



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

Washington, DC 20226

January 14, 2004

Open Letter to All Federal Firearms Licensees

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), under the Department of Justice, is responsible for enforcing the Federal firearms laws, regulating the firearms industry, and promoting community outreach in an effort to reduce violent firearms crime. As a Federal firearms licensee (FFL), you play a vital role in this effort.

I am writing to you to emphasize the importance of the partnerships that have been established between ATF and the firearms industry and to reinforce our joint responsibilities under the Gun Control Act (GCA). Your compliance with these obligations is critical to the prevention of terrorism, firearms trafficking, and other related criminal activities. In turn, ATF is dedicated to helping you fulfill these duties, thereby making our communities safer.

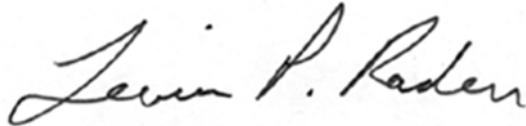
For example, ATF has taken a number of measures to assist licensees by providing information on proper and safe business procedures and recordkeeping practices. These include providing basic instructions for new licensees, holding seminars, distributing the FFL Newsletter, making information available on the ATF Internet site (<http://www.atf.gov/>), and publicizing open letters. Licensees are also provided with a copy of the Federal Firearms Regulations Reference Guide upon the commencement of business, as well as upon request. We are committed to helping you develop best business practices. We strive to process all industry paperwork timely and generally assist you in whatever way we can to help you succeed in a competitive business environment. Furthermore, licensees are encouraged to contact the nearest ATF office with any questions concerning the conduct of operations.

As an active partner in the fight against violent crime, you need to comply with all Federal laws and regulations that govern your firearms business. The proper accounting for the acquisition and disposition of firearms (inventory control) is essential to fulfill many of these responsibilities and to ensure that firearms are not diverted to the criminal element. Proper inventory control is needed to help law enforcement trace guns and potentially solve crimes, as well as to help you identify whether theft or pilferage is occurring at your business. A proven method of controlling inventory is a periodic complete inventory to bound book reconciliation. If you have not conducted one recently, we encourage you to do so.

You should know that if ATF discovers violations upon inspection, there can be a number of possible consequences, including recommendations for warning letters, warning conferences, and — in instances of willful offenses — license revocation or criminal prosecution. In order to achieve our shared goal of ensuring proper and accurate business practices, ATF must take appropriate administrative or criminal action when voluntary

compliance is not achieved. This is critical to carrying out our mission to ensure that criminals and terrorists do not gain access to firearms and to protect the public.

ATF remains committed to assisting licensees in complying with the Federal firearms laws. We have always viewed this as a partnership between industry and Government and continue to do so. We thank you for your continued diligence in helping keep America safe, and we look forward to continuing this relationship in future years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lewis P. Raden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a distinct "P".

Lewis P. Raden
Assistant Director
Firearms, Explosives and Arson