Learning Objective: *The student shall be able to explain the key elements of the Bomb Arson Tracking System and its advantages in helping to combat criminal use of fire and explosives.*

The Bomb Arson Tracking System is a secure, web-based intelligence database and case management tool for documenting any fire, arson or explosive-related incident. BATS was developed and is maintained by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to help facilitate information sharing among law enforcement agencies and fire service organizations at every level of government.

Participating investigative agencies can immediately share key information and intelligence concerning arson and explosives incidents with counterparts in other states or regions. The BATS database allows images of arson scenes, improvised explosive device components and bomb scenes to be shared online with law enforcement partners anywhere in the United States.

BATS is a secure web-based system to support federal, state and local agencies by providing a common platform for sharing arson and explosives-related information.

Investigators are able to track trends and compare incidents for similarities in motives, investigative leads and potential suspects, and to strengthen their ability to identify investigative leads in real time. BATS users can input and access information during the course of an investigation. They can conduct trend analysis and compare incidents to identify potential suspects. Investigators can upload photo images, audio/video files, witness statements, laboratory reports and diagrams, as well as write narratives detailing origin and cause and other investigative activity. BATS includes a Geographic Information System (mapping) function to provide additional analysis and assist in uncovering patterns and trends.

There are currently thousands of authorized BATS users from more than 1,500 local, state, trial, and federal law enforcement and public safety agencies across the United States. BATS contains hundreds of thousands of arson and explosives incident reports within the consolidated BATS database. This includes a unique set of data associated with the tracing of explosives products from the manufacturer to the end-user in support of criminal investigations.

BATS can be accessed around the clock from any computer with an Internet connection. Each agency administers its BATS account, and authorized users receive user IDs and passwords. BATS also includes a functionality that allows investigators to use the program as a case management system while maintaining critical operational security.

BATS is available to all fire departments and fire marshal offices at no cost. To obtain additional information or to request a BATS account, contact the U.S. Bomb Data Center at 1-800-461-8841 or apply online at www.BATS.gov. An information packet can also be downloaded at http://www.interfire.org/features/pdfs/IAFC_BATS_Info_Paper.pdf.