a NICS check.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact your local ATF office.

John P. Malone
Assistant Director
Firearms, Explosives and Arson