



4473 Deep Dive

Year after year 4473 mistakes account for the largest percentage of ATF violations. To help FFLs avoid these issues this document identifies the most often cited Form 4473 fields and the fields for which we receive the most questions.

This aid is not legal advice and we recommend contacting FFL Law for any legal needs.

1 – Firearm Manufacturer and Importer – If the firearm is imported both the Manufacturer and Importer of the firearm must be recorded.

2 – If the firearm does not have a Model name this may be omitted or entered as “Unknown”.

3 – Serial Number – If the firearm does not have a serial number (e.g., it was manufactured prior to 1968), the FFL must still complete this box and may record “NSN”, “N/A”, or “None”.

4 – Type – The firearm type must be recorded here. ATF has issued multiple notices and informal guidance on what is an acceptable firearm type to record in Box 4. Firearm types include, but are not limited to:

- Pistol
- Revolver
- Rifle
- Shotgun
- Receiver
- Frame
- Pistol Grip Firearm or PGF (e.g., a firearm over 26” in length originally manufactured with a pistol grip attached to a receiver in place of a buttstock)
- Short-Barreled Rifle
- Short-Barreled Shotgun
- Silencer
- Machine Gun
- Machine Gun Receiver
- Any Other Weapon or AOW
- Destructive Device
- Barreled Action
- Drop In Auto Sear
- Rifle / Shotgun Combo
- *Firearm
 - Various firearms have been created that do not fall into any of the categories above. ATF has advised in such instances to simply record “Firearm.” All effort should be made to properly classify a firearm prior to resorting to use of the generic “Firearm” designation in Box 27.

5 – Caliber or Gauge – If the firearm transferred is a frame or receiver (no known caliber or gauge) “Unknown” may be utilized.

8 – Private Party Transfer – Checking this box indicates to ATF that the transfer (or attempted transfer) occurred not accepted and the FFL was merely facilitating the transfer (in accordance with ATF Proc. 2020–2) by conducting the appropriate background check.

9 – Name – All 3 boxes must be completed.

- The only acceptable options for middle name field are:
 - A complete middle name;
 - An initial with “IO” following (stands for “initial only”);
 - “NMN” (indicates “no middle name”)

10 – Address – Contains the COUNTY, NOT the COUNTRY (i.e., “US” or “United States” is NOT acceptable). Must be a current address, P.O. Box not accepted.

11 – Place of Birth – If the transferee was born in the US, then BOTH the City and State of birth are required. If the transferee was not born in the US then only the country is required (no city or state/province/etc. required).

16 – SSN – This field is optional and may be omitted.

17 – Unique Personal ID Number (UPIN) or Appeals Management Database Identification (AMD ID) – This field is optional and is often blank. The UPIN is a number assigned to an individual who has applied to NICS and requested NICS maintain information about them in the Voluntary Appeal File (VAF) so that they are not incorrectly denied a firearm transfer. If the field is populated, this number should be given to NICS or the State POC when conducting the background check. The AMD ID is a number that is provided to an appellant on certain types of overturned appeals and should be recorded.

18a & 18b – Confirm the transferee selected a box for BOTH Ethnicity and Race.

19 – Citizenship – Confirm at least one box marked. Both boxes may be checked. If “Other Country/Countries” is checked the transferee must write the country or countries of citizenship.

21a – 21.I.2 – Prohibited Person Inquiries – With limited exception, all boxes must be checked “Yes” or “No.”

- 21a should be the only box marked “Yes” (with limited exception for both 21.I.1 and 21.I.2 being marked “Yes”). If any of 21b – 21k are marked “Yes” the transaction may not proceed as the transferee is a prohibited person.
 - If 21a is marked “No” or any of 21b – 21k are marked “Yes”, the FFL should not proceed with the transaction and should NOT contact NICS to attempt to conduct a background check.
- 21a may be left blank if the transferee is picking up a repaired firearm on behalf of another person. The transaction may proceed and 21a should be left blank in this circumstance.
- **Gifts** – if a person is purchasing a firearm as a bona fide gift for another person (e.g., as a Christmas present), the person purchasing the firearm is the actual transferee and should respond “Yes” to 21a.

21.I.1 – Nonimmigrant Visas – Aliens admitted under a nonimmigrant visa includes persons such as persons visiting the US or aliens studying within the US (among others).

- If the transferee checked “Yes” to 21.I.1, in order for the transfer to proceed:
 - 21.I.2 should also be checked “Yes”; and
 - Box 20 should be completed; and
 - Additional documentation identifying an exception to the nonimmigrant alien prohibition must be provided to the FFL and the FFL must record that documentation in 26d and attach a copy of the document to the Form 4473. Exceptions to the nonimmigrant alien prohibition include:
 - Alien possesses a valid and unexpired hunting license or permit issued by the Federal Government, State government, local government, or Indian tribe federally recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
 - Alien was admitted to the US for lawful hunting or sporting purposes.
 - Alien has received a waiver from the prohibition from the Attorney General of the United States.
 - Alien is an official representative of a foreign government en route to or from another country to which the alien is accredited.
 - Alien is an official of a foreign government or a distinguished foreign visitor who has been so designated by the Department of State.
 - Alien is a foreign law enforcement officer of a friendly foreign government entering the US on official law enforcement business.
 - Alien is an official representative of a foreign government who is accredited to the US Government or the Government’s mission to an international organization having its headquarters in the US.
- If the transferee checked “Yes” to 21.I.1 and “No” to 21.I.2, the transfer may not occur as the transferee is prohibited from purchasing firearms.

