

Fingerprint Identification Records System (FIRS)

The Fingerprint Identification Records System (FIRS) is used to perform identification and criminal history record functions and maintain resultant records for local, state, tribal, Federal, foreign, and international criminal justice agencies, as well as for noncriminal justice agencies and other entities where authorized by Federal statute, state statute pursuant to Public Law 92-544, Presidential Executive Order, or regulation of the Attorney General of the United States. In addition, identification assistance is provided in disasters and for other humanitarian purposes. Records within FIRS are maintained as automated records within the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS), as microfilm, or in their original state as hard copy fingerprint cards stored in file cabinets.

Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS)

The Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) was developed to sustain the FBI's mission of providing identification services to the nation's law enforcement community and to organizations where criminal background histories are a critical factor in consideration for employment. IAFIS is an integrated system that provides ten-print, latent print, subject search, and criminal history request services, document submission, and image request services to FBI service providers as well as Federal, state, and local law enforcement users.

As a prerequisite to developing IAFIS, the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division worked with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the fingerprint community to develop a standard for electronically encoding and transmitting fingerprint image, identification, and arrest data. This standard consists of an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard entitled "Data Format for the Interchange of Fingerprint Information" (ANSI NIST-CSL 1-1993), together with an addendum "Data Format for the Interchange of Fingerprint, Facial, and SMT Information" (ANSI NIST-ITL 1a-1997). The IAFIS specific standard is named the Electronic Fingerprint Transmission Specification, version 7.

At the present time, CJIS maintains a dual recordkeeping system consisting of an electronic fingerprint identification system (IAFIS) as well as a paper based repository of criminal master fingerprint cards. In 1995, CJIS and the Laboratory Division signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing that CJIS would continue to maintain the paper file until both parties approve its destruction. This MOU was established because the Laboratory's specifications for scanning fingerprints (i.e., resolution requirements) do not coincide with the fingerprint specifications established for use in IAFIS. The Laboratory and CJIS continue to discuss the development of a uniform scanning standard, but until an agreement is reached, CJIS will continue to maintain the criminal master fingerprint file in paper format as well as electronically in IAFIS.

A. INPUTS:

- 1.) Image files:** Electronic images of civil and criminal fingerprints acquired from outside agencies. Civil fingerprints are submitted electronically by local, state, or Federal agencies for Federal employment, military service, alien registration and

naturalization, and personal identification purposes. Criminal fingerprints are submitted as a result of an arrest at the local, state, or Federal level. Criminal fingerprints are processed locally and then electronically forwarded to a state or Federal agency processing center. In the majority of the cases, the prints are electronically transmitted through the CJIS Wide Area Network (WAN) to the FBI. The civil and criminal fingerprints are then imported into IAFIS through the Identification Tasking and Networking (ITN) segment.

2.) Hard copy fingerprint cards: Some city, county, state, and Federal jurisdictions do not possess electronic fingerprint imaging and transmittal capabilities. Fingerprints from these sources are submitted in ten-print hard copy format. Once these cards are received by CJIS, they are scanned by Card Scanning Services (CSS) and imported into IAFIS as an electronic image.

a. Civil Fingerprint Cards: DESTROY after verification of a successful scan.

b. Criminal Fingerprint Cards: As images are imported into IAFIS, the system assigns one of three designators to the images. “R” designates a return submission with a response, “D” designates a destroy submission, and “T” designates a submission which has been retained in IAFIS.

1. “R” and “D” cards: DESTROY after verification of a successful scan.
2. “T” cards: Interfile in the hard copy Criminal Master File (CMF).

3.) Latent prints: The FBI Laboratory receives electronic and hard copy latent prints. Hard copy prints are converted by the Laboratory and then used to perform matches in the IAFIS system. IAFIS provides the FBI’s laboratory with enhanced search capabilities using databases especially designed for matching latent prints. The Laboratory has the option of adding unidentified latent fingerprints to IAFIS; however, not all unidentified latent fingerprints are retained in the Unsolved Latent File (ULF).

B. DATA FILES:

1.) Identification Tasking and Networking (ITN): The Identification Tasking and Networking (ITN) segment of IAFIS serves as the system’s workflow manager by receiving incoming transactions and routing them based on the type of transaction. ITN interacts with both the Interstate Identification Index (III) and the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and links networks to the FBI. ITN provides the computer applications for ten-print, document, and latent processing and maintains the Fingerprint Image Master File (FIMF). It is also the principal interface to external users who submit electronic submissions and requests. The ten-print processing sub-element (TPS) processes automated and manual fingerprint submissions. The document processing sub-element (DPS) processes file maintenance requests, search requests, and record requests. The latent

processing sub-element (LPS) provides latent specialists with the ability to create a submission, enter it on the submission log, and scan latent prints into the image log.

