



## **News for Immediate Release**

**May 3, 2012**

### **PA State Police Fingerprint Identification System to be Upgraded**

**Harrisburg** – The Automated Fingerprint Identification System, used by the Pennsylvania State Police, will be taken out of service for three days later this month for a full system replacement.

The system, better known as AFIS, will be out of service from 10 p.m. Saturday, May 19, through 10 a.m. Tuesday, May 22, 2012, when the new AFIS will go online.

Members of law enforcement rely on AFIS to provide automated fingerprint search capabilities, latent searching capability, electronic image storage, and electronic exchange of fingerprints and responses.

While the system is replaced, the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS), and the Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History (PATCH) system will not have full access to real-time criminal history information. Consequently, this will temporarily restrict the purchase of firearms and negate the ability to obtain criminal history checks.

Once AFIS returns to normal operating status, all transactions submitted during the implementation phase will automatically upload into the new system.

The Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act and the federal Brady Act are the laws that ban certain individuals from purchasing firearms, including persons convicted of certain criminal offenses.

“The replacement of AFIS will allow us to better serve the many agencies and citizens of Pennsylvania who rely on up-to-date and accurate criminal history information,” State Police Commissioner Frank Noonan said.

“I want to assure our citizens that their safety is our number-one priority and that prohibited persons will not be able to purchase firearms,” he added. “We apologize for any inconvenience stemming from this system replacement, and we appreciate your patience while we perform this essential work.”

AFIS is a type of biometric system that uses digital imaging to capture a fingerprint, which then can then be compared to a database of fingerprint records to assist in determining the identity of an individual.

AFIS also has the capability of searching unidentified latent fingerprints developed at crime scenes against known fingerprints on file with the Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Records and Identification.

All persons arrested and fingerprinted with a date of birth of 1957 or later are currently on file, as well as all newly arrested persons. These registered fingerprints are subsequently compared against all new fingerprints entered into AFIS.

The Pennsylvania State Police started using AFIS in 1990, when the system replaced the manual classification and searching of fingerprints. It has been upgraded three times since then, the latest in 2006, when it allowed AFIS to receive and store palm prints.

The system is currently processing 531,000 more transactions annually than it was eight years ago. Those numbers continue to increase, exceeding the current system's capacity. In addition, the original system is no longer on the market, so the entire system must be replaced.

For more information about Pennsylvania State Police, visit [www.psp.state.pa.us](http://www.psp.state.pa.us).

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