Glossary of firearms terminology

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This revised advice has been produced and approved by the NABIS and the National Criminal Use of Firearms Group. It has been approved by NCOCC and VPP portfolio lead. The operational implementation of all guidance and strategy will require operational choices to be made at local level in order to achieve the appropriate police response and this document should be used in conjunction with other existing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) produced by the College of Policing. It will be updated and re-published as necessary.

Any queries relating to this document should be directed to either the author detailed above or the Head of Knowledge and Communications at NABIS on 0121 626 7114

Glossary of firearms terminology from the European Firearm Experts (EFE) Group

One of the recommendations of the 'European Union Threat Assessment – Assessing the Threat from the Criminal Use and Supply of Firearms within the European Union' (November 2011) written by the UK on behalf of the EFE was the need to create a standard glossary of firearms terminology.

The Glossary of Firearms Terminology is an EFE initiative that has been led by the UK as part of an EFE Working Group. It is not a document intended to change terminology in member states' domestic legislation, but rather to ensure that EFE members are able to communicate effectively when discussing firearms and is intended for use by the EFE representatives, who are law enforcement and customs officers, not technical firearm specialists.

Ammunition

Ammunition – a collective term for all items that can be discharged from a firearm. A loaded cartridge consists of a primed case, propellant and with/or without one or more projectiles.

Ball ammunition – ammunition loaded with full metal jacketed (FMJ) bullets.

BB – this refers to the size of birdshot with a nominal diameter of 0.180" in shotgun cartridges. It is also used to refer to air weapon ammunition of steel projectiles with a diameter of 0.177" (4.5mm) and the plastic BBs used in airsoft or soft air weapons. This is despite the fact that these have a diameter of 6mm.

Belt – a device used to hold and control the feed of ammunition into the firearm.

Black powder – another name for gunpowder, the earliest form of propellant. It has now been replaced in modern firearms by the introduction of smokeless powder. This is a mechanical mixture of potassium or sodium nitrate (saltpetre), charcoal and sulphur. The rapidly burning propellant produces a volume of hot gases that seal the cartridge case against the chamber wall of the firearm and force the projectile down through the barrel.

Blank cartridge – is a cartridge that is loaded without a projectile, typically for use in re-enactment and sporting events. Although there is no ballistic projectile, the discharge of the cardboard, fibre or plastic wad 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 and a distinct angular shoulder stepping down to a smaller diameter at the neck portion of the case.

Brass – a term that refers to an unloaded cartridge case.

Buckshot – shot with a diameter of greater than 6.1mm.

Bullet – a non-spherical metallic projectile usually made from lead, but can be made from other metals or materials, normally for use in a rifled barrel. Bullets may have a thin metal jacket, often made from copper alloy.

Bullet core – the inner section of a jacketed bullet, usually lead.

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 cartridge consists of a self-contained unit comprising the primer, propellant, and with/or without one or more projectiles all housed within a cartridge case. It also applies to a shotgun cartridge and is also referred to as a round of ammunition.

Cartridge case – the main body of a round of ammunition that contains the components. Refers to centrefire and rimfire metallic cartridges and also to shotgun cartridges. The cartridge case is discarded after firing and will normally retain marks from the firearm from which it was discharged.

Case – the body of a round of centrefire ammunition. It is the portion that contains the propellant or in shotgun cartridges it is the tubular section that contains the propellant, wads and shot charge (if present).

Cartridge case length – the dimensions from the face of the head to the mouth.

Case mouth – the opening in the case into which the projectile or shot is inserted.

Centrefire cartridge – any cartridge that has its primer central to the axis of the case head. Most modern firearms utilise centrefire ammunition, with the exception of .177 and .22 calibre rimfire firearms and those firearms of an antique design.

Charge – the amount, by weight, of a component of a cartridge (eg, 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, eg, hollow point bullets. These are very common in ammunition for hunting rifles.

Full metal jacket (FMJ) – a projectile in which the bullet jacket encloses most of the core, with the exception of the base. Other terminology includes full jacketed, full patch, full metal case.

Gunpowder – a generic term for cartridge and muzzle-loading propellant.

Gunshot residue (GSR) – residues from the powder, primer and projectile, as well as from the metallic components of the cartridge case and firearm's barrel, which partly are expelled from the firearm during firing and partly remain in the firearm (mainly in the bore).

