

Employee Background Check - 4 Things to Know

Before we befriend anyone, we assess their personality first. If we feel comfortable with their traits, then we tend to get close to them. Otherwise, we resort to remain mere acquaintances. Job recruitments are the same way. When a company [HR management](#) formulates an employee recruitment plan, part of the process is conducting employee background checks. Doing so assesses a candidate's professional background to determine if he or she is fit for the job. Both applicants and recruiters must understand the value of such a procedure, which is where this article comes into play.

Why do Employers Conduct Background Checks?

Many employers conduct background checks in their hiring process as a part of their risk management practices. During their [employee recruitment](#), they ensure that the people they bring in possess clean records. Other than that, background checks determine if a candidate is capable of upholding the company's values and standards.

Ways to Do Background Check

According to a survey about background checks by the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS) and HR.com, 96% of the 1,528 HR professionals they've surveyed responded that they conduct employee background screening. That finding confirms that employee background checks are indeed a standard for every employer's [employee management](#) practices. Here are four ways on how they do background checks.

Personal History and References

Asking an employee's personal history is the simplest way to start a background check. The employer will converse with the job candidate about his or her professional history. Another approach is through the character references stated by the job candidate on his/her resume. Character references offer the employer a second opinion about the candidate's background.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing is quite costly, but it helps employers in recruiting the best people. When it comes to background checks, outsourcing agencies can perform them on the employer's behalf. This assures employers that their background check procedures are by following global standards in workforce reinforcement. Plus, the duration of their [selection process](#) is made lesser.

Social Media

Research from CareerBuilder states that 70% of recruiters are using social media as a means to do employee background checks. This method makes sense because, as we all know, the way we act on social media is a manifestation of our true selves or at least a good part of it. That said, the employers will have a better view of a candidate's personality through his/her social media posts.

Public Records

Public records are the most essential documents employers must look into in background checks. It's a policy to check candidate public records. Public records are mostly the civil records of the job candidates. Employers check public records because most of them are credible government-issued records, such as court records, civil status, birth certificates, licensing records, etc.

What Is Included in the Background Check?

These are the checklist of inclusions in conducting an employee background check evaluation.

Criminal Record History

Of course, job candidates must have clean records to become official employees. For that reason, employers will undoubtedly check if they have any criminal records. It's one way of protecting the reputation and security of the company. However, some employers accept employees with criminal records that aren't too grave, but this rarely happens.

Credit Background Check

The purpose of credit background checks is for an employer to get a sense of a job candidate's financial situation. Credit records speak volumes of a candidate's financial responsibility or irresponsibility. If the candidate has a bad credit report, there's a

chance the employer takes the precaution of not hiring him/her to avoid the possibility of fraud and theft within the workforce.

Employment Verification

Job applicants sell themselves by showcasing their relevant employment history on their resumes and job application letters. To know if the applicants' work experiences are hard facts, the employers verify their previous employment. Some unqualified candidates who boast of having experience that they don't have. The employer must check if the candidates have a certificate of employment or any verifying document.

Identity and Address Verification

Employers must have accurate data on the employees' respective profiles and residences. For that reason, they have to verify their identity and address by asking for their birth certificates or any credible documentation.

Education Verification

Some job positions require specific educational attainments, mainly supervisory and managerial positions. In that case, the employer has to verify their educational background. The employer will likely ask for the job candidate's college degree diploma, competency certifications, and licenses (if necessary).

Reference Verification

As mentioned earlier, the character references stated on the applicant's resume will be utilized as a second opinion regarding the applicant's personal history. To verify them, the employer simply has to contact the referenced person. If the referenced person's contact details can't be reached in any way, it could degrade the applicant's chances of getting hired for the job.

Medical Records

An employee must be physically fit to work. It's the employer's job to ensure that by checking the employee's medical records. Other than ensuring the employee's physicality to work, the reason why an employer checks medical records is to know if an employee has health problems that could be chronic or contagious. Employees with such conditions could endanger other employees around the workplace.

Drug Test Record

Workers that have drug problems will be a burden and danger in the workplace, and could potentially disrupt the [employee engagement](#) rate. So employers must ask for the drug test records of a candidate. And if a successful candidate is offered the job, most employers require the candidate to undergo a drug test.

Bankruptcy Information

A history of bankruptcy doesn't totally affect the applicant's chances of employment. However, the employer has the right to know of his/her financial history. This matter can be directly tied with credit background checks. But there's a condition for checking bankruptcy information. The Fair Credit Reporting Act prompts employers to disregard an individual's bankruptcy information that's 10+ years old.

Vehicle Record

Vehicle records are simply the driving history of a job candidate, which may include records of traffic violations. Checking vehicle records is most important if the work position being applied for is a driver job. In that case, the employer has to make sure that the candidate has a clean driving record and possesses a professional driver's license.

Tips to Follow For Background Checks

Here are four useful tips that employers can apply in conducting employee background checks.

Follow a Consistent Verification Policy

A consistent verification policy helps employers in receiving accurate and credible information about an employee's background. Plus, it ensures that the company's background check procedures comply with government regulations.

Take Legal Advice

There are certain guidelines that an employer must know in conducting employee background checks, especially those implemented by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). If breached, lawsuits could follow. That said, some employers ask for legal advice regarding appropriate background checks.

Partner with Background Check Agencies

Partnering with recruitment agencies for onboarding employees is one of the tips for hiring. For the case of background checks, employers can also partner with agencies that specialize in that process. They do them faster and more efficiently; and, they also follow the regulations in doing so. With that in mind, the employer doesn't have to worry about unintentionally breaching background check regulations.

Get Permission Before a Background Check

Employers should ask for the candidate's consent before running a background check. It could be done through a [written agreement](#) for documentation and transparency purposes. If the candidate refuses to give his/her consent, the employer can or should reject his/her application.

An employee background check should not be taken lightly. It's one of the steps in ensuring the capability of the company's workforce and maintaining its positive reputation. Conducting background checks is a must-have for every [HR policy](#). Whether you're an employer or a job candidate, you should keep in mind that it's more of like a getting-to-know phase in [employee relations](#).