

BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES APPROPRIATIONS

The Fire and Arson Investigation Capabilities of the ATF are essential to national security, public safety, and the ability for state and local investigators to handle complex fire, arson, and explosives cases.

Background

The ATF is the lead agency for complex fire and arson investigations. Through its Certified Fire Investigators (CFIs), the agency applies advanced forensic techniques to determine fire origin and cause, especially in large-loss, fatal, or multi-jurisdictional incidents.

The ATF works closely with state and local fire departments, offering training in fire investigation, evidence handling, and courtroom testimony. This collaboration improves overall investigative quality and helps ensure that arson cases are accurately identified and successfully prosecuted.

The ATF also supports information sharing across jurisdictions, helping identify patterns such as serial arson or coordinated criminal activity. By connecting cases through data and intelligence, they assist fire departments and law enforcement in stopping repeat offenders more quickly.

Ask



Provide appropriate funding and staffing of the Fire and Arson Investigation Capabilities of the ATF.

Talking Points

▶ **Advanced Forensic and Laboratory Support**

The ATF provides access to specialized labs that analyze fire debris, accelerants, and explosive materials. These capabilities allow investigators to identify ignition sources and strengthen criminal cases related to arson.

▶ **Rapid Response Teams and Resources**

The ATF deploys National Response Teams (NRTs) that can arrive quickly at major fire scenes. These teams bring equipment, expertise, and coordination support, helping local departments manage complex investigations and preserve critical evidence.

▶ **Explosives and Fire Scene Integration**

Because ATF also regulates explosives, it brings unique expertise when fires involve blasts or suspicious ignition devices. Investigators can assess whether an incident involves arson, explosives, or both—critical for accurately classifying and prosecuting complex scenes.