24 – Firearm types – All firearms being transferred should be identified. For example, if a pistol and a shotgun are the subject of the transaction, both “Handgun” and “Long Gun” should be checked.

- There are 2 types of “Handgun”; pistols and revolvers
- There are 2 types of “Long Gun”; shotguns and rifles
- ALL OTHER firearms fall under “Other”. This includes: receivers, frames, silencers, “pistol grip only firearms”, short barreled rifles, short barreled shotguns, destructive devices, and “any other weapons”.
- Age limitation – if the transferee is between the ages of 18 and 21, the only firearms that may be transferred to such individual is “Long Gun”. An FFL may not transfer a receiver or frame to an individual under 21 years of age even though it is for making a rifle or shotgun.

26a – Identification – The transferee must provide a valid (unexpired) government-issued photo ID containing their name, address, and date of birth.

- Always confirm the address on the photo ID is current. If the transferee informs an FFL the address is not current, they must provide supplemental documentation that reflects their current address. This supplemental documentation must also be issued by a government body and be recorded in Box 26b wherein the FFL must identify the governmental entity and type of document.
- Multiple States of Residence and Handgun Transfers – If a transferee is a resident of multiple states the transferee may purchase a handgun in any state of residence. If the transferee is a resident of both State A and State B, the transferee may purchase a handgun in State B by providing the FFL a photo-ID issued by State A and a government-issued document proving his address in State B (such as a tax document).
- Members of the Armed Forces – If the transferee is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty acquiring a firearm in the State where his or her permanent duty station is located and he or she has a driver’s license issued by another state, the FFL should list the official PCS orders identifying the permanent duty station in response to 26c. Electronic PCS orders are acceptable.

26b – Supplemental Government Issued Documentation – See notes on 26a, above.

26c – Official Military Orders Establishing Permanent Change of Station – See notes on 26a, above.

26d – Exemption to the Nonimmigrant Alien Prohibition – see notes on 21.l.1, above.

27c – Initial NICS Response

- **Proceed** – The transfer of the firearm may proceed immediately.
- **Denied or Cancelled** – The FFL is prohibited from transferring the firearm to the transferee.
- **Delayed** – A delayed response means that NICS (or the State POC) is conducting further research. If no further response is received, under Federal law the FFL may transfer the firearm after three business days (during which State offices are open) have elapsed. The FFL may record that day and date in 27c, if desired. However, many States have additional restrictions. For example, a State may require an affirmative “Proceed” response before a firearm may be transferred. Other states may extend the timeline prior to transfer in the case of a “Delayed” response.
- The following chart may be used as reference for the Federal restriction only provided that the State offices were opened as normal (i.e., no intervening holidays or closures). If your State has a law in place more restrictive than Federal law, you must abide by your State’s requirements.

NICS Delayed Response Received	Firearm May Be Lawfully Transferred Under Federal Law
Monday	Friday
Tuesday	Saturday
Wednesday	Tuesday
Thursday	Wednesday
Friday	Thursday
Saturday	Thursday
Sunday	Thursday

27d – Follow-Up NICS Response Prior To Transfer – If the initial response was “Delayed” 19d must be completed if NICS provides a response at any point prior to the transfer of the firearm.

- **Proceed** – The transfer of the firearm may proceed immediately.
- **Denied or Cancelled** – The FFL is prohibited from transferring the firearm to the transferee.
- **Overtaken** – If the initial response received was “Denied” or “Cancelled”, the FFL may receive a notice the initial result was overturned. The FFL should check both “Proceed” and “Overtaken” and record the date. In addition, if an overturned certificate was provided by NICS or the State POC, a copy must be attached to the 4473.

27e – Follow-Up NICS Response After Transfer – If at any point following a firearm transfer NICS or the State POC provides an additional response, the date and response must be recorded here.

27f – Name and Brady ID number of NICS examiner – This field is optional and FFLs may record the name of the person at NICS (or State POC) who provided the background check services.

27g – Name of FFL Employee – This field is optional and FFLs may require their employees to record their name in this field when completing NICS checks.

28 – NICS Exemption; NFA Transfers – FFLs may forego conducting the NICS check if the only firearm on the Form 4473 is an NFA firearm and ATF has issued an approved tax stamp for the transfer. A copy of the transfer approval should be attached to the 4473,. If State law requires a background check be performed, the background check must proceed and the information recorded in 27a – 27g, as applicable.

