



Pre Employment Background Screening At a Glance

An Employment Background Screening Company

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Pre Employment Background Screening

What is it?

Pre employment background screening is the process of investigating the character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and/or mode of living of a potential employee in order to determine their suitability for a given job.

These investigations can be as simple as a criminal background check or, for higher risk positions, as thorough as searching civil records, bankruptcy records, credit reports, and driving records. Most background checks consider a seven year history and include verification of the individual's identity, employment history, educational background, and reference checks. Drug screening is also a common form of background screening.

In all cases, pre employment background screening should be conducted in a manner that respects an individual's privacy rights while managing the organization's hiring risks.

Why screen?

Pre employment background screening has become commonplace with 80% of U.S. corporations currently conducting background checks on job candidates. The reasons for screening vary but the most common reasons are:

1. **To comply with legal obligations** to screen, as in transportation, education, and other industries where federal law requires certain workers to be screened.
2. **To protect against negligent hiring lawsuits** since employers are responsible for the behavior of their employees on the job, and in some cases even away from the job.
3. **To create a safer workplace** by preventing those with potentially unsafe backgrounds from joining the organization.
4. **To reduce productivity, turnover costs, and other losses** associated with employee theft, substance abuse, and otherwise unqualified employees.
5. **To do the right thing!** Background screening is the right thing to do to protect the public, your employees, and yourself.

Simply put, background screening helps companies hire the most qualified candidates and reduces the risk of hiring the wrong candidates.

The Background Screening Process:



1. Verify the Applicant's Identity

Is the applicant who they say they are? This is the number one requirement for an accurate background check.

2. Identify the Scope of the Background Check

What geographic locations has the applicant lived, worked, or otherwise been associated with over the past 7-10 years?

What other names has the applicant used (maiden or otherwise) over the past 7-10 years?

3. Fulfill the Background Check

Conduct the background check in logical order and using authoritative data. For example, a typical screening program would employ the following types of checks in the following order:

Identity Verification

- Social Security Locator
- Database Criminal Research
- Internet Research

Scope Determination

- Legal Names
- Jurisdictions

Search Fulfillment

- Criminal Records
- Position-Related Checks (Credit Report, MVR, Drug Test)
- Credentials (Employment History, Education History, Professional License)

Common Background Screening Services

Several of the most common types of pre employment background checks are described below:

Type	What is it?	How is it used?
Social Security Number (SSN) Locator	A search of commercial social security based data that report the names and addresses associated with a particular SSN. Also validates that the number is in a validly issued range and searches the death index to ensure the SSN does not belong to a deceased individual.	The SSN Locator is the first necessary step in a background check since it serves to validate the identity of the individual and sets the stage for the names and jurisdictions that will be used for further searches. Neglecting this step can waste time and money on searches conducted using the wrong identity.
National Database Criminal Records Searches	A database search of criminal records covering most, but not all, states and jurisdictions in the U.S. Includes multi-state sex and violent offender's data and U.S. government watch list data.	A national criminal records search is extremely useful as a pointer to guide deeper searches at the state and local level. However, since there does not exist a national database search to cover all U.S. jurisdictions, national records searches should never be the end-all-be-all source of a criminal background search.
Local Criminal Records Searches	A criminal records search conducted in jurisdictions where an applicant has lived, worked, currently resides, or in places where potential criminal activity has been found -- typically discovered through the national criminal records database search.	The local criminal records search is by far the most useful criminal search for local-level crimes, assuming the data is gathered directly from the authoritative source. Note: these searches do not contain federal criminal information which must be searched separately.
Sex Offender Registry Search	A search of each state's mandatory sex offender registry.	Sex offender registry data is useful, if not essential, when hiring for sensitive positions, such as those involving access to children, healthcare patients, or private residences.
Drug Screening	Testing for common illegal or illicit drugs using any number of testing methods.	Substance abuse causes numerous undesirable effects in the workplace. A drug testing policy is proven to identify potential substance users and deter individuals with substance abuse issues from approaching the organization to begin with.
Education Verifications	Verification of an applicant's stated educational background, including degrees	One of the most commonly falsified areas of a job application or resume, education

earned, certifications, and dates attended.

verifications are essential for any position where educational achievement is vital.

