

**European Firearm Experts (EFE) Group  
Glossary of Firearms Terminology  
September 2012**

***Consolidated text incorporating changes proposed by FESAC, April 2013***

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### **Ammunition**

**Ammunition** - A collective term for all objects and materials used to enable a firearm to function as such, including ignition, case, propellant and projectile.

**Ball Ammunition** – ammunition for use in firearms loaded with lead or full metal jacketed (FMJ) bullets, not designated as armour piercing and not containing an explosive or incendiary charge

**BB** - this refers to the size of birdshot with a nominal diameter of .18" in shotgun cartridges. It is also used to refer to air gun round pellets of .177" (4.5mm) diameter and also to the plastic BBs used in airsoft or soft air guns that are generally 6 mm in diameter.

**Belt** - a flexible device consisting of a single part or combined links, used to hold and control the feed of ammunition into a, mostly automatic, firearm.

**Belted Cartridge** – a cartridge that incorporates a "belt" around the base of the cartridge intended to obtain uniform head-spacing.

**Black Powder** - historically, "Gunpowder" is the earliest form of propellant that has now been replaced in modern firearms by the introduction of "Smokeless Powder". – It is a mechanical mixture of potassium or sodium nitrate ("saltpetre"), charcoal and sulphur. The rapidly burning propellant produces a volume of hot gases that force the projectile through the barrel and, in case of breech-loading firearms, seal the cartridge case against the chamber wall of the. Black powder was in general use until about 1900, after which it was almost completely replaced by smokeless powder (introduced in 1885).

**Blank Cartridge** - a cartridge that is loaded without a projectile, typically for use in film and theatre productions, military exercises, re-enactment and sporting events. Although there is no ballistic projectile, the discharge of the cardboard, fibre, wood or plastic wad sometimes used to retain the propellant charge in the cartridge will pose a safety risk over short distances when the cartridge is discharged.

**Bottleneck Cartridge** - a cartridge case that has a main body diameter stepping down to a smaller diameter at the neck portion of the case at a distinct angular shoulder.

**Brass** - a term that refers to an unloaded cartridge cases, or to the copper zinc alloy that many cases are made of.

**Buck Shot** - shot with a diameter greater than 6.1 mm

**Bullet** - a non-spherical metallic projectile usually made from lead, but sometimes made of other metals or materials, normally for use in a rifled barrel. Bullets may have a thin metal jacket, often made from tombac, a copper alloy or soft steel.

**Bullet Core** - the inner section of a jacketed bullet, usually made of lead or steel.

**Bullet Diameter** - the maximum dimension across the largest cylindrical section of a Bullet

**Bullet Jacket** - a metallic cover over the core of the bullet

**Bullet Metal** - metal forming the entire bullet or bullet core. Usually an alloy of lead, antimony and/or tin

**Bullet Mould** - a split block of metal having one or more cavities into which molten lead is poured to form a bullet

**Cartridge** – a self-contained unit comprising at least two components of which one is the propellant. The other may be a projectile, a primer or a case. The term also applies to a shotgun cartridge, caseless cartridge, blank cartridge and primerless cartridge. It may also be referred to as “a round of ammunition”. See also: self-contained cartridge. Paper cartridges containing propellant and projectile(s) were sometimes used in muzzle-loading firearms.

**Cartridge Case** - the main body of a round of ammunition that contains the components. Refers to centrefire, pinfire and rimfire metallic cartridges and also to shotgun cartridges.

**Cartridge Case Length** - the dimensions from face of the head to the mouth.

**Case** – See cartridge case

**Caseless Cartridges** - a type of small arms ammunition that eliminates the cartridge case that typically holds the primer, propellant, and projectile together as a unit.

**Caseless ammunition** a type of small arms ammunition that does not utilize a case in which the components are contained but in which the propellant and primer form a solid block that is attached to the projectile.

**Case Mouth** - the opening in the case into which the projectile or shot is inserted.

**Centrefire Cartridge** - a self-contained cartridge in which the primer sits in a cavity in the case head, positioned on the central axis of the cartridge. With few exceptions (particularly .17”, .22”, 4mm, 5mm and 6mm), most modern firearms utilise centre-fire ammunition.

**Charge** - the amount, by weight, of a component of a cartridge (i.e., priming weight, propellant weight, shot weight).

**Dummy Cartridge** - an inert cartridge which contains no primer or propellant and cannot be fired under any circumstances.

**Expanding Bullet** - a bullet design that allows for controlled expansion upon impact with the target, an example would be hollow point bullets. These are very common in ammunition for hunting rifles.

