

# Bureau of alcohol, tobacco, firearms and explosives



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## Introduction

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is an agency within the United States Department of Justice. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives protects American citizens from dangerous and illegal activities involving, as its name suggest, alcohol, tobacco, firearms and explosives.” The mission of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is to conduct criminal investigations, regulate the firearms and explosives industries, and assist other law enforcement agencies. This work is undertaken to prevent terrorism, reduce violent crime and to protect the public in a manner that is faithful to the Constitution and the laws of the United States (The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives). Though The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is a law enforcement agency one of the primary responsibilities is tax collection. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is responsible for taxes on alcohol, tobacco, ammunition, and firearms. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is an important agency protecting Americans.

## History of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has been the sole agency responsible for regulation and taxation of the above mention categories since July 1<sup>st</sup> 1972. However, some of the duties of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have existed in some form in the United States since 1789. Initially, these activities were performed by the <https://assignbuster.com/bureau-of-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives/>

Department of Treasury. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 1862, the Office of Internal Revenue was founded. This new agency was now responsible for all taxes, including those on alcohol and tobacco. The Office of Internal Revenue included enforcement agents to pursue those who evaded taxes. In 1919, the Volstead Prohibition Enforcement Act and the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution made it illegal to produce or transport alcohol. Enforcement of these policies fell on the Office of Internal Revenue. In 1920, the Prohibition Unit was created. This agency was made up of the agents focusing on liquor laws. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1927 the Prohibition Unit officially became a bureau under the Treasury Department. Congress established a new Bureau of Prohibition under the Department of Justice in 1930. This new bureau was now responsible for enforcing Prohibition. Then, the Treasury Department was still responsible for the tax and regulations associated with Prohibition, under the new Bureau of Industrial Alcohol. In December 1933, the Twenty First Amendment to the Constitution ended Prohibition. Shortly after, President Roosevelt created, via executive order, the Federal Alcohol Control Administration to regulate the newly legal industry. This agency was replaced in less than two years by the Federal Alcohol Administration (FAA). The FAA was founded as part of the Treasury Department, who was again responsible for supervising the alcohol industry. In 1934 the Alcohol Tax Unit was founded as part of the Bureau Of Internal Revenue. The FAA combined with the Alcohol Tax Unit.

Prohibition, though over, resulted in a lasting culture of organized crime. Due to the violence resulting from organized crime, the National Firearms Act was passed in 1934 and the Federal Firearms Act passed in 1938. These Acts

regulated firearms, largely via taxes. In 1942, the enforcement capacity of firearm regulation was entrusted to the Alcohol Tax Unit. Around this time, the ATU became known as the Alcohol Tax Division until the 1968 Gun Control Act. With this act, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was now responsible for additional substances, including explosives. In July 1972, the Treasury Department Order NO. 120-1 officially shifted all activities involving alcohol, tobacco, firearms, and explosives from the Internal Revenue Services to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. After over one hundred years of restructuring, The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has finally achieved stability in its structure and its duties. One major change the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has undergone was its adoption of anti- arson enforcement. In 1982, congress amended the original legislation that outlines the duties of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to include arson. Since the 1970s the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has grown both its budget and its staff. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has added over a thousand employee positions. Since 1973, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives budget has increased from \$74 million to \$1. 07 billion (The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives).

## Budget

In 2013 the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives total budget was \$1, 153, 345, 000. This budget covers The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives staff, operations, and programs. Though the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives collects taxes, that

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money does not found The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives activities. From the years 2007-2011, the ATF collected over \$112 million. This money is turned over to the Treasury Department General fund. The funding from The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives comes from federal government. Before each fiscal year, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives submits a budget draft to congress. The draft includes information about the allocation and purposes of their requested funding. Congress edits and revises the budget as they see appropriate and then grants the funding to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. This budget includes salaries of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives 4, 937 staff employees (The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, 2012).

### International Partners

Though The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is responsible for enforcing laws in the United States, they also work along international organizations. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives works international to investigate and prosecute international crime. Some examples of these organizations include the United Nations, Interpol, and the G8. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has field offices in several other countries. They work alongside law enforcement, government officials, and policy makers in these countries. For example, The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has offices in Canada, Mexico, Europe, Colombia, El Salvador, and the Caribbean. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has the most offices in Mexico, with five field offices in the country.