Handloading – the process of manually assembling a cartridge case with a primer, propellant and bullet or wads and shot. See **Reloading**.

Head – the end of the cartridge case in which the primer or priming is inserted and the surface upon which the headstamp identification is imprinted. The head impacts against the breech during firing.

Headstamp – numerals, letters and symbols (or combinations of each) 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 to facilitate expansion.

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

Lead bullet – a compact bullet formed by 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 a 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 or shotgun cartridge from which the projectile or shot charge is expelled in firing.

NATO cartridge – a common designation for military cartridges produced under the specifications of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and signified by a ⊕ symbol on the headstamp.

Nitrocellulose powder – is a smokeless propellant 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.

Paper shell – a cartridge (shot shell) with a body of paper.

Pellet – a common name for the small spherical projectiles loaded in shot shells. It also referrers to a non-spherical projectile used in some air rifles.

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

Percussion cap – the ignition source for several types of muzzle-loading firearms, usually consisting of a copper alloy cup containing the priming mix. It is placed over a hollow nipple at the end of the barrel with a clear channel to the propellant.

Pinfire – an obsolete design of cartridge created in the early 19th century 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 pinfire cartridge was rendered obsolete by the invention of the rimfire and centrefire cartridge.

Primer – a component in the ammunition which explodes when struck by the firing pin, igniting the propellant and discharging the projectile.

Primer cup – a 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 insertion of a centrefire primer or battery cup in the head of a cartridge case or shotgun cartridge. When properly seated, it should be flush or below the face of the head.

Projectile – an object (bullet, shot, slug or pellet) which is discharged by the force of rapidly burning gases or by other means when a gun is fired. It may retain unique markings from the gun from which it was discharged.

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.

Reloading – the process of manually reassembling a fired cartridge case with a new primer, propellant and bullet or wads and shot. See **Handloading**.

Rimfire cartridge – cartridges containing the primer mixture around the rim of the case head. Often used to refer to .22” calibre ammunition, the most common rimfire calibre.

Rimless cartridge – a centrefire cartridge whose case head is of the same diameter as the body and having a groove turned forward of the head to provide the extraction surface.

Rimmed cartridge – a cartridge having a head that is larger in diameter than the body of the case. May be either rimfire or centrefire.

Round – a single ammunition cartridge.

Shot – small spherical pellets (normally lead) of varying sizes and weights which are used as the projectiles in shotgun cartridges.

Shotgun cartridge – a centrefire or rimfire cartridge loaded with small diameter shot.

Shot size – a numerical or letter(s) designation related to the average diameter of a pellet. The number system varies from country to country.

Smokeless powder – propellant containing mainly nitrocellulose (single base) or both nitrocellulose and nitroglycerine (double base).

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 gilding metal 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 mechanism of a firearm. May be broken down into action types as: automatic, semi-automatic, bolt, box-lock, side lock, lever, hinged, revolver, rolling block, falling block and slide (pump).

Air weapon – a gun that uses compressed air or gas (carbon dioxide) to propel a projectile. Projectiles are normally .17" to .22" calibre and are either round, elongated, or shaped lead pellets. In some European member states, airsoft guns and paintball guns are classified as air weapons.

Airsoft – a device intended to closely replicate a 'real' commercial firearm for the purposes of recreational military simulation exercises, typically using 6mm calibre plastic balls.

Antique – an antique firearm is accepted as one that chambers cartridges of an obsolete calibre or of an obsolete ignition design (eg, pinfire, flintlock, wheel-lock). Exceptions exist in some member states, whereby some centrefire weapons may be classified as antiques depending on domestic firearms legislation.

Assault rifle – is a selective fire weapon with a detachable magazine. It is capable of fully automatic fire and is typically the standard infantry weapon in the armed forces of a member state.

Automatic pistol – a common but improperly used term applied to auto-loading pistols in use today. A fully automatic pistol starts firing when the trigger is pulled and continues until the trigger is released or ammunition is exhausted. Most current 'automatic' pistols are truly semi-automatic (self-loading) in action only. See **Semi-automatic**.

Automatic rifle – a fully automatic shoulder firearm that starts firing when the trigger is pulled and continues until the trigger is released or ammunition is exhausted. The term should not be used in conjunction with semi-automatic (self-loading) firearms.

