In recent years, federal firearms licensees (FFLs) nationwide have seen an increase in the number of firearms stolen from their businesses when they have been the victim of a burglary or robbery. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) tracks the number of FFL burglaries and robberies each year. According to ATF’s data, burglaries peaked in 2017 at 577, a 71 percent increase from 2013. In 2018, the number dropped to 427, a 26 percent decrease from 2017, but still well above the 338 in 2013.

The number of robberies from FFLs increased 9 percent from 2017-2018. About 6,000 firearms were stolen from FFLs in burglaries and robberies in 2018.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and members of the firearms industry are concerned about these trends and are working to support further declines.

That’s why NSSF, as the trade association for the firearms industry, is cooperating with ATF to try to address this problem, through an initiative launched in January 2018 called Operation Secure Store®. As part of Operation Secure Store, NSSF matches ATF reward offers for information that leads to the successful arrest of the criminals responsible for a theft of firearms from an FFL. Additionally, NSSF is helping to educate FFLs on steps they can take to reduce the chance guns will be stolen from them during a burglary or robbery. NSSF, in cooperation with ATF, conducts retailer store security seminars.

While presenting options for FFLs to choose, it is important to keep in mind that every store is different and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Even when following best practices and taking proper precautions, FFLs remain high-value targets for determined criminals seeking to illegally obtain firearms.