**Fixed Cartridge** – see: Self-contained cartridge

**Full Metal Jacket (FMJ)** - a projectile in which the bullet jacket encloses most of the core, with the possible exception of the base. Other terminology includes Full Jacketed, Full Patch, Full Metal Case.

**Gun Powder** - a generic term for propellant powder for muzzle-loading and obsolete cartridge firearms, more often referred to as “black powder”.

**Gunshot Residue** – residues and particles from the powder, primer and bullet, which are expelled upon firing from the firearm during or remain in the firearm (mainly in the bore)

**Hand-loading** – see: reloading.

Head - the end of the cartridge case in which the primer or priming is inserted and the surface upon which often but not always the head-stamp is imprinted for purposes of identification. The head impacts against the breech during firing. Occasionally used as a slang term for bullet.

Head Stamp - numerals, letters and symbols (or combinations thereof) stamped into the head of a cartridge case or shotgun cartridge to identify the manufacturer, year of manufacture, calibre or gauge, and other additional information.

Heel - the rear portion of a bullet.

Hollow Point Bullet – a bullet with a cavity in the nose usually to facilitate expansion. Some target bullets have a hollow point because the core is inserted from the front of the jacket or a hole of small diameter improves ballistic stability.

Jacket - a metallic envelope surrounding the lead core of a compound bullet.

Lead Bullet - a bullet made entirely out of a lead alloy.

Load - the combination of components used to assemble a cartridge. Also refers to the act of putting ammunition into a firearm

Long Rifle - the name given to one type of .22" rimfire calibre cartridges.

Magnum - a term commonly used to describe a rimfire or centrefire cartridge, or shotgun cartridge that is larger, contains more shot or produces a higher velocity than a standard cartridge or shell of a given calibre, or gauge. Rifles, handguns or shotguns that are designed to fire Magnum cartridges or shells may also be described with the term Magnum.

Metallic Cartridge - ammunition having a metallic cartridge case

Mouth - the open end of a cartridge case from which the projectile or shot charge is expelled during firing

NATO Cartridge - a common designation for military cartridges produced under the specifications of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and identified by a Å symbol on the head stamp. First standardised in 1970.

Nitrocellulose Powder - a smokeless propellant used for ammunition whose principal ingredient is colloidal nitrocellulose. The nitrogen content of the nitrocellulose is usually between 13.1% and 13.2%. It is also known as single base powder. Introduced in 1885.

Paper Shell - a cartridge (shot shell) with a body of paper

Pellet - a common name for the small spherical projectiles loaded in shot shells (then collectively referred to as "shot"). It also refers to non-spherical projectiles used in most air guns.

Percussion - a means of ignition of a propellant charge by a mechanical blow against the primer (modern) or cap (antique).

Percussion cap - A small metal cup containing fulminate that is placed on the hollow tube or nipple of a percussion firearm; when struck it produces sparks that enter the barrel through a hole and fire the charge. Percussion caps were in wide use between 1820 and 1870.

Pinfire - an obsolete design of cartridge in wide use from about 1855, that utilised a pin emanating through the wall of the cartridge, which, when struck by the hammer of the firearm, would strike a primer within the body of the cartridge. The introduction of the rimfire and centrefire cartridge around 1870 superseded this type of ammunition but pinfire cartridges continued in relatively common use in Europe until about 1914.

Primer - a component in the ammunition which ignites when struck by the firing pin, igniting the propellant.

Primer Cup - brass or copper cup designed to contain priming mixture.

Primer Pocket - a cylindrical cavity formed in the head of a metallic centrefire cartridge case, or in the head of a shotgun cartridge, to receive an appropriate primer or battery cup primer assembly.

Primer Seating - is the process of inserting a centrefire primer or battery cup in the head of a cartridge case. When properly seated, it should be flush or below the face of the head.

Projectile - an object (bullet, shot, slug, dart or pellet) which is expelled by the force of rapidly burning gases or by other means when a gun is fired.

Propellant - a chemical compound or powder inside a cartridge which burns rapidly when ignited to produce large amounts of hot gas. This gas drives the projectile(s) down the barrel.

Rebated rim cartridge - a centrefire cartridge of which the diameter of the extraction rim, with a groove cut in front of it, is the smaller than the diameter of the body immediately in front of that groove.

Reloading - the process of manually assembling a fired cartridge case with a new primer, propellant and bullet or wads and shot. See Hand-loading.

Rimfire Cartridge - cartridges containing the primer mixture inside the hollow rim of the case head. Often used to refer to .22" calibre ammunition, the most common rimfire calibre.

Rimless cartridge – a centerfire cartridge of which the diameter of the extraction rim, with a groove cut in front of it, is the same as the diameter of the body immediately in front of that groove.

