



# National Crime Information Center NCIC

# The NCIC File Reference

Revised July 2022

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is an information system available to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. The system includes records of wanted persons, missing persons, and persons who pose a threat to officer and public safety, as well as records for stolen property items.

Records of persons are generally indexed and accessed using identifiers such as names and dates of birth, Social Security numbers, and operator's license numbers. Records of property are generally indexed and accessed using identifiers such as serial numbers, license plate numbers, vehicle identification numbers, and owner applied numbers.

## THE NCIC SYSTEM FILES

A discussion of each NCIC System file, the year the file became part of the NCIC System, the type of information contained in the file, and how long a record remains in the file follows. The files are grouped by type and are in chronological order by the year each was implemented.

## PERSON FILES

### Wanted Person File (1967)

The Wanted Person File contains records of individuals who have an outstanding warrant(s). This file also contains records of juveniles who have been judged delinquent and who have escaped from custody or supervision or who have absconded while on probation or parole. The file also contains records of juveniles who were charged with committing an act of delinquency, which would be a crime if committed by an adult, and who have fled from the state in which the act was committed. Agencies may also enter temporary felony want records into this file. Temporary felony want records allow a law enforcement agency to take prompt action to apprehend a person suspected of committing a felony when circumstances prevent the agency from immediately obtaining a

warrant. Except for temporary felony want records, which are active for 48 hours, Wanted Person File records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **Missing Person File (1975)**

The Missing Person File contains records of missing persons of any age who have a proven physical or mental disability; records of persons who are missing under circumstances indicating they may be in physical danger or abducted; records of persons missing after a catastrophe; records of persons under the age of 21 who are missing but who do not meet any of the above criteria; and records of persons aged 21 and older who are missing but who do not meet any of the above criteria but for whom there is a reasonable concern for their safety. Records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **Unidentified Person File (1983)**

The Unidentified Person File contains records of unidentified deceased persons, living persons who are unable to verify their identities, unidentified catastrophe victims, and recovered body parts. Records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **Foreign Fugitive File (1987)**

Only the staff of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) can enter records into this file, which is available to all criminal justice agencies. INTERPOL records contain information on persons wanted in other countries for felonious crimes if committed in the United States. The wanting country must have signed an extradition treaty or convention with the United States, or the subject must be wanted for a violent crime or otherwise must be known to be violent, armed, or dangerous. Records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **Immigration Violator File (1996)**

Only the staff of the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement can enter records into this file, which is available to all criminal justice agencies. This file contains records of criminal aliens whom immigration authorities deported for drug or firearms trafficking, serious violent crimes, or both; information on aliens who have outstanding

administrative warrants for removal from and who have unlawfully remained in the United States; and records of aliens who have outstanding administrative warrants for failure to comply with national security registration requirements. Records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **Protection Order File (1997)**

The Protection Order File contains records of individuals who are subject to court-issued orders to prevent violent or threatening acts, harassment against, contact or communication with, or physical proximity to another person(s). The NCIC System retains records in this file until the record reaches the date in the Date of Expiration Field. Nonexpiring records remain in the NCIC System indefinitely. The System retains expired and cleared records in an inactive status for the remainder of the year in which the record was cleared or expired plus 5 years.

### **National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) (1999)**

Records of sex offenders or other persons required to register under a jurisdiction's sex offender registry program are contained within this file. Records stay in the file until the record reaches the date in the Ending Registration Date Field. Nonexpiring records remain in the file indefinitely. The NCIC System retains expired or cleared records in an inactive status indefinitely.

### **Supervised Release File (1999)**

The Supervised Release File contains records of individuals who are under specific restrictions during their probation, parole, supervised release, pre-trial sentencing, or released on their own recognizance. The System retains records until the date in the Date of Probation Expiration (DPE) Field is reached. Nonexpiring records remain in the System indefinitely.

