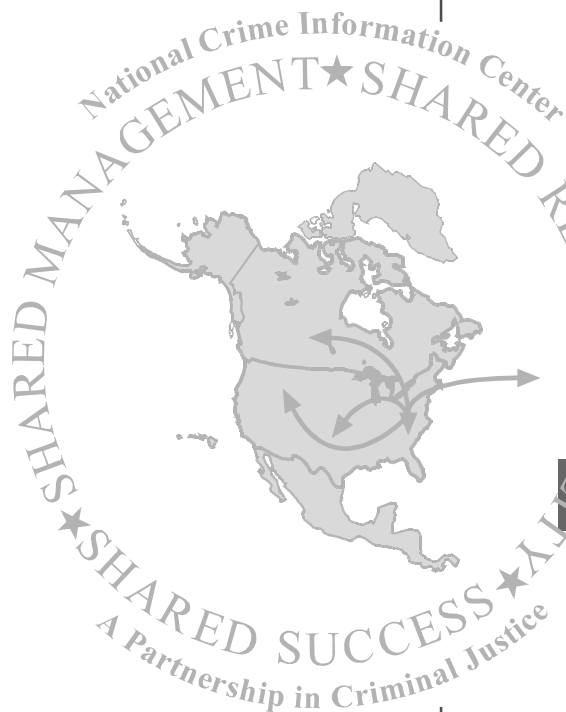


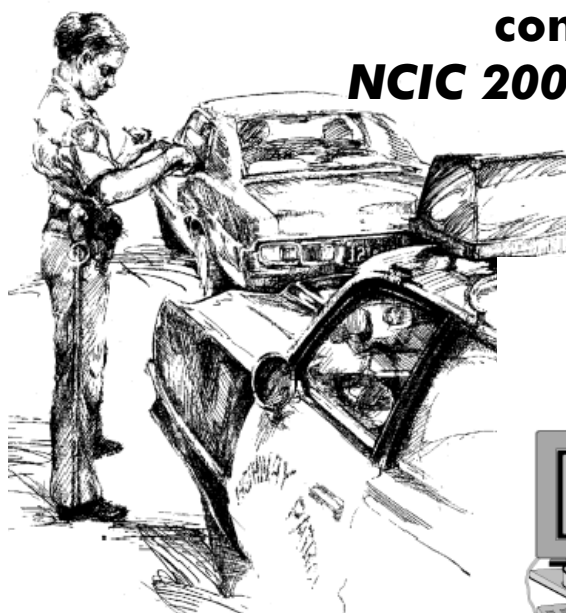


The Investigative Tool

Revised April 2001

NCIC
National Crime
Information Center

The Investigative Tool
is a synopsis of some
of the National Crime
Information Center's
most important
features and a
complement to the
comprehensive
NCIC 2000 Operating
Manual.



Foreword

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is a computerized information system containing documented criminal justice information. Established in 1967 as a service to local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies, the System has grown to include more than 100,000 criminal justice agency users.

Historically, NCIC has contained information on wanted persons, missing persons, and stolen property. In recent years, the files have been expanded to include information on individuals who, for one reason or another, may pose a danger to others. The Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File was added in 1995, the Deported Felon File in 1996, and the Protection Order File in 1997. The Convicted Person on Supervised Release and the Convicted Sexual Offender Registry Files became operational following the implementation of NCIC 2000 in 1999.

This edition of *The Investigative Tool* offers an updated look at the System, including the new person files and the Image File, which stores identifying images associated with persons or property or as a reference. Additionally, information concerning investigative applications such as Off-line Searches, Delayed Inquiry, and the One Crime Inquiry are included.

This booklet is a synopsis of some of the System's most important features intended to complement the more detailed *NCIC 2000 Operating Manual*.

Contents

THE TOOLS OF NCIC	7
The NCIC Network	7
Entry	8
Record Retention	8
Inquiry Guidelines	8
Hit Confirmation	10
Preserving System Security	11
Information Security Officer (ISO) Program	11
INTERSTATE IDENTIFICATION INDEX (III)	12
NCIC FILES	12
Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) File	12
Wanted Person File	12
Missing Person File	13
Unidentified Person File	14
Foreign Fugitive File	16
U.S. Secret Service Protective File	17
Vehicle File	18
License Plate File	18
Boat File	18
Securities File	19
Article File	19
Gun File	20
Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File	21
Deported Felon File	22
Protection Order File	22
Image File	24
Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File	25
Convicted Person on Supervised Release File	25
CANADIAN VEHICLE INDEX	25
SPECIAL CAPABILITIES OF NCIC	26
Off-line Searches	26
Delayed Inquiry Program	27
NCIC 2000	27
Other Transactions/Capabilities	28
REFERENCE SECTION	30
Record Retention	30
CONCLUSION	32

The Tools of NCIC

The NCIC Network

NCIC serves criminal justice agencies located in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada. NCIC also provides inquiry-only capability to more than 30 foreign countries for access to records maintained in the Vehicle, License Plate, and Boat Files.

The NCIC computer stores vast amounts of criminal justice information that can be instantly retrieved and furnished to any authorized terminal. A user may access the NCIC System through a regional and/or state computer system or, in some cases, through a direct line to the NCIC System. NCIC standards require responses to be returned within seconds.

The NCIC computer stores records in the following files:

- Originating Agency Identifier (ORI)
- Wanted Person
- Missing Person
- Unidentified Person
- Foreign Fugitive
- U.S. Secret Service Protective
- Vehicle
- License Plate
- Boat
- Vehicle/Boat Part
- Image
- Securities
- Article
- Gun
- Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization
- Deported Felon
- Protection Order
- Convicted Person on Supervised Release
- Convicted Sexual Offender Registry

The Interstate Identification Index (III), accessed through NCIC, is an index containing identifying data for individuals with criminal history records.

Entry

NCIC contains records entered by participating criminal justice agencies. Agencies that enter records are responsible for their accuracy, timeliness, and completeness. Requirements concerning which agencies can make entries and what kinds of data are required for specific entries vary according to the nature of the file. The NCIC Files Section of this booklet contains individual file descriptions that provide more specific details.

It is important to remember that the entry of **all** available descriptive data in an NCIC record can aid an inquiring agency in the identification of the person or item of property inquired upon.

Timeliness of entry is also important as **prompt** entry of a record can be instrumental in the quick solution of a case.