Rimmed cartridge – a cartridge (either centrefire, rimfire or pinfire) of which the diameter of the extraction rim is larger than the body immediately in front of it.

Round - a single ammunition cartridge

Self-contained cartridge – a cartridge that comprises projectile, propelling charge and ignition plus, where applicable, a case to hold everything together. Also referred to as fixed cartridge.

Shot - small spherical pellets (usually lead) of varying sizes and weights which are intended to be used as multiple projectiles fired from smooth barrels.

Shotgun Cartridge - a centrefire or rimfire cartridge loaded with small diameter shot (i.e. a large number of pellets).

Shot Size - a numerical or letter(s) designation referring to the average diameter of the pellets. The number system varies from country to country.

Smokeless Powder - propellant containing mainly nitrocellulose (single base) or both nitrocellulose and nitro-glycerine (double base), introduced in 1886, superseding black powder

Soft Point Bullet - a jacketed bullet design where a portion of the core is exposed at the nose of the bullet

Steel Shot - soft steel pellets made specifically for use in shotgun cartridges.

Steel Jacketed Bullet - plated or clad steel is sometimes used as a substitute for tombac or copper in bullet jacket material.

Total Metal Jacket Bullet - bullet made by copper plating a lead bullet to create a jacket that completely encases the core. This jacket is thicker than cosmetic copper plating.

Wadding - plastic or fibre filler loaded in shotgun cartridges to contain the gases and protect shot pellets.

## **Firearms**

Action - the working/firing/repeating mechanism of a firearm. May be specified as: Automatic, semiautomatic, bolt, box-lock, side lock, lever, hinged, revolver, rolling block, falling block and slide (pump). In English the term action is sometimes used for the receiver of a break-open shotgun.

Airgun – a gun that uses compressed air or gas (e.g. Carbon dioxide or Freon) to propel a projectile. In some MS, airsoft devices and paintball guns are classified as airguns.

Airsoft device - a device intended to replicate a ‘real’ firearm for the purposes of sport or recreational military simulation exercises. Uses air, gas or an electric motor to expell typically (but not exclusively) 6mm calibre plastic balls.

Antique firearm – a firearm that is considered an antique by common usage, statute, national preference or legislation in a Member State, by virtue of it age, design or technical qualities. In some Member States replicas are also classified as antiques.

Antique weapon – A weapon that is considered an antique by common usage, statute, national preference, or legislation in a Member State by virtue of its age, design or technical qualities.

Artistic firearm – a firearm embellished or designed in a manner which goes beyond its pure functional requirements.

Assault Rifle – a rifle capable of automatic fire.

Automatic Pistol -: a self-loading pistol that, upon a single actuation of the trigger, fires two or more rounds sequentially without the need for any further manipulation. The term is often improperly applied to semi-automatic (self-loading) pistols. See also Burst Fire.

Automatic Rifle – a self-loading rifle that, upon a single actuation of the trigger, fires two or more rounds sequentially without the need for any further manipulation. See: Assault rifle. If the number of rounds fired per trigger actuation is limited by a mechanism: see “Burst fire”.

Barrel – a part of a firearm or airgun consisting of a tube with a smooth or rifled bore through which shot or a projectile is propelled by means of expanding gasses. The barrel is considered an essential component of a firearm in directive 2008/51/EC.

Black Powder - historically, “Gunpowder” is the earliest form of propellant that has now been replaced in modern firearms by the introduction of “Smokeless Powder”. – It is a mechanical mixture of potassium or sodium nitrate (“saltpetre”), charcoal and sulphur. The rapidly burning propellant produces a volume of hot gas that forces the projectile through the barrel and, in case of breech-loading firearms, seals the cartridge case against the wall of the chamber. Black powder was in general use until about 1900, after which it was almost completely replaced by smokeless powder (introduced in 1885).

Blank firing gun - a gun designed and intended only to be used with blank cartridges and mechanically incapable of expelling a solid projectile.

Blowback Action - a self-loading mechanism that is actuated only by the force exerted on the bottom of the cartridge by the combustion of the propellant.

Bolt Action - a single shot or repeating mechanism in which the bolt (part that closes the chamber from the rear) is actuated manually by means of a handle attached to it and has to be moved in line with the barrel. The required movement can be either straight forward and back or a combination of straight and rotating movements to lock the bolt to the rear of the chamber.

Bolt Handle - a protrusion attached to the bolt used to manually actuate the mechanism.

Bore Obstruction - an object or material in the bore of a barrel which prevents unhindered passage of projectile(s) when fired.