Barrel – the cylindrical tube designed to contain the pressure of a propellant and direct the projectile. For many weapons it consists of chamber and bore which may be rifled or smooth bore.

Blank firing weapon – a gun designed with an obstructed barrel to prevent the discharge of a projectile while allowing the discharge of blank cartridges.

Blowback action – in self-loading firearms, the blowback action is characterised through the acquisition of energy that drives the operation being derived from the motion of the cartridge case as reactionary force drives it against the bolt of the weapon.

Bolt action – a (repeating) mechanism where the bolt is moved in line with the bore. As the bolt is moved utilising the handle, the breech opens, withdrawing and ejecting any spent shell. The completion of the action causes the firing pin to become cocked and a new round is placed into the breech and the bolt closes.

Bolt handle – a protrusion from the bolt, usually at right angles from the axis of the bolt, which is used to manually actuate the mechanism.

Bore obstruction – a foreign 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 the head of the cartridge properly.

Breech face – the part of the breech block which supports the head of the cartridge case during firing.

Bullpup – a rifle in which the rear of the firing action/mechanism and magazine are located behind the trigger assembly.

Burst-fire weapon – this weapon fires a predetermined number of shots (for example, three) with each pull of the trigger.

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 barrel diameter, 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 originally designed for mounted troops.

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 a cartridge or round of ammunition ready for firing. In a rifle, shotgun or pistol, it is the rearmost part of the barrel that has been formed to accept a specific cartridge or shell when inserted. In a revolver, the chamber is not part of the barrel but is instead the holes in the cylinder that have been formed to accept a cartridge.

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

Class characteristics – gun manufacturers will leave common tool marks in multiple weapons because they use the same rifling technique in each weapon. These features mean that specific marks will be characteristic of a type or class of weapon, but not unique to a specific gun. They can be used to eliminate or implicate a particular type/class of weapon.

Cock – to place the hammer or firing pin/striker in position for firing.

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 rifle barrel and one or more shotgun barrels to allow taking of different types of quarry.

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**.

Components – 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.

Converted firearm – a barrelled weapon such as a blank firing, airsoft, paintball, air cartridge or personal defence weapon that is adapted or modified to enable a shot, bullet or other projectile to be discharged that is capable of lethal injury.

Cut rifling – a process of forming the spiral grooves in the bore of a rifle barrel by a cutting tool which has a hook shape. Also called hook rifling.

Cyclic rate – the rate at which a succession of movements repeats itself. In an automatic firearm, it is usually expressed in shots per minute that are theoretically possible to be fired, given an unlimited supply of ammunition.

Cylinder – part of a revolver, typically holding six rounds in separate chambers. 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. 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.

Disconnector – a device intended to disengage the sear from the trigger. (1) In a manually operated firearm, it is intended to prevent firing without pulling the trigger. (2) In a semi-automatic firearm, it is intended to prevent full automatic firing. (3) In fully automatic firearms it ensures proper ignition by delaying the release of the hammer.

Disguised firearm – a commercial or home-made firearm constructed to disguise its true capability. Examples have included those capable of lethal discharge disguised as pen guns, mobile phones, Maglite®-styled torches and defence weapons including mobile phone stun guns.

Double action – a firing method where the hammer or firing pin are cocked and released by the same movement of the trigger.

Double-barrelled – 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 case.

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

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. (Can be useful in identification examination).

Firearm – the term firearm is defined as a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged.

Firing pin – the part of a firearm which strikes the ammunition primer or the rim of the cartridge, igniting the propellant and discharging the projectile(s).

Gauge – a term used to denote the calibre of a shotgun. It is taken as a measure of the number of identical solid spheres that can be made from a pound of lead. For example, 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 weapon – refers to an imitation weapon that is capable of discharging a blank round or a round filled with a noxious substance designed to temporarily disable or disorientate an attacker. The gases normally vent forward through a partially obstructed barrel. Also known as a defence weapon.

Gas-operated – an automatic or semi-automatic type firearm in which the propellant gases are used to unlock the breech bolt and then, to complete the cycle of extraction and ejection, this is usually accomplished in conjunction with a spring which returns the operating parts to a ‘ready to fire’ position.