- **NFA Transfers to Trusts** – a NICS check must be conducted if an NFA firearm has been approved for transfer to a trust or other legal entity and no background check was conducted as part of the NFA approval process on the individual who will receive the firearm (identified on the transfer form).
- If there are additional non-NFA firearms on the Form 4473, a NICS check must be conducted to proceed with the transfer of those non-NFA items.

29 – Permits Qualifying as NICS Exemptions – FFLs may forego conducting the NICS check if the transferee has a license or permit issued by the State in which the transfer is to take place which allows the transferee to possess, acquire, or carry a firearm and the permit is recognized by ATF as a valid alternative to the NICS check, this box may be checked. If State law requires a background check be performed, the background check must proceed and the information recorded in 27a – 27g, as applicable.

- A copy of the license or permit must be made and attached to the 4473.
- FFLs may view which permits and licenses qualify (known as the Permanent Brady Permit Chart) on the ATF’s website at: [atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/permanent-brady-permit-chart](https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/permanent-brady-permit-chart) (web address subject to change)

30 & 31 – Transferee Recertification – If the transferee signed Section A on a different date than which the firearm is being transferred, the transferee must sign and date here (certifying that their responses in Section A are still accurate). Date must not be more than 30 days from date listed in Section A.

32 – For Use by Licensee – This box is optional and may be utilized by the FFL for any reason.

33 – 35 – FFL Name and Number, Transferor Name and Signature– These fields must be completed even if the transfer does not occur.

36 – Date Transferred – Do not complete this box if the firearm was not transferred (e.g., the response from NICS was “Denied” or “Cancelled”).

Additional 4473 Transfer Information

Multiple Handgun Sales

If (a) the transferee is purchasing 2 or more handguns (revolver or pistol) in a single transaction, or (b) if the same transferee is purchasing a single handgun within 5 consecutive business days of previously purchasing 1 or more handguns, the FFL must complete the Report of Multiple Sale or Other Disposition of Pistols and Revolvers and attach a copy to the Form 4473. A copy must be sent to the ATF and another copy to the FFL's local CLEO.

For purposes of the multiple handgun sales requirement, 5 consecutive business days do not take into account whether State offices are open (unlike the NICS "Delayed" response transfer window). For example, if a transferee purchases a handgun on Monday, and purchases a second handgun on Friday from the FFL, the FFL must complete the Report. However, if the transferee purchased a handgun Monday and then purchased a second handgun Saturday, the Report is not required. (FFLs should still be mindful of potentially suspicious activity by transferees)

Multiple Sales of Certain Rifles in Border States

For FFLs who operate in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas, only.

If (a) the transferee is purchasing 2 or more of the applicable rifles (explained below) in a single transaction, or (b) if the same transferee is purchasing one of the applicable rifles within 5 consecutive business days of previously purchasing 1 or more, the FFL must complete the Report of Multiple Sale or Other Disposition of Certain Rifles and attach a copy to the Form 4473. A copy must also be sent to the ATF (not required to send this form to the local CLEO).

The rifles applicable to this Report are semiautomatic rifles with a caliber larger than .22 (includes .223/5.56mm) and with the ability to accept a detachable magazine.

For purposes of the multiple sales requirement, 5 consecutive business days do not take into account whether State offices are open (unlike the NICS "Delayed" response transfer window). For example, if a transferee purchases an applicable rifle on Monday, and purchases a second applicable rifle on Friday from the FFL, the FFL

must complete the Report. However, if the transferee purchased an applicable rifle Monday and then purchased a second on Saturday, the Report is not required. *(FFLs should still be mindful of potentially suspicious activity by transferees)*

NFA Transfers

The Form 4473 must still be completed if the firearm(s) being transferred were submitted to ATF on a Form 4 and the FFL received the ATF approval to transfer the item. If the only firearm(s) being transferred were on a Form 4, Box 28 should be checked and no NICS check is required.

Electronic Forms 4473

FFLs may use electronic Forms 4473 to comply with ATF regulations. There are requirements as to how electronics Forms 4473 operate (see ATF Ruling 2016-2) so FFLs should be mindful of the provider of the software. If the software is noncompliant, the FFL using the software will be receiving the citation (or worse), not the software company.

If utilizing an electronic Form 4473 software program, unless the FFL has a received an approved variance for electronic storage of Forms 4473 from the ATF, the completed Form 4473 must be printed in its entirety (including instructions!) and filed in paper form.

Filing of Forms 4473

Forms 4473 for Successful Transfers

Where a transfer of a firearm is successful, the FFL shall file the Forms 4473 in one of the following ways: (a) alphabetically by name of purchaser; (b) chronologically by date of transfer; or (c) numerically by 4473 serial number if the FFL serializes their Forms 4473. These shall be kept for at least 20 years.

Forms 4473 for Unsuccessful Transfers

If a NICS check was conducted but the sale, delivery, or transfer of the firearm is not made for any reason, the Forms 4473 for those transaction shall be maintained in a separate folder than the successful transactions. These shall be kept for at least 5 years.