Breech - the rear end of the chamber.

Breech Block - a locking/closing mechanism which does not operate in line with the axis of the bore, and which is intended to support, properly, the head of the cartridge.

Breech Face - the solid section of the bolt or breechblock, which supports the cartridge case head.

Bull Pup - a rifle, in which the action, the firing mechanism and, where applicable, the magazine are located behind the trigger assembly.

Burst-Fire firearm – An automatic firearm constructed in such a way that on a single actuation of the trigger a predetermined number of rounds is fired.

Butt - in handguns it is the bottom part of the grip. In long guns, it is the rear or shoulder end of the stock.

Butt-Plate - a metal, rubber or composition covering to reinforce and protect the shoulder end of a firearm stock

Calibre - a measurement of the bore diameter of a barrel but commonly used as a term to identify the type of cartridge a gun is designed to fire.

Carbine - a rifle of relatively short length and light weight.

Cartridge Guide - a firearm component which acts as a guide for the cartridge while it is being fed from the magazine to the chamber.

Chamber – Part of a firearm that holds the cartridge or charge and projectile at the moment the weapon is being fired, containing the pressure of the combusting powder. The chamber can be a separate component or it can be an integral part of the barrel. Several chambers may be combined into one component, like the cylinder of a revolver. The chamber (and thus also the cylinder) is considered an essential component of a firearm in directive 2008/51/EC.

Choke - an interior constriction at or near the muzzle end of a shotgun barrel for the purpose of controlling shot dispersion.

Class Characteristics - tool marks which have common characteristics and systematic features that are characteristic of a particular type of gun. They are not unique, and if different it will eliminate it from another item/object.

Clip – device or object that holds cartridges together and is placed together with those cartridges in the weapon. It has a function during the repeating cycle but does in itself include a feeding mechanism or -spring.

Cock - to place the hammer or firing pin/ striker in position for firing. Also the part holding the flint on a flintlock firearm.

Collectors' firearm – an antique, historical, rare or artistic or otherwise valuable firearm that is of interest to museums and collectors for these reasons. This category of firearm is classified under Tariff code 97.05 of the Customs Harmonised System.

Combination Gun - a multiple barrel firearm designed to handle cartridges of different sizes, calibres, or types of ammunition. A sporting weapon such as this could have one or more rifle barrels and one or more shotgun barrels.

Compensator - a device attached to the muzzle end of the barrel that utilises propelling gases to reduce recoil and recoil jump. Also, see Muzzle Brake.

Converted Firearm – an object, not originally being a firearm, that has the appearance of a firearm and was converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of a combustible propellant. See also: improvised firearm.

Cyclic Rate - the rate at which a succession of movements repeats itself; in an automatic firearm it is usually expressed in shots per minute or rounds per minute.

Cylinder - part of a revolver that encompasses the chambers (see: "Chamber") the chambers are sequentially rotated in line with the barrel prior to each round being discharged.

Deactivated Weapon - deactivated weapons are firearms that have been modified in such a manner that they can no longer discharge any shot, bullet or other missile. The deactivation is intended to be permanent and such firearms should be incapable of being reactivated without specialist tools or skills.

Derringer - a generic term applied to many variations of small one or two-shot pistols, using both percussion caps and cartridges. The term is from the original designer, Henry Deringer, produced from about 1840 to 1935.

Disconnecter - a device intended to disengage the sear from the trigger. In a manually operated firearm, it is intended to prevent firing without pulling the trigger. In a semi-automatic firearm, it is intended to prevent full automatic firing. In automatic firearms it ensures proper ignition by delaying the release of the hammer.

Disguised Firearm - a commercial, homemade or improvised firearm constructed to disguise its true capability. Examples have included firearms disguised as pen guns, keys, pipes, mobile phones and flashlights. The difference between a disguised firearm and a packed or wrapped (as in a guncase or box) firearm is that a disguised firearm can be fired while still disguised and a packed or wrapped firearm cannot.

Double Action - a firing method where the hammer or firing pin is cocked and released by the same movement of the trigger

Double Barrel - two barrels in a firearm mounted to one frame. Can be vertically ("over-and-under") or horizontally ("side-by-side") aligned.

Ejection Port - an opening in the slide or receiver for expelling the cartridge or spent case.

Ejector - a component which causes the spent cartridge case to be expelled following the discharge of a self-loading or repeating firearm. Shotguns are also often equipped with ejectors that serve as both extractor and ejector.

Essential component - the breech-closing mechanism, the chamber and the barrel of a firearm.

Extractor - part of a firearm that extracts the fired cartridge case from the chamber when the action is opened.

