



How Long A Good Background Check Should Take



Today's business moves at the speed of light. Your clients want things yesterday. The last thing you need is to be slowed down by your hiring process. The good news is you can do a thorough and accurate background check on all of your candidates in a very short amount of time.



Background screening is an essential part of running a successful business and should not be considered “optional.” You need to make sure you do all of your due diligence for several reasons. First, you are responsible for the safety of your employees and your customers. Regardless of your industry, background screening will help you ensure your employees are trustworthy. If you hire someone with a violent past and they harm someone while on the job, you could be subject to a negligent hiring lawsuit.

Checking employees out before putting them to work is also good for your bottom line. Replacing a bad hire can cost you in several ways. You might lose clients, hurt productivity and harm morale. It’s also estimated that replacing a bad hire can cost a business up to three times the position’s annual salary.

Doing it right the first time is not as unwieldy a proposition as it seems. This eBook will help you decide what services you need and how much time it will take to get you there.

What Do You Really Need?

The first step in planning any background screening program is to decide what products will give you the best information on your applicants. There are several products to choose from, and the answer depends on your industry and the position in question. You might choose to use different combinations of these products depending on the position you are filling. First, let’s review the products, and then we will give examples on how to put them together.



Social Security Number Trace

The Social Security Number Trace is the jumping off point for all background checks. The trace instantaneously takes a name and date of birth and provides residential history, aliases and other key data. This information is then used to verify any matches that are discovered in criminal database searches. The SSN lets us know when the number was issued and if it is valid. The issue date is very useful because if the number was issued before your candidate was born, it is a clear discrepancy.

EBI's main concern is making sure you get information on your applicant. You would be amazed at how many people not only share the same name, but date of birth as well. These details will help determine if a match is truly a match, or if it's in name only.

The best searches pair the SSN trace with County Criminal Searches (see below). Without the combination of the two, criminal records under aliases or in jurisdictions that the applicant did not list on their application might never be found. The SSN trace combined with the criminal record search package helps prevent applicant dishonesty.



National Criminal Record Search (NCRD)

The NCRD is used to uncover criminal offenses that happened outside the areas where your candidate has lived. Hundreds of millions of offense records are included in this multi-jurisdictional search of state and county criminal records. Most searches that turn up no criminal records, or “clears”, can be returned instantaneously. Slight delays could be caused by common name matches or unreportable records showing up in the search. These issues take a little time to review, but this short delay will guarantee more accurate results.

Sources of information include:

- State and local courts
- Multi-state sex offender searches
- FBI
- U.S. Marshals Service
- Department of Justice
- Secret Service
- U.S. Customs
- DEA Fugitive and Most Wanted Files
- Department of Public Safety
- Traffic Court

Search results can vary from state to state and county to county. Some areas are fully automated and up to date which shortens turnaround time. Others are “clerk searched” courts which means our researchers must wait on court clerks to pull the needed information. These requests are on top of the clerks’ normal day-to-day duties. In some locations the average turnaround time is two weeks.



County Criminal Records

EBI's nationwide network of researchers conducts felony and misdemeanor searches of criminal records through hands-on searches at county courthouses across the country. If there is no "name match", most of these searches clear within 48 hours. About 75% of all county criminal searches fall into this category.

If there is a name match, it can take an additional 24- 48 hours for our staff to cull through all of the available information to make sure the record that was discovered belongs to your candidate.

The additional steps to verify the match happen both in our office, as well as on location at county courthouses. While this does add some time to your results, it is essential. As mentioned earlier, there are an astounding number of people that have the same name and date of birth. To prove this, we searched a co-workers name and date of birth. He has no criminal history, but 259 other people with the SAME name and birthday have records.



Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs)

License validity, type, vehicle violations, restrictions, suspensions, revocations, accidents and convictions are all included in this search. The majority of states return these results within seconds. Alaska, Hawaii, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wyoming and the District of Columbia return results within 72 hours.



Employment Verifications

EBI Verifications Specialists perform in-depth, detailed and confidential verifications of employment.

Employment Verifications can include:

- Dates of Employment
- Salary
- Titles and Duties
- Reasons for Leaving
- Rehire Status
- Supervisor References
- Customized Questions from Client

These verifications are completed within 72 hours. Our base package includes three attempts in three days to get the information. We can customize packages to meet your company's needs, but additional requests can add to the turnaround time.