Grip – in handguns, it is the handle; in shoulder arms, it is the portion of the stock to the rear of the trigger.

Grooves – the spiral cuts in the barrel which create the rifling.

Gun – the common term for a portable weapon that fires ammunition, for example, a handgun or rifle, but can also include realistic imitations.

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 of many guns.

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

Handgun – a short-barrelled firearm designed to be held and fired in one hand.

Heavy firearms – illegally possessed and illegally used automatic firearms. This definition is only to be used in the context of the European Action Plan to combat the illegal trafficking in so called 'heavy' firearms.

Imitation firearm – any device which has the appearance of being a firearm whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet or other projectile. In the Netherlands it may also be referred to as a 'look-a-like' and in Denmark it is referred to as a replica.

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 – a firearm with an action where the block/bolt are opened and closed by 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 encompasses **small arms** to describe 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, motorised or man-portable. Normally, light weapons are crew-served and the crew is fewer than four people.

Loading ramp – a platform in the receiver behind the chamber which guides the cartridges into the chamber.

Machine gun/fully automatic weapon – a firearm that fires rapidly and repeatedly without requiring separate pressure on the trigger each time. The gun will continue to fire until the trigger is released or the supply of ammunition exhausted.

Machine pistol – is a fully automatic handgun, for example, the Glock® 18. In Germany, the term machine pistol is used to refer to a sub-machine gun.

Magazine – a spring-loaded box or tube that holds cartridges ready for loading into the chamber of a repeating or self-loading gun. It may be removable or an integral (fixed) part of the firearm.

Magazine-fed – a repeating firearm in which the ammunition for subsequent firing is fed from a magazine.

Mainspring – the mechanical, energy storage device 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 type of firearm or ammunition.

Markings – words or symbols, stamped, rolled, cast or engraved, on a firearm designating information such as the manufacturer, model, origin, calibre or gauge, choke, material.

Musket – military firearm with a long smoothbore barrel and fore-end or forearm extending nearly to the muzzle.

Muzzle – the end of a gun barrel from which the bullet or shot emerges.

Muzzle brake – 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 also referred to as a **Compensator**.

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

Muzzle-loader – a firearm that does not use conventional cartridges and which can only be loaded with powder and projectile(s) through the muzzle or the front end of a cylinder in the case of a muzzle-loading revolver

Muzzle velocity – the speed at which the projectile leaves the muzzle of a firearm

Operating handle – handle of a semi- or full automatic firearm used to cycle the firearm without firing. Also called charging handle, cocking handle, and cocking knob.

Original lethal purpose – a firearm originally manufactured with lethal purpose as opposed to weapons converted to be capable of live firing with lethal effect.

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.

Pepper spray – a self-defence device either in hand-held spray form or contained with a round of ammunition for use in a gas alarm weapon. A noxious substance designed to temporarily disable/disorientate an attacker.

Pistol – a handgun in which the chamber is a part of the barrel.

Proof mark – a stamp applied at or near the breech or other stressed component of a firearm after it has passed a proof test.

Pump action – a mechanism whereby, following discharge of a round, moving a defined part of the firearm parallel to the barrel enables a spent cartridge to be ejected and the return action chambers the next round. Also called **Slide action**.

Rate of fire – the pace at which projectiles can be discharged from the firearm.

Rate of twist – the distance required for the rifling to complete one revolution.

Reactivation – reactivated firearms were previously weapons deactivated in the approved manner that have subsequently been restored to be capable of discharging a projectile.

Receiver – the basic unit of a firearm which houses the firing and breech mechanism and to which the barrel and stock are assembled. In revolvers, pistols, and break-open guns, it is called the frame.

Recoil – the rearward movement of a firearm resulting from firing a cartridge or shotgun cartridge.

Recoil operated – an automatic or semi-automatic type firearm in which the force of recoil is used to unlock the breech bolt and then to complete the cycle of extracting, ejecting and reloading.

Replica – a reproduction of a firearm to exact detail. It is also the term used to refer to a modern reproduction of an antique weapon in some member states. See also **Imitation**.

Revolver – a firearm, usually a handgun, with a revolving cylinder of chambers, so arranged to allow several successive shots to be discharged by the same firing mechanism fired without reloading.

Rifle – a long-barrelled firearm with a rifled barrel and designed to be fired from the shoulder.