Feed Ramp - an angled surface before the chamber, which helps to guide a cartridge into the chamber when it is loaded from a magazine.

Firearm - any portable barrelled weapon that expels or is designed to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of a combustible propellant

Firing Pin - the part of a firearm which strikes the ammunition primer or the rim of the cartridge, igniting the propellant).

Flare Gun – A firearm that is designed to fire flares for alarm, signalling, illuminating or lifesaving purposes.

Flash hider – a device at the muzzle end of a firearm, usually integral with or attached to the barrel intended to reduce the frontal flash.

Flintlock Firearm - A firearm in which the propellant is ignited by sparks caused by a flint striking a metal surface.

Gauge - a term used to denote the calibre of a firearm. It is taken as a measure of the number of identical solid spheres that can be made from a pound of lead. There are 12 identical solid spheres of lead that can be made from a pound of lead that fit the internal diameter of a 12 bore shotgun.

Gas Alarm Gun - a firearm intended to expel only a noxious substance, not a solid projectile. Usually the substance is expelled forward through a barrel that may be partially obstructed. The weapon can also discharge blank rounds.

Gas operated – an automatic or semi-automatic firearm in which gas tapped from the barrel provides the energy to operate the mechanism of the weapon

Grip - in handguns, it is the handle, while in shoulder arms, it is that portion of the stock to the rear of the trigger.

Grooves - the spiral cuts in the barrel which constitute the rifling.

Gun – the common term for firearm.

Half cock - the position of the hammer, when about half retracted and held by the sear, intended to prevent release of the hammer by a normal pull of the trigger This can be the safety or loading position firearms that have an ignition system utilizing a hammer.

Hammer - a part of the firing mechanism which strikes the firing pin, primer or percussion cap. In some cases the firing pin is an integral part of the hammer.

Handgun – a short barrelled firearm designed or intended to be fired while being held in one hand. Also, in the context of the EU weapons directive: portable firearm with an overall length of 600 mm or less or a barrel length of 300 mm or less.

Heavy Firearm - Firearms covered by category A sub 1 of EU directive 1991/477 plus those covered by category A sub 2 of the directive so far as crew served automatic firearms are concerned.

Historical Firearm – a firearm belonging to previous generations or used by historical personages or in important historical events (including wars, revolutions, uprisings etc.) or representing significant technological, stylistic, artistic or cultural developments.



Imitation Firearm – an object that resembles a firearm but cannot discharge a shot and is made from materials that make it impossible to convert it into a functional firearm

Improvised Firearm - a firearm manufactured from one or more components not originally intended to be a firearm component.

Lands - the area between the grooves in the rifling.

Lever Action - an action where the breechlock/bolt is opened and closed by means of a lever.

Light Weapons - although there is no internationally accepted definition for light weapons, it is generally a term used to describe man portable weapons. The term Small Arms covers those weapons carried and used by a single person and also those weapons for which the mountings or carriages of light weapons may be wheeled and towed or pushed, motorized, or man-portable. Normally light weapons are crew-served and the crew is less than four people.

Loading Ramp – see: Feed ramp

Long gun – portable firearm with an overall length of more than 600 mm and a barrel length of more than 300 mm.

Machine carbine – obsolete British term for sub-machine gun

Machine Gun - automatic firearm in a rifle- or larger calibre, (firing two or more shots sequentially on single actuation of the trigger), intended in military practice not as a personal weapon but as a weapon for squad or higher level and intended for sustained automatic operation, generally to be fired from a bipod or mount.

Machine Pistol - is an automatic or selective fire handgun. In German language the term Maschinenpistole is used to refer to a sub-machine gun since it fires a pistol round.

Magazine – A container (either box, tube, drum or hopper) that holds cartridges ready for loading into the chamber of a repeating or self-loading firearm. This can be either a removable or integral part of that firearm and has a spring-loaded feed mechanism. The magazine is not considered an essential component of a firearm in directive 2008/51/EC.

Magazine Fed - a repeating firearm in which the ammunition is fed from a magazine.

Mainspring - the spring that operates the striker or hammer of a firearm.

Mark, M, Mk - a term used in conjunction with a number to designate a specific model or version of firearm or ammunition.

Markings - words or symbols, stamped, rolled, cast or engraved, on a firearm, possibly designating the manufacturer, model, origin, calibre, gauge, choke, material, user, owner or other information.

Musket - A military arm, usually a muzzle loader with a long smooth bore barrel, commonly fitted with a stock extending to or close to the muzzle. In general use between 1700 and 1880.

Muzzle - the front end of a gun barrel.