### **Identity Theft File (2005)**

The Identity Theft File contains records of victims of identity theft with descriptive and other information that law enforcement personnel can use to determine if an individual is a victim of identity theft or if the individual might be using a false identity. NCIC retains records in this file until the

record reaches the date in the Date of Purge (DOP) Field. The maximum retention period is 5 years.

### **Gang File (2009)**

The Gang File contains records of violent gangs and their members. Records of gangs remain in the file indefinitely. Records of gang members are retained until the record reaches the date in the Date of Purge (DOP) Field. Records with a nonexpiring DOP are retained indefinitely.

### **Threat Screening Center (TSC) File (2009)**

The FBI's TSC is the only entity that can enter records into this file, which is available to all criminal justice agencies. TSC File records contain information on persons who have been nominated to the TSC as a known or suspected terrorist or other authorized national security threat. These records remain in the file indefinitely or until the TSC staff removes them.

### **Protective Interest File (2011)**

The Protective Interest File contains records for individuals for whom an authorized agency reasonably believes, based on its law enforcement investigation, might pose a threat to the physical safety of protectees or their immediate families. Only law enforcement agencies with a protective mission as specified within municipal, state, or federal statutes, regulations, or other appropriate legal authority may enter records into this file. Records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **NICS Denied Transaction File (NDF) (2012)**

The NDF contains records regarding individuals who have been determined to be prohibited persons as a result of a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) background check. NDF information will not be maintained on the NCIC System logs. NDF records are entered and canceled through an interface between NCIC and NICS. If the status of a NICS denied transaction is subsequently changed, such as the result of a successful appeal, then the corresponding NDF record will be removed from NCIC

System. Otherwise, all active NDF records are available in NCIC System from the date of NICS denial.

### **Violent Person File (VPF) (2012)**

The VPF contains records of individuals who have been convicted of violent crimes, or have made credible threats, against law enforcement and individuals who have been convicted of certain other violent crimes. The VPF was designed to alert law enforcement officers an individual they are encountering may have the propensity for violence against law enforcement. Records remain in this file indefinitely.

### **Extreme Risk Protection Order File (ERPO) (2022)**

The ERPO File contains records of individuals who are found, by courts, to be a threat to themselves or others. The court-issued order temporarily restricts the individual from purchasing or possessing firearms, ammunition, and other related items as identified by the jurisdiction's law. The NCIC system retains records in this file until the date in the Date of Expiration Field is reached. Non-expiring records remain in the NCIC System indefinitely.

## **PROPERTY FILES**

### **Article File (1967)**

The Article File contains records of any stolen item valued at \$500 or more; records of all property taken, regardless of value, if the aggregate value taken in one theft exceeds \$5,000; records of property taken, regardless of value, if the investigation indicates interstate movement of the property; records of property taken in which the seriousness of the crime indicates the investigating agency should enter a record for investigative purposes; or records of lost Public Safety, Homeland Security, or Critical Infrastructure items of identification. The Article File records remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 1 year, with the exception of lost Public Safety, Homeland Security, or Critical Infrastructure (Category Q) items of identification, which stay active indefinitely.

### **Gun File (1967)**

The Gun File contains records of stolen weapons; recovered (abandoned, seized, or found) weapons; lost or missing weapons; or weapons used in the commission of a felony. Records of stolen, lost, or felony guns remain in the file indefinitely. Recovered gun records remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 2 years.

### **License Plate File (1967)**

The License Plate File contains records of stolen license plates. The License Plate File records remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 4 years.

### **Vehicle File (1967)**

The Vehicle File contains records of stolen vehicles, vehicles used in the commission of a felony, or vehicles a law enforcement agency seizes based on a federally issued court order. Records of felony vehicles and vehicles subject to seizure remain active for 90 days from the date of entry; records of stolen vehicles remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 4 years.

### **Securities File (1968)**

The Securities File contains records of securities stolen, embezzled, used for ransom, or counterfeited. Securities are identified as currency and documents or certificates providing evidence of debt or ownership of property or documents representing subscription rights. Examples of securities include Federal Reserve notes, warehouse receipts, traveler's checks, money orders, stocks, and bonds. Securities File records of ransom securities remain active indefinitely. Records of stolen traveler's checks and money orders remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 2 years; records of all other stolen, embezzled, or counterfeited securities remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 4 years.