## Domestic Partners

Since its beginning, The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has worked closely with multiple other governmental agencies. Early on, The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives worked with the Treasury Department and the now nonexistent Federal Alcohol Administration. Today the bureau works closely with state and local law enforcement. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives works with state and local law enforcement to implement laws and regulations, as well as to locate and prosecute those who break these laws. Also, the ATF'S leaders work with Congress on evaluation and budgetary matters.

In "The American System" by Morton Godzins, the American government is described as very chaotic. Godzins discusses how multiple branches and agencies of government often overlap in function. He writes that successful collaboration requires agencies to openly communicate. To describe the intermingled functions of government, Godzin uses the analogy of a marble cake. This image illustrates the mixing of government functions as chaotic and unordered (Shafritz and Hyde, 2011).

## THE BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES Today

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives today serves the same purposes as it did when it was founded. Their scope has grown to include numerous activities that are relevant to their purpose. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives organizes its activities into ten core functions. These functions include original objectives, such as alcohol and tobacco, the criminal firearm usage and trafficking and regulation of the <https://assignbuster.com/bureau-of-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives/>

firearms industry. In the 1970s, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives began including explosives, bombs, bombing, and the explosive industry in their responsibilities. As previously mentioned, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives began to investigate Arson in the 1980s, adding it to their core functions. The three remaining functions are more recent additions. The first of these additions is a focus on criminal groups and gangs. This activity is closely aligned with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' mission and values as criminal activity often involves the usage, purchase, or trade of the materials regulated by the bureau. The final two functions involve management activities and are also included in the strategic goals of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. These functions involve the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' workforce and modernization. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is constantly seeking to maintain and build a highly skilled staff. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives seeks a diverse and talented employee base. The final function, modernization, is a focus of many government agencies today. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives aims to improve upon its technological skills in order to remain effective and relevant in today's world.

### Strategic Goals

In 2010, The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives published its strategic goals for 2010-2016. Four of the six goals focused on activities relating to the mission of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. These goals involve illegal firearms trafficking, criminal groups

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and gangs, explosives and bombings, and fire and arson. The remaining goals involved management activities. Those goals relate to work force and modernization. Over the past four years the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has implemented changes where needed in order to meet these goals. All of these goals contribute to The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives vision, “ We protect America. We protect your community.”(The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives)

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives two management activities, modernization and work force seek to improve the internal operations of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Their modernization goal consists of modernizing business activities. This goal also involves updating procedures for information sharing and knowledge management. Finally, this goal also seeks the implementation of more innovative technology. The second management goal of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives attempts to improve its work force by attracting, developing, and retaining a strong work force. Both of these goals aim to keep the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives operating at its full potential.

#### Victim/Witness Assistance Program

Since the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives focuses on illegal activities, the agency frequently interacts with victims. In order to guarantee victims receive their rights as specified in the Crime Victim Rights section of Federal Law 18 United States Code, Section 3771, The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives established its Victim /Witness



Assistance Program in 1999. This program enables the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to provide victims with various types of support. The Victim/ Witness Assistance Program ensures victims' safety, as well as providing them with other resources. These resources include, but are not limited to, on financial assistance, recovery of property, and referrals to other relevant support agencies. These support agencies can provide services such as emergency housing, counseling, and support groups.

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program is implemented by twenty three Victim/Witness Coordinators. These officers can be found in each of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives field divisions located the across the country. These coordinators work closely with the United States Attorney's Office, which has its own Victim Witness Coordinators. The Victim/Witness Assistance Program also works with the previously mentioned support agencies. These agencies can be located at both state and local levels. The program Coordinators also worked closely with local law enforcement agencies, especially concerning the safety of victims.

While I found no criticism of the Victim/Witness Program, I also found no praise of the program. There seems to be little information available from other sources about this program. This is most likely due to the fact that the program is largely confidential and is only experienced by those who truly need its services, victim irrelevant crime.

## Conclusion

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives exists in order to protect American citizens and to keep their activities in line with the law. The <https://assignbuster.com/bureau-of-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives/>

bureau enforces laws and regulations intended to keep Americans safe. They are responsible for regulating the manufacture and trade of weapons and explosives and for controlling and preventing drug trade. Without The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the United States government would have a very difficult time regulating these trades and enforcing these policies.

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