Muzzle Brake – a device at the muzzle end of a firearm, usually integral with the barrel that uses the emerging gas behind a projectile to reduce recoil and movement of the barrel. It is sometimes incorrectly referred to as a compensator but that is a device, specifically intended to reduce muzzle climb.

Muzzle Energy - the kinetic energy of the projectile as it leaves the muzzle of a firearm.

Muzzleloader - a firearm that can only be loaded with powder and projectile(s) through the muzzle of the barrel (or the front end of a cylinder in the case of a muzzle-loading revolver). It is not capable of chambering conventional cartridges.

Muzzle Velocity - the speed at which the projectile leaves the muzzle of a firearm.

Operating Handle - handle of semi automatic or automatic firearm used to cycle firearm without firing. Also called Charging Handle, Cocking Handle, and Cocking Knob.

Original Lethal Purpose - A firearm that at the moment of production was intended to fire live ammunition, as opposed to an object later converted to do so.

Over and Under (O/U) - firearm with two barrels placed one above the other.

Overall Length - the length from the muzzle to the butt plate, measured parallel to the barrel.

Part - any element or replacement element specifically designed for a firearm and essential to its operation, including a barrel, frame or receiver, slide or cylinder, bolt or breech block, and any device designed or adapted to diminish the sound caused by firing a firearm (definition from EU directive 2008/51/EC). See also: Essential component.

Pepperbox – firearm that has three or more barrels grouped around a central axis, that fire sequentially.

Pepper Spray – a noxious substance in aerosol form containing capsicum, intended to temporarily disable or disorientate an opponent and sprayed from spray cans.

Percussion pistol – a pistol that uses a percussion cap or any similar device to ignite the charge in the chamber.

Percussion revolver – a revolver that uses percussion caps or any similar devices to ignite the charge in the chambers.

Percussion rifle – a rifle that uses a percussion cap or any similar device to ignite the charge in the chamber.

Pistol - a handgun in which the chamber is an integral part of the barrel. In British military terminology a revolver was referred to as a 'revolving pistol'.

Proof Mark - a stamp applied to a load-bearing component of a firearm after it passed a proof test.

Pump Action - manual repeating mechanism of a firearm, operated by moving a handle under the barrel parallel to the axis of the barrel.

Rare firearm – a firearm of a type, make or model of which availability is very limited.

Rate of Fire - the pace at which projectiles can be discharged from a firearm.

Rate of Twist - the distance required over which the rifling of a barrel makes one complete revolution.

Reactivation - reactivated firearms are deactivated firearms that have subsequently been restored to be capable of expelling a projectile.

Receiver - the basic unit of a firearm which houses the firing and breech mechanism and to which the barrel and stock are attached. In revolvers, pistols, and break-open guns, it is called the Frame. In most legislation the receiver is the firearm, everything else attached to it is a part or component. As such the receiver often carries the serial number associated with the firearm.

**Recoil** - the rearward movement of a firearm resulting from the discharge.

**Recoil Operated** - an automatic or semi-automatic type firearm in which the force of recoil is used to operate the mechanism.

**Replica** - A term not defined in the EU weapons directive. Generally the term is used to refer to functional copies of obsolete or antique firearms or to firearms of which the construction is based on an obsolete design.

**Revolver** - a firearm, usually a handgun with two or more chambers in a cylinder placed behind the barrel that rotates after each discharge in order to bring a new, loaded chamber behind the barrel and thus fire several successive shots without reloading

**Rifle** - a long barrelled firearm with a rifled barrel and designed to be fired while being held with both hand, mostly supported by the shoulder.

**Rifling** - spiral lands and grooves inside the barrel intended to make the bullet spin, thereby improving its accuracy. Rifled barrels can be produced by processes like cut rifling, single point cut rifling, button rifling (or buttoning), broach rifling (or broaching), hammer forging or flow forming.

**Safety Device** - mechanical device in a firearm mechanism intended, when properly engaged, to reduce the chance of unintentional discharge under normal use.

**Sawn off shotgun** - a shotgun that has had its barrel and/or stock crudely and substantially shortened in order to decrease its visibility when being carried.

**Sear** - a part which retains the hammer or striker in the cocked position. When released, The weapon discharges.

**Selective-Fire Weapon** - a self-loading firearm that can fire in automatic or semi-automatic or, in some designs, burst fire mode.

**Semi-Automatic Firearm** – a firearm that fires a single shot when the trigger is pulled and the fired cartridge case is then ejected and a fresh cartridge loaded into the chamber. The trigger must be released and pulled again to fire another shot. Also known as self-loading or auto-loading firearm. Double action revolvers are not included in this definition. A few semi-automatic weapons exist that utilize a so-called slam-fire system in which the firing cycle starts and ends with the bolt in open position.