### **Boat File (1969)**

The Boat File contains records of stolen boats. The Boat File records remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 4 years.

### **Vehicle/Boat Part File (1999)**

The Vehicle/Boat Part File contains records of stolen component parts from a vehicle or boat or ownership documentation. The Vehicle/Boat Part File records remain active for the balance of the year of entry plus 4 years.

## **OTHER FILES**

### **Interstate Identification Index (III) (1983)**

The III is not an NCIC File but is an index accessible through the NCIC System. The III contains personal descriptor information an authorized agency can use to determine if a subject has a state or federal criminal history record on file. A positive response from the III will include instructions on how the agency can retrieve the corresponding history record.

### **Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) File (1985)**

An FBI authorized ORI is assigned pursuant to Title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, and is a nine-character identifier assigned to a criminal justice or law enforcement agency that has met the established criteria. The ORI is required to access the FBI CJIS Division systems and is used in each transaction to identify the authorized sending agency and to ensure the proper level of access. The ORI file contains contact information, such as the agency's name, address, phone, fax, and email. While the ORI can be placed in retired status, the ORI record remains in this file indefinitely.

### **Image File (1999)**

Images can be associated with NCIC System records to assist agencies in identifying people and property items. In addition to identifying images, the file contains generic images used as references for particular makes and models of vehicles and boats. If there is an identifying image associated with a record in this file, the image remains in the file until the record is canceled or expires. Generic images remain in the file indefinitely.

# RETRIEVABILITY

Mandatory descriptors for NCIC System inquiries are listed below:

## Wanted Person File

A Wanted Person File inquiry will also search the Foreign Fugitive, Gang, Identity Theft, Immigration Violator, Missing Person, National Sex Offender Registry, NICS Denied Transaction File, Protection Order, Protective Interest, Supervised Release, Threat Screening Center, and the Violent Person Files. Inquiries containing vehicle identifiers will also search the License Plate, Vehicle/Boat Part, and Vehicle Files.

Inquiries containing a Miscellaneous Number, Social Security number, or Operator's License Number will also search the Article File. A Wanted Person File inquiry must include:

- ◆ Name (NAM) and one or more of the following identifiers: Date of Birth (DOB), Operator's License Number (OLN), Social Security Number (SOC), FBI Number (FBI), Miscellaneous Number (MNU). The Sex (SEX) and Race (RAC) Fields are not required, but agencies may include information in those fields to limit the scope of the search.
- ◆ Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), License Plate Number (LIC), or both. The License State (LIS) is not required, but agencies may include information in those fields to limit the scope of the search.
- ◆ NAM and Originating Agency Case Number (OCA) only.

## Missing Person File

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Missing Person File with name and unique identifiers. Agencies must use a Missing Person File inquiry to search nonunique identifiers. The Missing Person File inquiry must include: Approximate Age (AGE), Sex (SEX), Race (RAC), Height (HGT), Weight (WGT), Eye Color (EYE), Hair Color (HAI), and Ethnicity (ETN).

## Unidentified Person File

- ◆ An Unidentified Person File Body Part Status (BPS) inquiry must include: the BPS Field. Sex (SEX), Race (RAC), and Area (ARE) are not required, but agencies may include information in these fields to limit the scope of the search.

- ◆ An Unidentified Person File nonunique inquiry must include:  
Approximate AGE, SEX, Race (RAC), Eye Color (EYE), Hair Color (HAI),  
Approximate Height (HGT) and Weight (WGT), and Ethnicity (ETN).

## Foreign Fugitive File

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Foreign Fugitive File.

## Immigration Violator File

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Immigration Violator File.