Record Retention

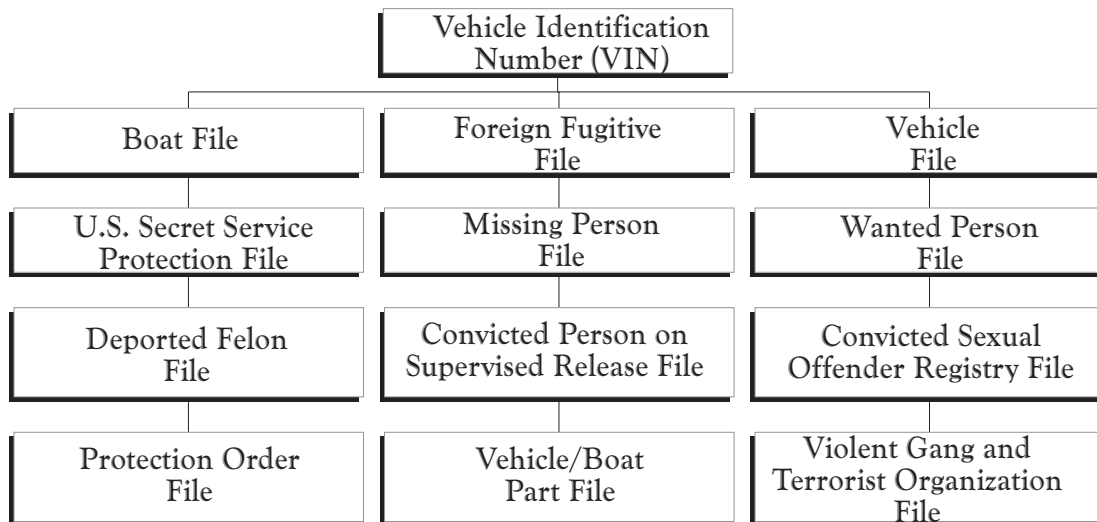
Records entered into NCIC are retained for a specific period of time. The length of record retention depends upon the NCIC file into which the record was entered, as well as the type of record that was entered. Investigators who handle cases that continue for extended periods of time should be aware that their NCIC entries may automatically be retired. Records may be reentered if the circumstances surrounding the case warrant such action. Record retention periods are provided in the Reference Section of this booklet.

Inquiry Guidelines

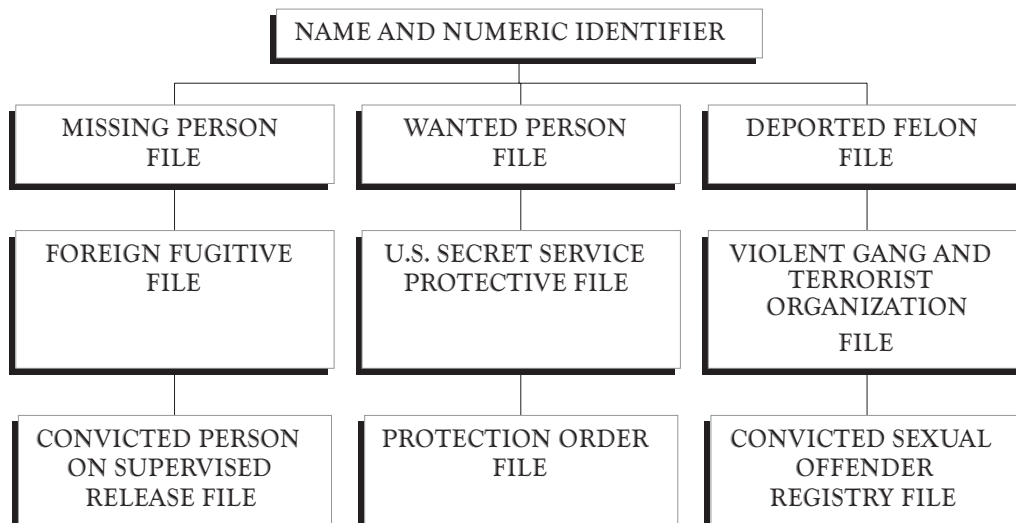
An inquiry is a transaction that contains information necessary to conduct a search of active NCIC files.

Each NCIC file has unique data requirements that must be fulfilled before an inquiry can be initiated. The *NCIC File Reference Card* provides these data requirements in a summarized format.

Using certain data during an inquiry will automatically initiate a search of several files. For example, any inquiry containing a vehicle identification number will automatically initiate a search of the vehicle identification numbers entered in the Boat, Foreign Fugitive, Vehicle, U.S. Secret Service Protective, Missing Person, Wanted Person, Deported Felon, Convicted Person on Supervised Release, Convicted Sexual Offender Registry, Protection Order, Vehicle/Boat Part, and Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization Files. Any inquiry containing a license plate number will automatically activate a search of the license plate numbers entered in the above-mentioned files as well as the License Plate File.



Any inquiry containing a name and a numeric identifier will cause an automatic search of the Foreign Fugitive, U.S. Secret Service Protective, Missing Person, Wanted Person, Deported Felon, Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization, Convicted Person on Supervised Release, Convicted Sexual Offender Registry, and Protection Order Files.



III inquiry transactions search only the III File.

Inquiries may also contain a Related Search Hit (RSH) Field. If the RSH is Y, secondary hit responses will be returned for all records with the same Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) and Originating Agency Case Number (OCA) as the primary hit response and all records linked by the Linking Agency Identifier (LKI) and Linking Case Number (LKA) contained in the primary hit response.

Users are reminded to enter all available information when making an inquiry. This practice results in a more accurate response. Also, users should make multiple inquiries when appropriate. For example, authorities should always query NCIC prior to releasing suspects from custody. At times, law enforcement officers only inquire on suspects when taking them into custody. It is possible, however, that another agency will make an entry on the subject while he or she is still in custody.

Hit Confirmation

Any agency that receives a record in response to an NCIC inquiry must confirm the “hit” on the record. Hit confirmation must be made prior to taking any action based on the hit, such as arresting the wanted person, detaining the missing person, or seizing the stolen property.

Confirming a hit means to contact the agency that entered the record to:

- Ensure that the person or property inquired upon is identical to the person or property identified in the record.
- Ensure that the warrant, missing person report, or theft report is still outstanding.
- Obtain information regarding: (1) the extradition of a wanted person when applicable, (2) the return of a missing person to the appropriate authorities, (3) the return of stolen property to its rightful owner, or (4) the terms and conditions of a protection order.

The National Law Enforcement Telecommunication Systems, Inc. (NLETS) is the recommended network for hit confirmation. Even if the initial confirmation is handled via telephone, NLETS should be used for documentation. NLETS has created inquiry (YQ) and response (YR) formats for hit confirmation. The (YQ) must contain one of the following priorities:

Priority 1 Urgent - confirm the hit within 10 minutes. In those instances where the hit is the only basis for detaining a suspect or the nature of a case requires urgent confirmation of a hit, this priority should be used.

Priority 2 Routine - confirm the hit within 1 hour. This priority will be used when the person is being held on local charges or when property has been located under circumstances where immediate action is not necessary.

After confirming the hit with the entering agency and upon taking a person into custody or acquiring property, the recovering agency must place a “locate” on the corresponding NCIC record.

Preserving System Security

Information stored in NCIC is documented criminal justice data and must be protected to ensure correct, legal, and efficient dissemination. Agencies operating NCIC terminals should secure terminals from any unauthorized use. Any departure from these responsibilities may result in written censure and the possible removal of the offending agency from participation in NCIC.

