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ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS
WASHINGTON, DC 20226

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OPEN LETTER TO FEDERAL FIREARMS LICENSEES

This letter serves to provide Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) with procedural guidance regarding the handling of ATF Form 4473, Firearms Transaction Record, after a firearm transaction has occurred. Currently, there is uncertainty among FFLs concerning how to handle an incomplete or improperly completed Form 4473.

Because the original Form 4473 could become critical evidence in a criminal case, civil case, or administrative proceeding, under no circumstances should any changes or additions be made to the original Form 4473 after the transfer of the firearm has occurred. Any changes made to the original Form 4473 after the actual transfer of the firearm takes place would raise questions about the validity of the form as an accurate record of the information provided at the time of sale or other disposition. At no time should an FFL attempt to amend or complete the form or ask the firearm purchaser to complete or revise the required transferee information contained in Section A of the Form 4473 after the firearm has been transferred to the customer.

When an incomplete or improperly completed Form 4473 is found after the firearm has been transferred, and you wish to make a record of your discovery of the error, the inaccurate form should be photocopied. Any necessary additions or revisions should then be made to the photocopy, and the additions or revisions should be initialed and dated by the FFL or purchaser, as appropriate. Should you choose to follow this suggestion, the corrected photocopy should be attached to the original Form 4473 and retained as part of your permanent records.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Firearms Programs Division at 202-927-7770.

Sincerely yours,

John P. Malone
Assistant Director
(Firearms, Explosives and Arson)