Employment Verification

Basic employment history verification provides confirmation from the applicant's employer of start date, end date, title, salary and eligibility for rehire.

This baseline step in the background screening process provides confirmation of the information an applicant has provided and can serve as an authoritative measure of the applicant's employment history.

DMV/MVR Records Searches

A search of an applicant's driver's record using Department of Motor Vehicle information.

Checking an individual's driving record is essential for positions that involve vehicle use, but driving records can also provide clues about an individual's degree of self control, ability to learn from mistakes, potential drug or alcohol issues, and much more. Thus, DMV records searches can be useful for a variety of jobs.

The Right Check for the Job:

Knowing the type of background check you need for a particular job requires an assessment of your corporate goals, risk tolerance, and the nature of the position the individual will hold. When assessing the nature of the position, ask yourself:

- Will the individual have access to the public?
- Will the individual have access to property?
- What is the level of supervision the individual will have?
- What is the level of trust that will be instilled in the individual?
- What is the potential damage that could be incurred if the wrong person is hired?

These types of questions will help you determine the type of background check that is needed for a given position. For example, hiring a CEO would require a much more in-depth background screen than hiring a warehouse worker, yet both individuals can carry risks to the organization if not properly screened.

Why hire a Background Screening Company?

When implementing your background screening program, you can do it yourself or hire a third-party background screening company to perform the services on your behalf. The right background screening partner can offer:

- Understanding of the compliance landscape surrounding background screening
- Access to trusted and established sources of authoritative data
- Guidance in crafting effective background screening policies, procedures, and methodologies
- Assistance in compliance fulfillment, particularly with pre-adverse and adverse action notices
- A comprehensive suite of background screening services, including criminal checks, personal searches, verifications, drug screening, and program management services
- Faster and more accurate results
- Convenient online ordering, management, and reporting

Some legal considerations:

The compliance environment surrounding pre-employment background screening is complex and far-reaching. Some of the most important compliance issues include:

Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)

The FCRA is a federal law that affects the collection, use, and dissemination of consumer reporting information, including background screening information. FCRA rules apply to all Consumer Reporting Agencies, including background screening providers. There are 3 basic requirements of employers who use background information provided by a CRA for employment purposes:

1. Make the applicant aware that a consumer report will be used for employment purposes and obtain the applicant's agreement to such use.
2. Notify the applicant if the information found in a report *may* result in a no-hire decision. This is a pre-adverse action notification.
3. Notify the applicant if the information found in a report *actually does* result in a no-hire decision. This is an adverse action notification.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA states that an employer may not discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability. The law does not protect applicants who are currently using illegal drugs when the drug usage is the basis of a no-hire decision, however, there are many other cases in which information discovered in the background screening process may warrant your adherence to ADA rules.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Rules

The EEOC is an independent federal agency that enforces laws related to discrimination. As it relates to background screening, the EEOC has handed down a set of guidelines employers should use when making decisions based on employment screening information. These guidelines help ensure the employer does not cause adverse impact on a protected class by keeping the screening activities *job-related*.

Negligent Hiring

Years of documented court cases have upheld the notion that employers are responsible for the actions of their employees on the job, and sometimes even away from the job. The Negligent Hiring doctrine states that an employer must use “reasonable care” in the employee selection process. Failure to do so can be grounds for severe lawsuits, in which employers rarely succeed. Background screening is proven to provide solid evidence of reasonable care, when conducted properly.

Looking for a Background Screening Partner?

Proforma Screening Solutions offers fast, accurate, and affordable pre employment background screening solutions for companies of all sizes. Our consultative approach makes it easy to get your background screening program up and running quickly so you can focus on bringing the right people into your organization right away.

To learn more about Proforma, explore our [background screening services](#), take a demo of our [online background screening system](#), or [request a meeting](#) to discuss your needs.

If you're ready to get started now, [open an account](#) or call us at (866) 276-6161.

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