



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,  
Firearms and Explosives

Washington, DC 20226

www.atf.gov

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MEMORANDUM TO: Area Supervisor, Portland Area Office

FROM: Chief, Explosives Industry Programs Branch

SUBJECT: Locking Requirements for Portable Type-5 Magazines

This memorandum is in response to inquiries regarding the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF's) determination on the locking requirements for portable Type-5 magazines commonly referred to as ocean freight containers, sea containers, or ISO containers.

The regulation at 27 CFR 555.211(a)(4) states, in part, that "Each door is to be equipped with (i) two mortise locks; (ii) two padlocks fastened in separate hasps and staples; (iii) a combination of a mortise lock and a padlock; (iv) a mortise lock that requires two keys to open; or (v) a three-point lock... Trailers, semitrailers, and similar vehicular magazines may, for each door, be locked with one steel padlock (which need not be protected by a steel hood) having at least five tumblers and a case hardened shackle of at least  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch diameter, if the door hinges and lock hasp are securely fastened to the magazine and to the door frame."

The aforementioned regulation specifically allows "Trailers, semitrailers, and similar vehicular magazines" to deviate from the standard locking requirements by only requiring one unhooded padlock. ATF has consistently held that this provision only applies to mobile magazines or those magazines equipped for vehicular transport. This exception does not apply to portable Type-5 magazines or those magazines that are not equipped for vehicular transport.

Therefore, each door on portable Type-5 magazines must be secured with "(i) two mortise locks; (ii) two padlocks fastened in separate hasps and staples; (iii) a combination of a mortise lock and a padlock; (iv) a mortise lock that requires two keys to open; or (v) a three-point lock."

There have been situations where explosives industry members place portable Type-5 magazines on top of flat-bed trailers or use a cargo container manufactured to fit a trailer chassis. In these scenarios, the portable Type-5 magazine may be locked with one unhooded steel padlock if the magazine is securely placed on top of the trailer. The padlock must have at least five tumblers

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and a casehardened shackle of at least 3/8-inch diameter and the door hinges and lock hasp must be securely fastened to the magazine and to the door frame. However, if the portable Type-5 magazine is removed from the mobile trailer it no longer qualifies as a mobile magazine and must be locked in accordance with the aforementioned standard locking requirements.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Explosives Industry Programs Branch at 202-648-7120.

Sincerely yours,



Debra S. Satkowiak  
Chief, Explosives Industry  
Program Branch

c: All Directors, Industry Operations  
Chief, Federal Explosives Licensing Center