**Semi-Automatic Pistol** – a semi-automatic handgun sometimes referred to as a self-loading or auto-loading pistol.

**Semi-Automatic Revolver** - a handgun that, powered by the recoil of the shot, will automatically rotate the cylinder to present the next round for shooting after discharging a shot. The trigger must be released and pulled again to fire another shot.

**Semi-Automatic Rifle** – semi-automatic firearm in the form of a rifle. Also known as self-loading or auto-loading rifle.

**Serial Number** - a number applied to a firearm by the manufacturer or the proof house in order to identify the individual firearm. Such numbering was introduced around 1850 but did not become universally accepted until 1968.

**Shotgun** - a short-range smoothbore firearm, designed to be fired while being held with both hands, primarily intended to eject a large number of small pellets at every shot.

**Side by Side** - a firearm with two barrels arranged adjacently in the horizontal plane.

**Single Action** - this refers to a trigger mechanism in which the only function of the trigger is to operate the sear, holding and subsequently releasing the hammer or striker. The hammer or striker is cocked manually (in revolvers) or by the movement of the slide or breechblock (in semi-automatic pistols).

**Single Shot** - a firearm with no magazine which is loaded before each shot by the manual insertion of a round into the chamber or a loading recess at the breech of the barrel.

**Sleeving** - inserting a metal tube (permanently) inside an existing gun barrel that has been drilled out in order to decrease the calibre or repair a barrel that has worn beyond limits or was damaged. It is a legal practice for repairing firearms but has also been observed in firearms that were illegally converted to a calibre for which ammunition was available or to reactivate a firearm.

**Slide Action** - a repeating mechanism where the loading is done by moving a part of the firearm along the axis of the barrel. See also pump action.

**Small Arms** - man portable firearms, capable of being carried by a person and fired without mechanical support. Usually have a bore diameter of 14.5mm or less. This bore diameter limitation does not apply to shotguns, flare guns and antiques.

**Smooth Bore** - a firearm with a barrel with no internal rifling, typically a shotgun.

**Sound Moderator** - also known as a Sound Suppressor or a Silencer – a device that attaches to or forms an integral part of the barrel of a firearm and reduces the noise (report) produced by a the discharge of that firearm.

**Speed-loader** - a device intended to make loading a firearm easier by holding several cartridges within a single unit. Typically used for loading all chambers of a revolver in one movement. Speed loaders also exist for tube magazines. For box magazines so-called stripper clips serve the same function. Speed loaders and stripper clips are accessories, not parts of a firearm.

**Starting Pistol** – a firearm that is designed to fire a blank cartridge to signal the start of a sport event such as a race. Also known as starting gun, alarm pistol or blank firing pistol.

**Stock** - part of the furniture of a firearm to which the action and barrel are attached that is used to steady the firearm against the shoulder of the shooter when firing.

**Straight Pull** - a bolt action firearm in which the bolt handle does not need to be rotated for locking and unlocking, but can be operated by a straight backward and forward motion.

**Stripper Clip** - a device intended to make the loading of a box-magazine of a firearm easier by holding several cartridges within a single unit from which the cartridges can be shoved into the magazine with one movement. A stripper clip is an accessory, not a part of a firearm.

**Stun Gun** - a stun gun is an electroshock weapon which uses a temporary high-voltage, low-current electrical discharge to override the body's muscle-triggering mechanisms. When fired, the recipient is temporarily immobilised via two metal probes, either by direct contact or by remote contact. The recipient feels pain and can be momentarily paralysed while an electrical current is being applied.

**Sub-machine Gun (SMG)** - a carbine that fires ammunition of pistol calibre and is capable of automatic fire or burst-fire.

**Toy gun** - a representation of a firearm (not necessarily realistic) that is incapable of firing ammunition or only capable of discharging soft projectiles. A toy gun must be structurally unsuited to be modified to discharge any kind of ammunition.

Trigger - the part of a firearm's mechanism which is pressed or squeezed to cause the firearm to discharge.

Trigger Guard - a rigid loop which partially surrounds the trigger to reduce the possibility of accidental discharge.

Transformed firearm – a term used to describe a firearm whose mechanism has been changed, e.g. from flintlock to percussion or from muzzle loader to breech-loader.

Volley gun – a gun with two or more barrels that are discharged simultaneously upon actuation of the trigger.

Weapon – weapon as defined in national legislation of the Member State.

Wheellock Firearm - A firearm that ignites the propellant by means of a spark, produced by a serrated wheel revolving against a piece of pyrite. In use between circa 1530 and 1700.