## Protection Order File

Agencies may use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Protection Order File. Information in the Name (NAM), Date of Birth (DOB), and Social Security Number (SOC) Fields will also search the Protected Person Name (PPN), Protected Person Date of Birth (PPB), and the Protected Person Social Security Number (PSN) Fields. To limit the search to the Protection Order File (active, expired, and cleared records), agencies must conduct a Protection Order File (QPO) inquiry using the same descriptors as in a Wanted Person File inquiry, except a QPO can be made using: NAM and Protection Order Number (PNO) only.

## National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)

Agencies may use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the NSOR. To limit the search of the NSOR, agencies must conduct a sex offender inquiry (QXS) using the same descriptors as in a Wanted Person File inquiry. A QXS can also be made using Zip Code (ZIP) only.

## Supervised Release File

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Supervised Release File.

## Identity Theft File

Agencies may use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Identity Theft File. To limit the search to the Identity Theft File, agencies must conduct an Identity Theft File inquiry (QID) using the same descriptors as in a Wanted Person File inquiry.

### **Gang File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Gang File:

- ◆ **Group Reference Capability**  
Group Name (GNG), Subgroup Name (SGP), or both.
- ◆ **Group Member Capability**  
Agencies may use a Wanted Person File inquiry. To limit the search to the Gang and TSC Files, agencies must conduct a Group Member inquiry (QGM) using the same descriptors as in a Wanted Person File inquiry.

### **Threat Screening Center (TSC) File**

Agencies may use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the TSC File. Agencies may also conduct a QGM inquiry using the same descriptors as a Wanted Person File inquiry.

### **Protective Interest File**

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Protective Interest File.

### **NICS Denied Transaction File (NDF)**

Agencies may use a Wanted Person File inquiry or NICS Denied Transaction File (NDF) inquiry (QND) to search the NDF. The Wanted Person File inquiry will return all NDF records where the date of NICS denial is less than 180 days. The NDF inquiry will search all records in the NDF and is not restricted by the date of denial.

### **Violent Person File (VPF)**

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the Violent Person File.

### **Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) File**

Agencies must use a Wanted Person File inquiry to search the ERPO File.

### **Article File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Article File: Serial Number (SER), which will also search the Owner Applied Number Field (OAN), and Type (TYP).

### **Gun File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Gun File:

- ◆ Serial Number (SER).
- ◆ SER and Make (MAK).
- ◆ SER, MAK and Caliber (CAL).
- ◆ SER and CAL.

### **License Plate File**

Agencies must use the following to search the License Plate File: License Plate Number (LIC).

License State (LIS) is not required, but agencies may include information in the LIS Field to limit the scope of the search.

### **Vehicle File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Vehicle File: License Plate Number (LIC), Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), which will also search the Owner Applied Number (OAN) Field, or both. License State (LIS) is not required, but agencies may include information in the LIS Field to limit the scope of the search.

### **Securities File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Securities File:

- ◆ Type (TYP), Denomination (DEN), and Serial Number (SER).
- ◆ Owner (OWN), Social Security Number (SOC), or both. TYP is not required, but agencies may include information in the TYP Field to limit the scope of the search.

### **Boat File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Boat File:

- ◆ Registration (REG) Number which will also search the Coast Guard Document Number (CGD).
- ◆ Boat Hull Number (BHN) which will also search the REG and CGD and Owner Applied Number (OAN).

### **Vehicle/Boat Part File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Vehicle/Boat Part File: Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), which will search the Serial Number (SER) and Owner Applied Number (OAN) Fields.

### **Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) File**

Agencies must use the following to search the ORI File: ORI.

### **Image File**

Agencies must use the following to search the Image File:

- ◆ NCIC Number (NIC) to retrieve all images associated with a particular record.
- ◆ Image Number (IMN) to retrieve a specified image.
- ◆ Vehicle Make (VMA), Vehicle Model (VMO), Vehicle Style (VST), and Vehicle Year (VYR) to retrieve a generic vehicle image.
- ◆ Boat Make (BMA), Boat Type (BTY), and Boat Length (BLE) to retrieve a generic boat image.