Rifling – spiral lands and grooves inside the barrel designed to make the bullet spin, thereby improving its accuracy.

Safety device – mechanical device in a firearm mechanism designed to reduce the chance of unintentional discharge under normal usage when properly engaged.

Sawn-off shotgun – a shotgun that has had its barrel and/or stock shortened.

Sear – a part which retains the hammer or striker in the cocked position. When released, it permits firing.

Selective-fire weapon – a self-loading firearm that can fire in fully automatic, semi-automatic or burst-fire modes at the option of the user.

Semi-automatic weapon – semi-automatic weapons fire a single shot when the trigger is pulled, 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.

Serial number – a number applied to a firearm by the manufacturer in order to identify the individual firearm.

Shotgun – a short-range smoothbore gun, designed to be fired from the shoulder, which normally discharges a cartridge containing a number of small pellets or shot or a single solid slug.

Side-by-side – a firearm with two barrels arranged adjacently in the horizontal plane

Single action – this refers to the requirement by the user to pull the hammer back manually (cocking the hammer) prior to utilising the trigger to operate the firing mechanism.

Single shot – a firearm without a magazine, holding a single round of ammunition.

Sleeving – using a metal tube to replace an existing gun barrel. It is observed in criminal conversion enterprises to overcome weaknesses in a barrel caused by the presence of venting holes or in an attempt to provide a barrel that chambers available ammunition correctly.

Slide action – a repeating mechanism where the loading is done by moving a part of the firearm parallel to the barrel. Also called **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 less than 14.5mm.

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 is fixed to, the barrel of a firearm and reduces the noise (report) produced by a cartridge discharging in a firearm.

Speedloader – a device for enabling ease of loading a firearm by holding several cartridges within a single unit. Typically used for loading all chambers of a revolver in one action. Examples do exist, however, that enabling the loading of magazines, such as a **Stripper Clip**.

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 individual when firing.

Straight pull – a bolt action firearm in which the bolt does not need to be rotated for locking and unlocking, but can be handled by a straight backward and forward motion of the shooter's hand. Civilian versions of military rifles, limited to straight pull versions, may be permitted for civilian ownership in some member states.

Stripper clip – a device for enabling ease of loading the magazine of a firearm by holding several cartridges within a single unit.

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) – an automatic firearm that discharges ammunition in pistol calibre.

Toy weapon – a representation of a firearm (not necessarily realistic) that is incapable of firing ammunition or one that is only capable of discharging soft rounds. The firearm would be structurally unsuited to be modified to discharge ammunition.

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

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

Wheel-lock – an obsolete mechanism.

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) entered into the system. Examples of such systems include IBIS and EVOFINDER.

Ballistic item – a physical item or exhibit potentially suitable for submission to a forensic hub, such as 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 utilised 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 during firing and/or extraction. Chamber fluting marks can be observed on cartridge cases fired in some firearms, eg, Heckler & Koch® model MP5 sub-machine gun.

Conversion – a conversion factory is the term given when an individual or individuals at a **reactivation** factory 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 their skills to adapt or modify blank firing, deactivated, airsoft, paintball, air cartridge or personal defence weapons into firearms that would otherwise be subject to control. This individual may also be involved in the removal of serial numbers.

Ejector marks – marks impressed in the head 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 process.

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 domestic 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 a 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 characteristics file (GRC) – a file containing the class characteristics specification for different firearms. These characteristics include 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. See **land and groove impression**

Illicit manufacturing – the manufacturing or assembly of firearms, their parts and components:

(i) from parts and components illicitly trafficked

(ii) without a licence or authorisation from a competent authority of the member state where the manufacture or assembly takes place

(iii) 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 member state to that of another if any one of the members states 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 from forensic examination of recovered ballistic material (projectiles and cartridge cases) but where the firearm is yet to be recovered.

Land and groove impression– the impression in the bearing surface of a fired bullet caused by the rifling in the barrel.

Manufacturing link – any tool mark or reloading mark that links ammunition or a firearm to a non-commercial, 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 how a firearm works and collecting samples for comparison examinations.

Tool marks – 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, paint, gunshot residue and soil.

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 member states in ongoing criminal investigations. The results of tracing can give valuable intelligence to be used in combating illicit manufacturing and trafficking.