In complying with hit confirmation requirements, the originating agency must assure that hit confirmation is available for all records, except III records, 24 hours a day either at the agency or through a written agreement with another agency at its location.

Ultimate control of System security rests with the agency participants. The FBI contributes to maintaining System integrity through: (1) automatic computer edits that reject certain common types of erroneous data, (2) automatic purges of records after they are on file for a prescribed time period, (3) quality control checks by FBI personnel, and (4) periodic validation of records by the entering agencies. These administrative procedures help to ensure the accurate entry of data.

Information Security Officer (ISO) Program

The increased use of systems linked by networks and the tremendous growth of electronic communications within the criminal justice community has created an urgent need to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of advanced identification and information system security.

As law enforcement agencies use more cost-effective and efficient communications such as the Internet to transport criminal justice information, there is a renewed awareness of the need for maximizing computer security. Because these technological advances have produced additional risks, more stringent precautions must be taken to protect criminal justice networks from destruction or unauthorized modification of hardware, firmware, software, and data; unauthorized or inappropriate disclosure of data; and interruption of access to mission-critical functions.

The Security Policy allows the use of the Internet and dial-up access as valid transport media but only when all security requirements have been implemented in accordance with the policy. These requirements include authentication, encryption, and a firewall-type device.

To ensure compliance with the Security Policy, all agencies must establish an information security structure that provides an Information Technology (IT) ISO at each Interface Agency including the Control Terminal Agencies (CTA), Federal Service Coordinator Agencies (FSC), and the INTERPOL National Central Bureau. The ISO's duties include, but are not limited to, administering the secure dial-up system, developing and maintaining network topology documentation, supporting security-related configuration management for the Interface Agency, serving as the point of contact for computer incident notification, and distributing security alerts to the Interface Agency Representatives and local agencies.

For more information on the ISO Program, agencies should contact the CJIS Advisory Process ISO, Contract Administration Office, Criminal Justice Information Services Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Module C3, 1000 Custer Hollow Road, Clarksburg, West Virginia 26306; telephone 304-625-2763.

Interstate Identification Index (III)

III is an automated system that facilitates the interstate exchange of on-line criminal history record information among criminal justice agencies. It consists of an index containing individuals' names, aliases, physical descriptors, identifying numbers, fingerprint classifications, and the names of the agencies maintaining the criminal history information.

An inquiry message searches the index by name and numeric identifiers to determine if a person has a criminal history record on file. A positive response contains additional identifying data to associate the record with the subject of the inquiry and may return records for multiple subjects. A III request can then be made by FBI number to generate criminal history reports from all locations maintaining files on the subject. The FBI provides records via NCIC for persons arrested by federal agencies and states not currently participating in III. Participating states furnish records from their files using the NLETS.

NCIC FILES

Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) File

An ORI is a nine-character identifier assigned by NCIC to an agency in order to identify the agency in transactions on the NCIC System.

Each NCIC record response contains the ORI of the entering agency. NCIC users can make an inquiry into this file using the ORI received in the hit, which will reveal the entering agency's name, address, and telephone number. Using this information, inquiring agencies are able to contact the originating agency to confirm record data.

The ORI File maintains pertinent information on virtually every criminal justice agency in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada, as well as certain foreign criminal justice agencies.

Wanted Person File

The Wanted Person File contains records on individuals for whom a felony, serious misdemeanor, or federal warrant is outstanding, as well as parole and probation violators. This file also includes records for juveniles who will be tried as adults or have been adjudged delinquent, who have absconded while on probation or parole, or who have escaped from an institution or agency vested with legal custody or supervision.

When entering a record for a wanted person, the originating agency must attempt to determine if extradition will be authorized if the individual is located in another state. (Extradition is the surrender of an individual charged or convicted of an offense outside of his/her own territory and within the territorial jurisdiction of the other state.) The entering agency should ensure that extradition decisions are immediately available if the wanted person is located outside of its jurisdiction. Any known limitation concerning the extradition of a wanted person (i.e., extradition from bordering states only) must be stated in the NCIC record. If extradition is denied across state lines, the record should be entered into NCIC with “NOEX” as the first four characters of the Miscellaneous (MIS) Field.

If a law enforcement agency cannot immediately obtain a warrant and must take prompt action to apprehend a person who has committed a felony, the agency can enter a temporary felony want record. As soon as possible after obtaining a warrant, the agency must cancel the temporary felony want record and enter a permanent wanted person record or modify the temporary felony want record to a permanent status. The System will automatically remove a temporary felony want record after 48 hours.

An agency may modify a wanted person record to include additional information obtained from the III. However, care must be taken to ensure the subject of the warrant and the subject of the criminal history are the same person. The III records contain personal identifying characteristics on the subject and may furnish additional information such as aliases, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, scars and tattoos.

Missing Person File

The Missing Person File contains records for persons meeting any of the following criteria:

- **Juvenile:** A person (child) who is missing and under the age of 18.
- **Endangered:** A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that his/her physical safety may be in danger.
- **Disabled:** A person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile, thereby subjecting himself/herself or others to personal and immediate danger.
- **Involuntary:** A person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary (abduction or kidnaping).
- **Catastrophe Victim:** A person of any age who is missing after a presumed or known catastrophe.
- **Other:** A person over the age of 18 not meeting the criteria for entry in any other category who is missing and for whom there is a reasonable concern for his/her safety.

A record for a missing person who is over the age of 18 may be entered in the Missing Person File provided the entering agency has signed documentation in its possession supporting the stated conditions under which the person is declared missing. This documentation will aid in the protection of the individual’s right to privacy.

In the absence of documentation from a parent, legal guardian, next of kin, physician, or other authoritative source, including friend or neighbor in unusual circumstances, or when such documentation is not reasonably attainable, a signed report by the investigating officer will suffice.

Before entering a report for a missing person, the officer should gather all **readily** available information. These data should include, but are not limited to, a description of the person's clothing, jewelry, and other personal accessories. Complete dental information, fingerprints, photographs, corrective vision prescription, blood type, X rays, medical records, history of drug use (both prescribed and abusive), and information concerning any vehicle associated with the disappearance obtained later should be **promptly** added to the record.

To facilitate the timely gathering of information on missing person and unidentified person records, NCIC has prepared special forms for use in collecting these details. These form packets, which may be obtained through the Control Terminal Agencies in each state or directly from the CJIS Division, are available to any criminal justice agency at no charge.

One unique feature of the Missing Person File is that it allows agencies to formulate an inquiry using nonunique identifiers. With this capability, users may make inquiries when specific information is not available, such as when a child or amnesia victim is found and is unable to give his/her name and/or date of birth. In order to inquire using nonunique descriptive data, users can include data such as approximate age, sex, race, eye and hair color, and approximate height and weight. An inquiry of this nature may match more than one missing person record. The user must review each of the candidate records to confirm a match.

