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Privately Made Firearms

Privately made firearms (PMFs) are firearms (including a frame or receiver) that have been completed, assembled or otherwise produced by a person other than a licensed manufacturer. PMFs are also made without a serial number placed by a licensed manufacturer at the time the firearm was produced. However, not all PMFs are illegal and not all firearms are required to have a serial number. ATF has compiled some information on the different types of PMFs and things to consider while owning one.

Types of PMFs

PMFs are categorized into 10 different types. The 10 types of PMFs include: pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, frame or receiver, machinegun conversion device (MCD), destructive device, machinegun, firearm silencer and any other weapon, and . Here are examples of what each type can look like:



Pistol



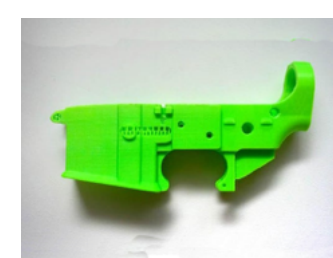
Revolver



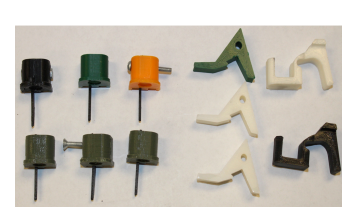
Rifle



Shotgun



Frame or Receiver



Machinegun Conversion Devices



Destructive Device



Machinegun



Firearm Silencer



Any Other Weapon

Things to Consider

- Individuals who make their own firearms may use a 3D printing process or any other process, as long as the firearm is “detectable” as defined in the Gun Control Act. You do not have to add a serial number or register the PMF if you are not engaged in the business of making firearms for livelihood or profit.
- Federal firearm licensees must mark PMFs with a unique serial number within seven days or prior to disposition, whichever is sooner.
- The possession of firearm silencers, destructive devices, and machine gun conversion devices (MCDs) can result in legal action.
 - Firearm silencers are legal on a state-by-state basis for hunting only. Review the relevant laws in your state of residence before purchasing a silencer.
 - Destructive devices (e.g., bombs, grenades and missiles) and machine gun conversion devices (e.g., Glock switches, drop in auto sears and force reset triggers) are illegal to possess under federal law. Possession of these prohibited devices can result in a prison sentence up to 10 years.
- If you are in possession of a prohibited device, contact your local ATF Field Office for further guidance on how you may discard the devices.

Challenges Involving PMFs

PMFs are commonly referred to as “ghost guns” because it can be difficult to track them. Investigating crimes involving unserialized PMFs can create difficulty in tracing the origins of the firearm and linking them to related crimes. From 2016 through 2021, there were approximately 45,240 suspected privately made firearms reported to ATF as having been recovered by law enforcement from potential crime scenes, including 692 homicides or attempted homicides. These issues have led to some states passing additional laws related to PMFs.

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