### **Ballistics / Law Enforcement Activity**

Automatic Ballistic - a computerised system for acquiring and storing the Identification System images of the marks on cartridge cases and bullets in the Open Case File (OCF). These cases and bullets are automatically correlated with marks on new cartridge cases and bullets (also from test firings of recovered firearms) acquired into the system. Examples of such systems include; IBIS and EVO-finder/Condor/ Papillon.

Ballistic Item - a physical item or exhibit potentially suitable for submission to a forensic hub, includes firearms or suspected firearms, fired bullets, fired cartridge cases, ammunition and component parts of firearms and/or ammunition.

Ballistic Link - a proven link between a piece of spent ammunition and the firearm which discharged it, or a proven link between two spent pieces of ammunition fired from the same gun.

Breech Face Marks - impressions in the head of a fired cartridge case from the breech face of the firearm. These are used in the identification of links between fired cartridge cases and firearms.

Chamber Marks - marks imparted upon the cartridge case by the chamber during chambering, expansion and during firing and/or extraction. Marking caused by chamber flutes can be observed on cartridge cases fired in some firearms e.g. Heckler & Koch model MP5 sub-machine gun or G 3 rifle.

Conversion / - a conversion factory is the term used when a Reactivation Factory, individual or individuals are converting or reactivating multiple firearms for possible distribution. The factory set up and operation methods can vary dramatically and can appear sophisticated and well organised at one end of the scale or chaotic in both appearance and methods at the other end of the scale.

Converter / Reactivator - an individual who uses his or her skills to adapt or modify blank firing, deactivated, air-soft, paintball, air cartridge or other weapons into firearms that would be subject to control. This individual may also be involved in the removal of serial numbers.

Ejector Marks - marks impressed in the head or side of a cartridge (case) by the ejector when the cartridge or cartridge case are extracted and ejected from the chamber of the firearm during the reloading cycle.

Extractor Marks - marks produced by the extractor when the cartridge or cartridge case are loaded and/or extracted from the chamber and ejected.

Firearm Identification - the process of identifying the make, model and type of a ballistic item.

Firearm Classification - the process of determining the legal status of a ballistic item according to current MS firearms legislation.

Firing Pin Drag Marks - the striation produced when a projecting firing pin comes into contact with the primer, during the unlocking process of the action. Commonly seen in cartridge case fired in pistol of Browning construction and in break open shotguns.

Firing Pin Impression - the impression made by the firing-pin in the primer cup of the centrefire primer or the rim of rimfire cartridges.

General Rifling - a file containing the class characteristics specification Characteristics File (GRC) for different firearms. These characteristics are the number of lands and grooves, twist direction and width of land and grooves, shape of firing pin and breech face, and position of extractor and ejector etc.

Illicit Manufacturing - the manufacturing or assembly of firearms, their parts and components from parts and components illicitly trafficked without a licence or authorisation from a competent authority of the Member State where the manufacture or assembly takes place; or without marking the firearms at the time of manufacture, in accordance with the corresponding national regulations.

Illicit trafficking - the import, export, acquisition, sale, delivery, movement or transfer of firearms, their parts and components from or across the territory of one MS to that of another MS if any one of the MS concerned does not authorise it in accordance with the national regulations or if the firearms are not marked in accordance with national laws.

Inferred Firearm - a firearm which has been identified through forensic examination of recovered ballistic material (projectiles and cartridge cases) but where the firearm is yet to be recovered.

Land and Groove - the impression in the bearing surface of a fired bullet Impression caused by the rifling in the barrel.

Manufacturing Link - any tool mark or reloading mark that links ammunition or a firearm to a non-authorised and therefore illegal, manufacturing site.

Open Case File (OCF) - a collection of spent bullets, cartridge cases and wadding from unsolved gun crime scenes. These items are retained to enable comparison with items recovered at new crime scenes. This allows incidents to be linked by reference to the same firearm.

Test Fire - the process of testing whether a firearm is functional, how that firearm works and collecting samples of comparison examinations.

Toolmark - marks imparted by the mechanism of a firearm on the ammunition during any operation of the firearm. The microscopic detail in such markings is invariably unique and can, therefore, be matched to an individual firearm.

Trace Evidence - contact trace evidence types such as DNA, fingerprints, hairs, fibres, organic material, glass and paint.

Tracing - the systematic tracking of firearms and, where possible, their parts and components from manufacturer to purchaser for the purpose of assisting the competent authorities of MS in ongoing criminal investigations. The results of tracing can give valuable intelligence to be used in combating illicit manufacturing and trafficking.