Approximately 80 percent of NCIC Missing Person File entries pertain to juveniles. Although a majority of missing juveniles (runaways) return home on their own, the small but critical percentage of those who do not must be found. The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 (the "Child Act") requires law enforcement agencies to make entries for all missing juveniles without observing any waiting period.

In addition to the Missing Person File, NCIC offers the Unidentified Person File. These two files have been designed to complement each other. Records entered in the NCIC Missing Person File are automatically searched against records in the Unidentified Person File to seek possible matches. This search capability is described in greater detail in the following section.

Unidentified Person File

The Unidentified Person File assists law enforcement personnel in identifying unidentified persons and body parts. There are three different categories for entering records into the Unidentified Person File:

- Unidentified deceased persons, including victims of catastrophe.
- Unidentified living persons who are unaware of their identities, such as amnesia victims, small children, persons with Alzheimer's disease, etc.
- Body parts. (Cases have arisen in which a body has been dismembered and disposed of in different geographic locations. Entry of these records may provide investigative links between agencies that have recovered body parts.)

The types of data included in an Unidentified Person File record include blood type, estimated year of birth, approximate height and weight, jewelry, medical conditions, and dental characteristics.

An agency that recovers an unidentified partial body can make an inquiry by identifying the specific body part(s) that has been recovered. The System will search for other records of incomplete bodies and transmit any matches which have that part(s) missing.

As with the Missing Person File, nonunique identifiers can be used when inquiring for unidentified person records. Such data include: approximate height, weight, and age; sex; race; eye and hair color.

Cross Searching the Missing and Unidentified Person Files

While playing in a ravine in Baldwin County, Alabama, two young boys discovered a body. Advanced stages of decomposition made identification difficult for county authorities. An autopsy determined strangulation as the cause of death and revealed that the body was that of a white male, 18-to 25-years-of-age, 5 feet 8 inches tall, and 145-155 pounds.

Baldwin County authorities entered a record into the NCIC Unidentified Person File using every available personal descriptor. A scar on the victim's finger, his dental chart, and his fingerprints provided information for coding the Scars, Marks, Tattoos, and Other Characteristics; the Dental Characteristics; and the Fingerprint Classification Fields. The initial cross-search of the Missing Person File returned a number of possible matches, all of which were eliminated during the follow-up investigation.

Meanwhile, a father in New Jersey was trying to locate his son. The son was absent from his Pensacola, Florida, address, and friends and employers could shed no light on his whereabouts. The concerned father contacted New Jersey authorities to file a missing person report.

The detective assigned to the case began the investigation by entering an NCIC Missing Person File record. A cross search of the NCIC files produced a possible match of the unidentified victim from Alabama. The physical descriptions were similar, particularly the scar on the fourth finger of the left hand. Automatic notification messages from NCIC informed both agencies of the possible match. The New Jersey authorities contacted the Alabama pathologist and agreed to compare dental X rays. Their collaboration resulted in the positive identification of the young man's body.

As this scenario illustrates, the Unidentified Person File operates in conjunction with the Missing Person File. The NCIC computer daily compares the identifiers contained in new and modified Unidentified Person File records with the identifiers in all Missing Person File records. Likewise, the identifiers in new and modified Missing Person File records are compared daily with all records in the Unidentified Person File. The identifiers used in the comparison are listed below.

Missing Person Record Identifiers	Unidentified Person Record Identifiers
Date of Birth	Estimated Year of Birth
Sex	Sex
Race	Race
Height	Estimated Height
Weight	Estimated Weight
Eye Color	Eye Color
Hair Color	Hair Color
Date of Last Contact	Estimated Date of Death
Date of Last Contact	Date Body Found
Scars, Marks, Tattoos	Scars, Marks, Tattoos
Fingerprint Classification	Fingerprint Classification
Jewelry Type	Jewelry Type
Originating Agency State Code	Originating Agency State Code
Blood Type	Blood Type
Dental Characteristics	Dental Characteristics

Once the computer has compared the new or modified record with all records in the other file, it transmits the best possible 100 matches to the entering agency to provide possible leads. If more than 100 records are matched, the remaining records can be obtained by contacting NCIC 2000 directly.

Foreign Fugitive File

On May 21, a man wanted in Greece for drug trafficking landed at Miami International Airport on a direct flight from London, England. Immigration and Naturalization Service officials at Miami Airport queried NCIC and found that an International Red Notice (an international wanted notice) had been issued on this man at the request of Greek authorities. INTERPOL-Washington, D.C. was notified. Authorities denied the man entry into the United States and extradited him back to Greece to face charges.

Established on July 1, 1987, the Foreign Fugitive File permits the INTERPOL office in Washington, D.C., to enter records for fugitives who are wanted in other countries for crimes that would be considered felonies if committed in the United States and who are the subjects of International Red or Blue Notices. An International Red Notice requests the arrest of the individual with the intent to extradite.

Generally, U.S. law enforcement officers cannot execute foreign-issued arrest warrants. However, Title 18, U.S. Code, Section 3184, states that a U.S. extradition warrant (federal arrest warrant) may be issued for the apprehension of a foreign fugitive who is found in the United States. This holds true only if a treaty or convention for extradition exists between the United States and the wanting foreign country.

A foreign fugitive record advises the inquiring agency that it cannot arrest the subject based solely on the file record. Responses for Canadian fugitives will instruct the agency to contact the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to confirm the hit and initiate the process of obtaining a U.S. extradition warrant. Responses for another country's fugitives will instruct the agency to contact INTERPOL. Once notified, INTERPOL will contact the country that issued the warrant to confirm that the warrant is still outstanding. Next, INTERPOL authorities will determine whether the foreign country wants to proceed with extradition. Following that country's decision to extradite, INTERPOL will notify the appropriate U.S. Department of Justice officials who will proceed with the application for a U.S. arrest warrant. If the subject of the inquiry match is not a U.S. citizen, the U.S. Department of Justice will contact the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

U.S. Secret Service Protective File

Two patrol officers on duty in Cahmet City, Illinois, effected the traffic stop of a motorist who had run a red light. An NCIC search that hit on a U.S. Secret Service Protective File record revealed that the driver had issued several threats against the President of the United States. In accordance with the record caveat, the officers contacted U.S. Secret Service Headquarters. Based on the subject's previous sightings and present whereabouts, authorities surmised that he had traveled through six states and was en route to Chicago. Agents noted that the President was scheduled to speak at the University of Chicago later that week. They proceeded to the site and interviewed the individual, at which time the subject expressed his desire to kill the President.

The U.S. Secret Service (USSS) Protective File aids the USSS in protecting the President of the United States and other designated protectees by storing records on individuals who pose perceived threats. Frequently, the subjects are categorized as "out of pocket," meaning their whereabouts are unknown. Hits made on this file serve the important function of informing the Secret Service of a subject's whereabouts.

