



# GEORGIA BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Director

**GBI CRIME LAB  
OPERATIONS BULLETIN 2025-02  
NEW SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR FIREARMS EVIDENCE  
(Operations Bulletins 2023-01 and 2024-01 are rescinded)  
September 5, 2025**

The GBI Crime Lab has updated the requirements for the submission of firearms to our laboratories to maintain a safe and efficient laboratory environment for our staff. Operations Bulletins 2023-01 and 2024-01 are rescinded. The updated information are identified throughout the document as (UPDATE REQUIREMENT)

All firearms (handguns and long guns) are required to be submitted in commercially available gun boxes **with clear windows** that will allow the viewing of the contents. Additionally, it will be required to fasten a plastic zip tie through the gun in a position where the chamber can be viewed through the window without opening the box. Zip tie instructions are described and shown below, and available in the Firearms and Toolmarks service manual on the GBI-DOFS website ([Firearms | Georgia Bureau of Investigation Division of Forensic Sciences](#)) Window gun boxes may be purchased from the vendor of your choice.

Packaging and Submission Requirements for guns and ammunition:

- Do not submit a loaded firearm to the crime laboratory. **(UPDATED REQUIREMENT) Any firearm that cannot be unloaded prior to submission must be submitted to Headquarters, Coastal or Western Laboratories only.** Please call ahead to ensure a trained firearms scientist is available to handle the firearm. A firearm that cannot be unloaded will NOT be accepted at the Northeastern, Eastern, Central, or Southwestern laboratories and must be transported to one of the acceptable locations for submission.
- Slides on handguns must be locked open and a zip tie inserted through the magazine well and ejection port to demonstrate the unloaded condition. The same zip tie should also be used to secure the handgun to the box to ensure the handgun does not move around within the box.
- The magazine must be removed from all firearms. It is acceptable to leave cartridges in the magazine. **(UPDATED REQUIREMENT) All magazines containing cartridges must be placed in a sealed package and zip tied inside the box near the bottom to prevent cartridges from becoming loose in the box.**
- If cartridges are submitted in the box with the gun, they MUST be contained in a separate sealed package and zip tied within the box.
- Do not package recovered/spent cartridge cases or bullets in the same box as a gun. They must be submitted separately.
- Evidence Receiving Staff will provide guidance for proper packaging but will not handle or package firearms for submitting agencies.

**(EXCEPTION)** Firearms that are being resubmitted to the laboratory for additional testing are not required to be repackaged to meet the updated firearm packaging requirements. These items should be submitted in their original packaging as previously returned from the laboratory. The original Department of Forensic Sciences (DOFS) barcode labels must remain affixed and clearly visible on all resubmitted items.

## DIRECTIONS FOR ZIP TIE USE

A firearm must be secured in a windowed gun box so that it can be easily confirmed the firearm is unloaded without opening the sealed box. The use of zip ties in the position(s) pictured below will allow lab staff to see the firearm is unloaded in addition to securing it to the box (one firearm per box).

For **pistols**, the slide must be locked rearward when possible and the zip tie will be inserted through the magazine well and through the ejection port. This zip tie can also be used to secure the pistol to the box.



For **revolvers**, the zip tie must be secured through one of the chambers in the cylinder. A second zip tie will be used to secure the firearm to the box (pictured below). In the event the cylinder is removeable and not a swing out, the cylinder can be removed from the frame and secured to the box with a zip tie through a chamber.



For **long guns**, the zip tie should be inserted through the magazine well and through the ejection port when possible. If this is not possible, the bolt should be in the open position to easily view the chamber. It is also acceptable to submit long guns (rifles and shotguns) in boxes without windows when a suitable window box is not available.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us preserve safe and effective evidence submission process.

If there are any questions or concerns about the information covered in this bulletin, please contact your local regional crime lab manager or HQ Evidence Receiving Manager, Lori Smalls at 404-270-8159 or [Lori.Smalls@gbi.ga.gov](mailto:Lori.Smalls@gbi.ga.gov).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cleveland L. Miles".

Cleveland L. Miles, Division Director  
GBI Division of Forensic Sciences