- a. **Electronic File Folders (EFF):** The electronic file folders (EFF) contain the incoming ten print submissions and any changes made to the submissions during IAFIS processing. Once IAFIS processing and file maintenance is complete, the submission is deleted from the EFF.
- b. **Ten print certification file:** This file maintains an exact copy of each fingerprint card submission, which CJIS is legally required to maintain. These copies are known as “ten-print certification cards.”
- c. **Unsolved Latent File (ULF):** This file contains latent fingerprint images that have been input by the FBI Laboratory and state agencies.

DELETE/DESTROY when the crime is solved or when the record owner requests its removal.

- d. **Audit log:**
 1. **Transaction history file:** This log identifies each user transaction processed by IAFIS including each function performed on the input data to include who performed the function, when it was performed, and the results of the function performed; the server which performed the function; final output data; transaction start time and date; and transaction completion time and date.

Maintain online for two years and then offline for 3 years.
DELETE/DESTROY when 5 years old.

NOTE: User Fee (UF) records are maintained according to the disposition authorities approved in NARA Job No. NC1-65-83-26.

2. **Receiving Agency Notification Report (RANR):** The RANR is associated with the III Subject Criminal History Record. This log records replies to contributing agencies and the date those responses were sent out.

DELETE/DESTROY when the corresponding index record is removed from III.

- e. **Fingerprint Image Master File (FIMF):** The FIMF is subdivided into criminal and civil files:

1. **Criminal Subject Master File:** This data file was put into operation in July 1999. It is a digital copy of the hard copy Criminal Master File and contains more than 46 million images and their associated indices. The database consists of three fields: a binary fingerprint image, an FBI number (FNU), and a flag noting whether the file is active or inactive. The file is used to support manual fingerprint comparisons.

DELETE/DESTROY all fingerprint cards and corresponding indices when the individual is 99 years of age or 7 years after notification of an individual's death, whichever is later.

NOTE. When an expungement order is received from a Federal court, then the identified records will be destroyed in accordance with the court order. CJIS will also comply with expungement requests from state and local criminal justice agencies to delete arrest data that has been submitted by that agency.

2. **Civil Subject Index Master File:** This data file was created in May 2000 and contains over 4.5 million images. The file includes fingerprint cards, index information, and related material, which are generated as a result of Federal employment applications or military service, for alien registration and naturalization purposes, and for personal identification purposes.

DELETE/DESTROY when the individual is 75 years old.

NOTE: IAFIS does not currently have the capability to delete these records, but a system modification is in the planning stages.

- 2.) **Interstate Identification Index (III):** The III segment serves as the holder of descriptive information and criminal history services for the IAFIS community, which includes local, state, and Federal law enforcement agencies as well as civilian agencies. Requests are received electronically from ITN service providers. Non-electronic special requests from designated Federal and civilian agencies are given to IAFIS service providers who electronically submit the request to IAFIS. III performs automated name and biographic searches in response to ITN, National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) requests. III supports NCIC Query History (QH) and Query Record (QR) messages by providing answers to millions of queries per day.

III services are made up of subject search, file maintenance, response generation, and segment administrator support services. Subject search services provide the capability to search the criminal and civil repositories for a specific subject or a subject with a similar sounding name. File maintenance services support the addition, modification, and deletion of data from the criminal history and civil

subject databases. All file maintenance occurs first in III; whenever a record is added to IAFIS, it is first added to III, and then messages are sent out to ITN and AFIS. Response generation services produce replies to database queries and file maintenance requests.

Subject Criminal History File: The master file in IAFIS, this file contains the criminal history records or “rap sheets” of over 46 million individuals. Included in the subject criminal history file are notations of arrests/court/custody information and personal descriptive data.

PERMANENT: Transfer in a format acceptable to NARA at the end of the calendar year in which records indicate that the individual has reached 99 years of age or 7 years have elapsed since notification of the individual’s death, whichever is later. Verification of death is established by comparison of deceased individual’s fingerprints with the fingerprints in the record. [NOTE: This retention period has previously been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Job No. N1-65-95-03 and is included only for clarification purposes).

- 3.) Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS):** AFIS provides searches based on fingerprint features. AFIS contains limited descriptive information (i.e., race and sex) which is used to narrow the hits for latent fingerprint identification purposes.

DELETE/DESTROY when the corresponding fingerprint card and index are removed from III or ITN.