U.S. Secret Service Headquarters is the only agency authorized to enter or cancel records in this file.

When an NCIC user receives a hit on a USSS record, the inquiring agency receives a message that the USSS has been notified of the transaction and that there is an interest in the whereabouts of the person in question. The inquiring agency should contact Secret Service Headquarters immediately using the phone number provided in the record. Law enforcement officers should not arrest or detain an individual based solely on the data furnished in the hit, but should await confirmation and instructions after conferring with the U.S. Secret Service.

Vehicle File

The Vehicle File contains records for stolen vehicles, including aircraft and trailers. A stolen vehicle record may be entered if a theft report has been made. The entering agency must maintain the entry in an up-to-date status. The agency holding the theft report should enter the record. In addition to theft reports, the file contains information about:

- Recovery of stolen vehicles or loaned, rented, or leased vehicles which have not been returned (providing an official police theft report has been made or a filed complaint results in the issuance of a warrant charging theft or embezzlement).
- Location of vehicles used in the commission of a felony (e.g., robbery, kidnaping, etc.).
- Recovery of vehicles subject to seizure based on a federally issued court order.

A record for a stolen Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) plate, certificate of origin/certificate of title (blank or associated with a vehicle), or a serially numbered engine, transmission, battery, carburetor, door, bumper, hubcap, etc., may be entered in the Vehicle/Boat Part File.

License Plate File

The License Plate File consists of records for standard passenger automobile plates and special plates that have a theft report on file. Entries are usually limited to instances where all plates are reported stolen. If one plate of the pair is reported stolen, a record entry is permitted provided that the owner will not use the remaining plate.

When an agency enters, modifies, locates, or removes a record for a license plate (or any record with license plate data) that is registered in another state, the NCIC computer will notify the state of registry.

Boat File

The Boat File assists law enforcement officers in the retrieval of stolen boats.

For entry into the Boat File, the boat must be one of the following: (1) an unrecovered stolen boat that has a registration number, document number, permanently attached Boat Hull Serial Number (BHN), or Owner-Applied Number (OAN) with a filed theft report or (2) a loaned, rented, or leased boat with a theft report or a filed complaint that results in the issuance of a warrant charging embezzlement, theft, etc.

Supplemental information such as Coast Guard Document Number, home port, hull shape, model name, and boat name may also be added to a stolen boat record.

The boat hull identification number, as well as the registration number, can be inquired on through the NCIC Boat File to determine whether or not a boat is stolen.

If only a boat part has been stolen (no boat involved), the record must be entered the Vehicle/Boat Part File.

Securities File

An officer of the Dover Township Police Department in Toms River, New Jersey, became suspicious of a vehicle located in a garage area. The officer followed the occupant of the vehicle who led him to a second car. The officer initiated a check on the license plate number and received an NCIC hit showing that the vehicle was stolen in Pennsylvania. The suspect was arrested and released on bail.

In the meantime, New Jersey detectives in possession of a large sum of money confiscated from the individual, as well as money which had been used to post bail, ran NCIC checks on the serial numbers of the bills. Forty-one hits were returned showing that the bills were part of \$270,000 taken during a bank robbery in Phoenix, Arizona, 3 weeks earlier.

Law enforcement officers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, arrested the suspect a few days later when he was reporting the New Jersey incident to his parole officer. He was subsequently returned to Phoenix.

The preceding is an excellent example of the advantage of regularly inquiring on currency in the possession of all persons arrested. Additionally, inquiries can be made concerning suspect securities received and reported by financial institutions.

The NCIC Securities File contains serially numbered identifiable securities that have been stolen, embezzled, or counterfeited, and for which a theft report has been made. Additionally, records for currency that have been stolen, used as bait money, or paid as ransom can be entered.

The following items do not meet the definition for entry in the NCIC Securities File: personal notes, bank drafts, bank officer's checks, cashier's checks, certified checks, company checks, lost or stolen credit cards, gift certificates, personal checks, savings and checking account passbooks, U.S. Treasury checks and other types of government checks (local and state), and gold or silver coins.

Article File

The Article File contains items of property with unique serial numbers that do not meet entry criteria for any of the other NCIC property files. Records entered in the Article File include bicycles, camera equipment, tools, household appliances, musical instruments, personal accessories, radios, televisions and sound entertainment devices, sports equipment, viewing equipment, data processing equipment, furniture, livestock, toxic chemicals, gaming equipment, collectibles, and items of identification.

An item of stolen property can be entered in the Article File when one or more of the following criteria is met:

- The item is valued at \$500 or more. (Office equipment, television sets, and bicycles can be entered regardless of value.)
- Regardless of value, the item is one of many stolen in a theft and the total dollar loss exceeds \$5,000.
- Regardless of value, the circumstances of the theft indicate that there is a probability of interstate movement, or the seriousness of the crime dictates that an entry should be made for investigative purposes.

Stolen or lost credit cards, bank drafts, and checks, including cashier's, certified, company, government (local, state, and federal), bank officer's, personal, and U.S. Treasury, are not to be entered in the Article File or any other NCIC file.

To ensure uniformity and eliminate confusion in the coding of items, an Article Name Dictionary is included in the *NCIC 2000 Code Manual*. This dictionary should be used for Article File entries and inquiries.

Many law enforcement agencies have established programs for the unique personal identification of all valuable property. Personal identification numbers are applied to property providing further assistance in the recovery of stolen items, even if items have not been labeled with a unique manufacturer's serial number. For NCIC purposes, this personal identifying number is known as an owner-applied number. It may be included as part of NCIC Article File records and used to make inquiries.

Gun File

The NCIC Gun File stores records for stolen, lost, and recovered firearms. The serial number of a stolen gun may be entered if a theft report has been made. A recovered (abandoned, seized, or found) weapon for which no stolen report is on file, whether or not ownership data are available, may be entered as a "recovered" gun. A recovered gun should be entered only after an inquiry reveals there is no stolen record on file. In the event another agency files a subsequent theft report and makes an NCIC Gun File entry, the agency holding the theft report will receive the recovered gun record and should, in turn, contact the recovering agency.

A record for a lost gun or missing weapon may be entered in NCIC if the entering agency has supporting documentation.

While the entering agency is in possession of the recovered weapon, the record remains in the NCIC database. If the entering agency loses custody of the recovered gun in any manner, that agency must cancel the entry.

Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File

The Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File was designed to provide law enforcement personnel with the means to exchange information on violent criminal gangs and terrorist organizations and their members. Officer safety is the key purpose of this file. Officers are given warning that a person they have encountered may be a potentially dangerous violent gang member or terrorist.

The information in this file is exclusively for the use of criminal justice agencies and is based, in part, on investigative information not previously subject to independent, judicial review. Therefore, strict adherence to policy on the security, use, and dissemination of information is necessary.

Within this file, the **Group Reference Capability** provides identifying information about violent gangs and terrorist organizations and their members. Users are directed to contact the entering agencies for further information concerning the gangs/organizations involved.