DOT Employment Verifications

If you are screening for a position that is DOT regulated, the turnaround time is extremely different. Some of the positions in this category include commercial drivers, pilots, train engineers and boat captains. By law, when researching a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), you can only look at the last three years. Work history inquiries can go back further depending on what clients ask for. The DOT also requires very specific questions that must be answered by the Human Resources or Safety departments. ***They have a full 30 days to respond to our request.*** It is very common for them to wait until the last moment to provide the information, so ***the average DOT search should be expected to take the full 30 days.***



Education Verifications

The education section on resumes is a hot spot for exaggerations and out-right lies. Verifications Specialists contact every educational institution listed by the applicant to confirm attendance dates, major, GPA and what degree was awarded. If you are verifying college or graduate level degrees, the verifications can take up to 72 hours. Checks on high schools can take longer, and it is important to note that summer and winter breaks can further add to the delay. The most difficult to reach can take up to 2 weeks.



Credit Checks

Credit checks are important for any applicant or employee in a role with financial responsibilities. Results of these searches come from the three major credit bureaus (Transunion, Experian and Equifax) and are instantaneous. They are an essential tool for reducing the threat of internal theft.



Healthcare Sanction Reports

There are several types of Healthcare Sanction Reports to consider:

1. Sanctions that involve misappropriation of drugs either involving physicians, pharmacists, pharmacist technicians, or nurses
2. Sanctions that involve criminal convictions such as theft, DUI's, etc. that the board finds out about and the individual is either given a fine with probation or suspension of license
3. Sanctions that involve an individual not paying an education loan
4. Sanctions that involve individuals on the exclusion list either for Medicaid fraud or abuse



If the sanctions are related to criminal convictions the records will show up on the background report. A clean Healthcare Sanction Report can be completed in as little as an hour; if there are records the turnaround time differs. It is not uncommon for these records to come back with only one identifier, which means more investigating must be done to confirm the record belongs to your applicant. This additional research can take as little as 2 to 3 days or it can stretch out for a couple of weeks.



Putting The Pieces Together

You do not have to do all of the above searches for every employee. It is possible to adjust searches based on the position a candidate is seeking. The following chart can serve as a jumping off point for your discussion. It shows what some example packages will look like for various employment categories. While this is not legal advice, this can serve as a good starting point as you begin to think about which products you would like to utilize.

POSITION	SEARCHES	TIMEFRAME
Team Member	SSN Trace County Criminal Records (current address) NCRD	Instant 24-48 Hours Most Instant (Clears Only)
Assistant Manager	SSN Trace County Criminal Records (Residence Past 7 Years) NCRD	Instant Up to 48 Hours for Clears Additional 24-48 for Hits Most Instant (Clears Only)
Assistant Manager w/Driving Req.	SSN Trace County Criminal Records (Residence Past 7 Years) NCRD Motor Vehicle Records	Instant Up to 48 Hours for Clears Additional 24-48 for Hits Most Instant (Clears Only) Instant in Most States
Managers	SSN Trace County Criminal Records (Residence Past 7 Years) NCRD Employment Verifications	Instant Up to 48 Hours for Clears Additional 24-48 for Hits Most Instant (Clears Only) Up To 72 Hours
Managers w/Driving Req.	SSN Trace County Criminal Records (Residence Past 7 Years) NCRD Employment Verifications Motor Vehicle Records	Instant Up to 48 Hours for Clears Additional 24-48 for Hits Most Instant (Clears Only) Up To 72 Hours Instant in Most States
Executive Suite	SSN Trace County Criminal Records (Residence Past 7 Years) NCRD Employment Verifications Education Verification Credit Check	Instant Up to 48 Hours for Clears Additional 24-48 for Hits Most Instant (Clears Only) Up To 72 Hours Up To 72 Hours Instant
Industry Specific Searches	DOT Verifications Healthcare Sanctions Professional License Verifications	Up To 30 Days Instant Up To 2 Weeks 24 to 72 Hours for Clears Several Days if Any Disciplinary Action is Discovered



Depending on your business and the responsibilities of your managers, you might choose to add Credit Checks and Education Verifications.

For professionals in other industries, license verifications are an important part of any vetting process. Some common licenses that should be verified include, but are not limited to: engineers, radiologists, nurses, nurse's aides, lawyers, CPAs and financial planners. While the turn-around times vary, it is important to verify a candidate's listed credentials with all applicable licensing boards. Typically these searches are done online, but we also include any disciplinary actions associated with each license. In order to get that information we have to contact the specific boards directly. That can take up to 5 or 6 days, depending on how busy they are.

Conclusion

Creating your screening program is a very individualized process. Once you have a feel for what you your needs are, your background screening partner can help you fine tune your policies and procedures.

Employment Background Investigations is a technology driven leader in domestic and global pre-employment background checks, drug testing, occupational health screening and I-9 compliance. We specialize in development, implementation and management of customized employment screening programs for large and multi-national clients. We are dedicated to information security. EBI is one of the few NAPBS Accredited background screening companies to hold both an ISO 27001:2013 certification for information security and an ISO 9001:2008 certification for Quality Management.

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