C. OUTPUTS:

1. Response to inquiries
2. Fingerprint identification/non-identification
3. Subject search and criminal history
4. Direct remote searches
5. Statistical reports: DELETE/DESTROY when superseded, obsolete, or no longer needed for reference.

D. SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION:

CJIS maintains extensive documentation detailing the development, implementation, and operation of the IAFIS system. CJIS is currently converting the system documentation to electronic format.

- 1.) **Documentation for Criminal History File:** Data system codebooks and record layouts identifying the logical and physical structure of the data transferred to NARA.

PERMANENT: Transfer system modifications in a format acceptable to NARA annually with the transfer of related records (NOTE: This disposition authority was previously approved in NARA Job No. N1-65-95-03 and is included for clarification purposes only).

2.) **All other system documentation:** Documentation regarding the development, implementation, and operation of the IAFIS system.

- a. **Hard copy:** DESTROY after verification of a successful scan.
- b. **Scanned version:** DELETE/DESTROY when system is discontinued.

E. SYSTEM BACKUPS: IAFIS is backed up daily in case system restoration is required due to a failure or other unintentional loss of data.

DELETE/DESTROY when superseded or when no longer needed for system restoration, whichever is later. (GRS 24, Item 4 a).

F. RELATED RECORDS:

1.) Additional Record Sheets (ARS): Prior to automation, CJIS maintained fingerprint cards in a manual jacket. The cards were two-hole punched and attached to a file back by the use of a two-prong clasp. The file back was known as the ARS back. One side of the ARS back contained employee identification numbers and dates that indicated when a file was pulled for some action. The other side of the ARS back was used primarily to record any disseminations of the record, including notations of expungements or purges of record entries, such as deletions of arrests for non-serious offenses. ARS backs were only maintained for criminal fingerprint cards. CJIS is in the process of converting these cards to electronic format.

- a. **Hard copy files:** DESTROY after verification of a successful scan.
- b. **Scanned version:** DELETE when the individual has reached 99 years of age or 7 years have elapsed since notification of individual's death, whichever is later.

NOTE: When an expungement order is received from a Federal court, then the identified records will be destroyed in accordance with the court order. CJIS will also comply with expungement requests from state and local criminal justice agencies to delete arrest data that has been submitted by that agency.

2.) Hard copy fingerprint cards: Note: The below retention periods have previously been approved by NARA in Job Nos. N1-65-02-04 and N1-65-95-03 respectively and are included solely for reference.

a. Civil Fingerprint Cards/Records: Fingerprint cards and related manual indices generated in connection with the background investigations of military enlistees and civilian job applicants.

DESTROY all fingerprint cards and other corresponding manual indices when the records indicate that the individual has reached 75 years of age.

b. Criminal Fingerprint Cards/Records (including the Criminal Master File): Identification records (Rap Sheets), fingerprint cards, and corresponding manual or automated indices generated in connection with the arrest or incarceration of individuals.

DESTROY all fingerprint cards, manual record information, and corresponding indices when records indicate that the individual has reached 99 years of age or 7 years have elapsed since notification of individual's death, whichever is later.

3.) Henry Classified Military File: The CJIS Division maintains a collection of approximately 4.1 million Henry Classified Military Fingerprint Cards for enlisted personnel with birthdates of 1960 to present. The cards are separated by the subject's gender and filed according to Henry Classification. These fingerprint cards are searched to process Bureau fugitive requests, telephone requests from various CJIS offices, and the Laboratory Division's Latent Fingerprint Section for identification purposes. In the past, the cards have been manually searched; however, this process is not only inefficient, but also adds hours of search time to immediate and sensitive requests. To facilitate searching, the Henry Classified Military fingerprint cards are being converted to electronic images and stored in the IAFIS Civil Subject Index Master File.

DESTROY hard copy fingerprint cards after verification of a successful scan. NOTE: electronic versions will be deleted in accordance with disposition instructions for the Civil Subject Index Master File.

4.) Microfilm Library: The microfilm library consists of 38,824 rolls containing approximately 50 million criminal fingerprint images. The microfilm conversion project began in 1958 and ended in July 1999 with the implementation of IAFIS. The fingerprints were not microfilmed in order by date of birth; therefore, the entire microfilm collection will be maintained until the birth date of the most recent set of fingerprints (i.e. born in 1981) reaches 99 years of age.

DESTROY in 2080.

NOTE: When an expungement order is received from a Federal court, then the identified records will be destroyed in accordance with the court order. CJIS will also comply with expungement requests from state and local criminal justice agencies to delete arrest data that has been submitted by that agency.