Records for street gangs of a violent criminal nature can be entered using the following criteria: (1) the group must be an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons and (2) the group must have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of “criminal or delinquent conduct.”

A terrorist organization must meet the following criteria for entry: (1) the group must be an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more individuals; (2) the group must be engaged in conduct or a pattern of conduct which involves the use of force or violence; and (3) the purpose of the group in using violence must be to intimidate or coerce a government or civilian population, or segment thereof, in the furtherance of political or social objectives.

The file’s **Group Member Capability** is established for the entry of information on individual members of gangs or terrorist organizations. It is designed to protect the officer on the street and to promote the exchange of information with the originating agency about specific gang members or terrorists.

The following criteria must exist before entering a group member: (1) the gang or terrorist organization (and subgroup) involved must meet requirements for entry in the gang reference portion of the file and entry must have been made and (2) the member must admit to membership in that gang or terrorist organization at the time of arrest or incarceration or must have been twice identified or observed by sources as a group member.

NCIC users should use appropriate caution when encountering potential members listed in the Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File. To assist law enforcement officers, the term “CAUTION,” the equivalent of “ARMED AND DANGEROUS,” will be printed at the beginning of all gang member records.

Deported Felon File

This file, created at the request of the INS, identifies deported criminal/aggravated felon aliens. Records on criminal aliens deported for drug trafficking, firearms trafficking, and serious violent crimes are maintained in this file. Vehicle and/or license data may be entered as part of the deported felon record if INS has reasonable grounds to believe that the person in question may be operating a particular vehicle or a vehicle bearing a particular license.

INS Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) is the only agency authorized to enter and maintain records.

An officer who receives a record on an individual must proceed as follows:

1. If the inquiry was made on an individual under routine conditions/circumstances (traffic stop, etc.), the individual should not be detained based solely on this notification. If the encountering agency has no other reason for detaining the individual, the agency should get all pertinent information relating to the individual and forward it to INS via NLETS.
2. If the inquiry was made on an individual who has been arrested or detained on other charges, the agency should notify the INS LESC to establish the identity of the subject.

Once INS has been notified that the previously deported criminal alien has returned to the United States, INS will respond by sending personnel to interview the subject. If the criminal has not received permission to return, INS, in conjunction with the U.S. Attorney's Office, will prosecute the individual.

Protection Order File

The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 contained three provisions that necessitated the development of the NCIC Protection Order File (POF):

1. Information from national crime information databases consisting of identification records, criminal history records, protection orders, and wanted person records may be disseminated to civil or criminal courts for use in domestic violence or stalking cases.
2. It is unlawful for any person who is the subject of a court order that restrains him/her from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner or child of an intimate partner to ship, transport, possess, or receive any firearm.
3. Any protection order that is consistent with the criteria established by the law and is issued by a court of one state shall be accorded full faith and credit by the court of another state.

In December 1995, the CJIS Advisory Policy Board approved the design, and the POF was implemented on May 4, 1997.

When responding to domestic violence incidents, law enforcement personnel can access the POF and obtain information on the existence and terms of a protection order.

Protection orders are issued to prevent acts of domestic violence against a person or to prevent a person from stalking, intimidating, or harassing another person. The types of protection orders issued and the information contained in them vary from state to state. In order for a record to be entered in the POF, it **must** meet the following criteria under 18 U.S.C. § 2266 (5):

PROTECTION ORDER. – The term “protection order” includes any injunction or other order issued for the purpose of preventing violent or threatening acts or harassment against, or contact or communication with or physical proximity to, another person, including any temporary or final order issued by a civil and criminal court (other than a support or child custody order issued pursuant to State divorce and child custody laws, except to the extent that such an order is entitled to full faith and credit under other Federal law) whether obtained by filing an independent action or as a pendente lite order in another proceeding so long as any civil order was issued in response to a complaint, petition or motion filed by or on behalf of a person seeking protection.

and under 18 U.S.C. § 2266 (6):

reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard must be given to the person against whom the order is sought sufficient to protect that person’s right to due process. In the case of ex parte orders, notice and opportunity to be heard must be provided within the time required by State or tribal laws, and in any event within reasonable time after the order is issued, sufficient to protect the respondent’s due process rights.

Protection orders that indicate that the subject is believed to be armed or dangerous should be entered using a caution indicator.

An inquiry of the POF using the QPO transaction will result in a search of *only* POF records and will not cause a cross search of any other file. However, an inquiry of the Wanted Person and/or Vehicle Files will result in the automatic cross search of the POF. Active records will be returned in a positive response; inactive records will not. (Inactive records include expired and cleared records.) When a QPO is made, both active and inactive records will be searched. Inquiries can be made using any of the following:

1. Name (NAM) (subject of the protection order) and one or more numeric identifier(s) pertaining to that subject.
2. NAM and Originating Agency Case Number (OCA).

3. NAM and Protection Order Number (PNO).
4. NAM and Date of Birth (DOB) of the protected person.

Protection Orders meeting certain criteria disqualify an individual from possessing, purchasing, or receiving a firearm per Federal Law 18, USC 922.

An order that restrains an individual from harassing, stalking, threatening, or engaging in other conduct that would place an intimate partner in reasonable fear of bodily injury to the partner or a child of the partner disqualifies that individual from possessing, purchasing, or receiving a firearm providing that the order was issued after a hearing, of which the subject received actual notice and at which such person had an opportunity to participate, and:

1. Includes a finding that the subject represents a credible threat to the physical safety of an intimate partner or child; or
2. Explicitly prohibits the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against an intimate partner or child that would reasonably be expected to cause bodily injury.

Image File

Images can be stored in the NCIC Image File for a person, property, or as a reference. The types of images that can be stored for a person are fingerprint, mugshot, signature, and identifying images such as a scar or tattoo.

Images of specific articles, parts, boats, and vehicles can be entered into this file. Generalized images of a particular make of vehicle or boat are stored as references and are referred to as generic images. A generic image can only be entered by FBI CJIS Division staff. These images can be associated to Vehicle or Boat File records.

An identifying image can be entered for Convicted Person on Supervised Release, U.S. Secret Service Protective, Missing Person, Deported Felon, Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization, Unidentified Person, Wanted Person, Convicted Sexual Offender Registry, Article, Vehicle, Boat, or Vehicle/Boat Files.

Image-processing equipment allows images to be processed by patrol cars. At booking stations and other state and federal agencies, images can be processed by an NCIC workstation or comparable equipment.

The user may initiate a fingerprint cold search inquiry (QIC) by scanning the right index fingerprint of a subject and entering the inquiry at the workstation or mobile unit. The searchprint is then transmitted via the CTA/FSC to NCIC and compared to all prints in the NCIC file. NCIC responds with a message indicating

a hit (the searchprint matches a print in the file) or a no hit (the searchprint does not match a print in the file). Hit responses include all information about the matching individual in the file. NCIC fingerprint matches do not constitute a positive identification; rather, they present probable cause only.

Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File

Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File information records can be entered in the NCIC System for a person who has been convicted of a criminal offense against a minor. This is defined as any criminal offense in a range of offenses specified by state law that is comparable to or exceeds the following range of offenses:

1. Kidnaping of a minor, except by a parent.
2. False imprisonment of a minor, except by a parent.
3. Criminal sexual conduct toward a minor.
4. Solicitation of a minor to engage in sexual conduct.
5. Use of a minor in a sexual performance.
6. Solicitation of a minor to practice prostitution.
7. Any conduct that by its nature is a sexual offense against a minor.

An attempt to commit any of the above-mentioned offenses could result in a person being entered into the Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File if the state makes such an attempt a criminal offense and chooses to include the offense in those which are criminal when committed against a minor. Also, a person who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense or a person who is a sexually violent predator may be entered into this file.

A standard inquiry searches the Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File in addition to other identifiable person files and retrieves active records only. A QXS inquiry retrieves only Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File records. Additionally, inquiries may be made using ZIP only, preceded by the proper message field code.

Convicted Person on Supervised Release

Local, state, and federal supervision officers may enter records in NCIC for subjects who are under specific restrictions during their probation, parole, or supervised release sentence following imprisonment.

Any local, state, or federal criminal justice supervision agency may enter information on probationers and subjects of supervised release convicted of federal crimes, felonies, or serious misdemeanors.

When an agency transmits an NCIC wanted person inquiry, the System will search the data in the Convicted Person on Supervised Release File and all other NCIC person files except the Unidentified Person File.

CANADIAN VEHICLE INDEX

NCIC maintains an interface with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) that allows searchable identifiers in CPIC records to be transmitted to NCIC for storage and access, thus creating the Canadian Vehicle Index (CVI). The CVI contains stolen boat, part, vehicle, and license plate records, including U.S. registered vehicles and boats stolen in Canada. As with other NCIC responses, positive record responses must be confirmed with the originating agency. The CVI functions as a pointer index in that the full Canadian record is not returned to the inquiring agency. The inquirer is instructed to retrieve the CPIC record directly via NLETS.

SPECIAL CAPABILITIES OF NCIC

Off-line Searches

In 1992, five women were raped and murdered in a residence in Oklahoma City. The crime remained under investigation by local police for almost five years with no suspect(s) being identified. In 1997, DNA recovered from the crime scene was compared with the California Sex Offenders DNA file. A suspect was identified through the comparison, charged with the five murders, and placed under UFAP-Murder investigation by the Oklahoma City FBI. At this time, an emergency NCIC off-line search was initiated regarding any reference to the suspect. Approximately 2 hours later, the FBI's Investigative and Operational Assistance Unit (IOAU) contacted FBI Oklahoma City to report that the San Jose Police Department (SJPd) had initiated an NCIC Wanted Person File inquiry on the suspect several days earlier. The inquiry had resulted from a police field interview involving the suspect. The suspect was arrested 2 days later, after the SJPd had been alerted and located him through information (e.g., known associates, his place of employment) acquired from the field interview and subsequent investigation.

Frequently, an investigator will not have all the information necessary to perform an on-line inquiry of NCIC. For example, a Vehicle File inquiry must be made using a license plate number or VIN, or a Wanted Person File inquiry must include the subject's name and a numeric identifier, such as date of birth or Social Security number. If the information for these mandatory fields is not available, an on-line inquiry is not possible.

An off-line search is a special technique used to obtain information from NCIC that cannot be obtained from an on-line inquiry. The results may provide an investigator with valuable information. An off-line search of the NCIC transaction log will reveal whether inquiries were made on a particular individual or property item (i.e., during a traffic stop) for a specified timeframe. This type of information can assist in determining if a suspect was near the scene of a crime or miles away. From an off-line search of purged records, it can be determined if a property item theft was entered and subsequently removed due to its retention expiration, even though an on-line inquiry produces a "NO RECORD" response. An off-line search of active records can also be performed using descriptive information.

For example, nonunique personal descriptors such as sex, height, weight, estimated age, and hair color can be used in searches for persons records. For vehicles, make, model, style, partial license plate number, or partial VIN can be used. Gun make, article type, securities descriptors, and date of theft can also be used as parameters.

Any NCIC user may request an off-line search. An investigator should furnish all available information obtained through the investigation that might lend itself to an off-line search. Together, NCIC staff members and the investigator determine the feasibility of a search.

Requests can be initiated by telephoning the FBI CJIS Division's IOAU at 304-625-3000, sending an NLETS message to DCFBIWAQ9, transmitting a facsimile to 304-625-5393 or an e-mail to IOAU@LEO.gov. In addition to this search program, state CTAs also have off-line search capabilities. Agencies can contact the CTA for further details.

Delayed Inquiry Program

User inquiries are stored in NCIC 2000 for 5 days. Subsequent entry or modify transactions received by NCIC are checked against the file of inquiries. If any match occurs, both the user entering or modifying a record and the user who made the initial inquiry are respectively advised by way of a delayed inquiry notification and a delayed inquiry hit response (both \$.H. messages). Agencies should contact each other to obtain additional information.

NCIC 2000

Law enforcement officers in Philadelphia noticed an elderly man walking along Interstate 95. The gentleman appeared disoriented and frightened, and when approached by officers, he was unable to identify himself. Using the newly developed NCIC 2000 mobile imaging unit, the officers scanned the man's right index finger. An image of his fingerprint was transmitted through the local, state, and federal databases along with an inquiry into the Missing Person File. Within seconds, the officers received a positive response, accompanied by an image of the man's photograph on the terminal screen.

Officers learned that the man suffered from Alzheimer's disease and had disappeared from his daughter's home several days before. The daughter had reported him missing and provided a photograph for the police. Because the man had served in the military, his fingerprints were on file and were made available to the police. Using the fingerprint card, they captured his right index fingerprint and entered it into NCIC 2000 along with a Missing Person Record. From this information, the NCIC 2000 mobile imaging unit was able to swiftly produce a match of the man's fingerprint along with the Missing Persons Record that resulted in an identification, and by nightfall, he was safely returned home.

The legacy NCIC System has been operating for more than 3 decades. Recognizing the need to update and improve operations, the FBI has completed a project called NCIC 2000. NCIC 2000 enhances the base capabilities of the legacy NCIC System and adds important new files. The scenario above is just one example of the mobile imaging unit's potential capabilities resulting from NCIC 2000.

NCIC 2000 involved a complete upgrade of the legacy System. One function will enable officers to access information from the Federal Bureau of Prisons SENTRY database. Another function enables officers to access information from the Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File and the Convicted Persons on Supervised Release File. All Wanted Person File inquiries will search the new files.

Designers have implemented state-of-the-art technological advances such as high-speed electronic image transmission of fingerprints, photographs, and other pictures. A mobile imaging unit can transmit readable and identifiable images from the patrol car to a state CTA and the FBI within seconds. This unit, located in an officer's vehicle, can contain such features as a digital camera, fingerprint scanner, and laptop computer.

NCIC 2000's efficiency provides law enforcement officers with significantly more information to assess a situation. Furthermore, NCIC 2000's accuracy, speed, and on-the-spot capabilities can eliminate false arrests or missed hits and can provide additional identifiers. NCIC 2000 brochures and other related materials are available upon request from each state's CTAs or directly from NCIC. (Additional information about obtaining NCIC publications is available on page 32.)

Other Transactions/Capabilities

The **One Crime Inquiry** transaction enables the user to submit an inquiry for all information related to a crime based on ORI and date of entry and/or case number. The inquiry can be directed to one, more than one, or all file types. If not specified, the inquiry will search all files.

The inquiry will return up to 20 hits on-line. If the hit response contains more than 20 responses, a notification will be included to indicate a file is being created with the additional hits.

The **Date and Time of Entry** inquiry is used to inquire upon the date and time of entry of a record and is available to all users. If a record was entered prior to NCIC 2000 implementation (July 11, 1999), then the inquiry result will feature a date of entry only. If a record was entered after NCIC 2000 implementation, then the response returned will include the date and time the record was entered.

The **NCIC Usage Statistics Request** allows CTAs/FSCs to request usage statistics compiled for the previous month's transactions. The request can be designated for a specific user and/or transaction type.

The **Error Trend Analysis Request** allows CTAs/FSCs to request an Error Trend Analysis, data entry rejects and serious errors, compiled from the previous month's transactions. The request can be designated for a specific user and/or transaction type.

The **Global Transaction Inquiry** is a request for records that cannot be retrieved by way of a standard inquiry transaction. The use of the Global Transaction Inquiry is restricted to authorized CTAs/FSCs. The CTA/FSC can perform searches of the active or retired (purged) NCIC records. Additionally, transaction log searches can be requested by contacting FBI IOAU at 304-625-3000.

The **Benefits and Effectiveness Analysis** transaction allows CTAs/FSCs to initiate an on-line request for benefits and effectiveness data accumulated over the previous month for its own records. Benefits and effectiveness data are compiled using information included in clear, locate, and cancel transactions. NCIC acknowledges the request when received. When the benefits and effectiveness response is ready, the CTA/FSC is notified via a \$.B. File Transfer Ready notification. The CTA/FSC can then request the response file via the FT transaction.

REFERENCE SECTION

Record Retention

Unless otherwise removed or located, records will be retained in file as follows:

Interstate Identification Index - Records remain in file until the individual reaches the age of 99.

Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) File - Records remain in file indefinitely. If an agency no longer qualifies for NCIC access, the ORI record is retired but kept in an inactive status.

Wanted Person File - Records (adult and juvenile) remain in file indefinitely or until the originating agency clears or cancels them. Temporary felony want records will be automatically removed from the file after 48 hours.

Missing Person File - Records remain in file indefinitely or until the originating agency removes the record.

Unidentified Person File - Records remain in file indefinitely or until the originating agency removes the record.

Foreign Fugitive File - Records remain in file indefinitely or until the originating agency removes the record.

U.S. Secret Service Protective File - Records remain in file indefinitely or until the U.S. Secret Service removes the record.

Vehicle File - Records containing a VIN or OAN and stolen part records containing an OAN or serial number remain in file for the year of entry plus 4 years. Felony vehicle records and records not containing a VIN or OAN will remain in file for 90 days after entry. License plate numbered data remain in a stolen vehicle record for the year of entry plus 4 years. Nonexpiring license plate data remain in a stolen vehicle record until the entire record is purged.

License Plate File - Records remain in file for 1 year after the end of the plate's expiration year. Records for nonexpiring license plates remain in file for the year of entry plus 4 years.

Boat File - Records remain in file for the balance of the year entered plus 4 years. Records without a BHN or OAN remain in file for 90 days after entry.

Securities File - Records remain in file for the balance of the year entered plus 4 years, except records for traveler's checks and money orders which are retained for the balance of the year entered plus 2 years.

Article File - Records remain in file for the balance of the year entered plus 1 year.

Gun File - Stolen and lost records remain in file indefinitely or until the originating agency removes the record. Records for recovered weapons will remain for the balance of the year entered plus 2 years.

Violent Gang and Terrorist Organization File -

Group Member Capability- Records are retained five years unless removed by originating agency. Only records entered by corrections agencies remain past 5 years.

Group Reference Capability-Single Interest records remain indefinitely or until removed by originating agency. Multiple Interest records remain indefinitely or until all agencies remove their records.

Deported Felon File - Records remain in file indefinitely or until INS removes them.

Protection Order File -

Active records will be retained until canceled by the entering agency or expiration date of the order is reached. Temporary records will be retained for a maximum of 1 year from the date of entry.

Inactive records will be retained on-line for the remainder of the year in which cleared/expired plus 5 years.

Images - Images associated with records are subjected to the same retention periods as those records. Generic images will remain on file indefinitely unless removed by the FBI CJIS Division staff.

Convicted Sexual Offender Registry File - Records will remain active until they are cleared or canceled by the entering agency or until the Ending Registration Date (ERD) is reached. Sexual offender records with the ERD Field containing NONEXP are retained as active records until they are cleared or canceled by the entering agency. Records for registered sexual predators must have an ERD value of NONEXP.

Convicted Person on Supervised Release - Records have the same unlimited retention period as wanted person records. The agency is responsible for clearing a record when the terms of the probation or the parole have expired.

Vehicle/Boat Part File - If a stolen vehicle/boat part record remains on file for 90 days and it does not contain a SER and OAN, the record is retired. Stolen Vehicle/Boat Part File records which contain a SER or OAN will remain on file for the balance of the year entered plus 4 years.

CONCLUSION

NCIC's primary mission has always been to assist the criminal justice community in performing its duties with the greatest possible efficiency. This computer filing system offers the officer one centralized location from which to access information.

Effective June 1992, the FBI consolidated NCIC, the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Identification Services, and the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System into a single organizational division called Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS). All criminal justice services and associated information systems are centrally located to operate as one function in meeting the needs of the user community and law enforcement agencies. This division is located in a state-of-the-art facility in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

The CJIS Division welcomes comments and suggestions from its users. Readers who have suggestions or questions concerning this booklet or who wish to obtain other NCIC publications, should contact their state's CTA. If materials cannot be obtained from the CTA, users may contact NCIC directly at Communications Unit, Criminal Justice Information Services Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Module D-3, 1000 Custer Hollow Road, Clarksburg, West Virginia 26306-0154; telephone 304-625-4995. Technical questions concerning NCIC may be directed to the Investigative and Operational Assistance Unit at 304-625-3000. Training questions concerning NCIC may be directed to the Education/Training Services Unit at 304-625-2821.