



Standardization of Common Industry Terms

SOCIT

February 2009

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Section 1 – Criminal History

County Criminal History

AKA: County Seat Search

This is one of the most common searches conducted by employers. A search may be conducted for (felonies and, most times, misdemeanors) criminal records in the county where the applicant has lived, worked, or studied

Source of report

The source comes either directly from the court or from the court via a "wholesale provider."

A wholesale provider is a company that gathers court records at the actual physical court location, on behalf of a number of background screening firms, through widely used networks. Such providers can range in size from a large firm with national coverage to one-person operations covering a limited number of counties. Wholesale providers may be referred to as a "furnisher," "runner," "agent," or "supplier."

Some larger background check companies utilize their own employees or a network of independent court runners in high volume areas.

Some County records are available online or through dial-in access, although the history of information may not consistently be 7 years.

Over 55% of the court records across the U.S. can be accessed online or through dial-up programs and typically contain a minimum of 7 years of information.

Service Insights

Court structure varies from state to state.

Approximately 80% of the county courts throughout the United States house both Felonies and Misdemeanors in the same courthouse. In other counties, court records may be in multiple courts across multiple courthouses.

Automation varies from highly sophisticated docket tracking systems to microfiche or card index catalogues.

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Some states are searched by parish and/or borough rather than by county (i.e. Louisiana = parish, New York = borough).

Although the "felony" charge type is a common term throughout the judicial system, there are some states that refer to such a charge as an "indictable offense" or other such verbiage. (i.e. New Jersey)

Counties have varying access. Not all are computerized or searched using the same identifiers.

Some counties do **not** allow the public or a provider to do the search. The clerk must complete the search. These are sometimes referred to as "Mercy of Court" areas or "mercy courts."

Common identifiers that are returned on county court records are name and date of birth (DOB). Other identifiers may be available, such as Social Security Number (SSN), address, Driver's License Number (DL #), etc. Personal identifiers may vary from county to county. More and more counties are placing restrictions on the personal identifiers they will return.

Every court determines its own search methodology (i.e., by name, Social Security Number, date of birth). It is a very common misconception that all courts are indexed for searching the same way.

Access to the length of years that may be searched varies from court to court.

Even if court records may be provided by a court, they may not be reportable by a background screening firm or able to be considered by the user of the report, due to a variety of federal and state laws and regulations.

Whether an offense is categorized as a felony or misdemeanor may vary from state to state.

As with all records requiring a lot of manual data entry and/or handling, records do contain errors.

County court structures can be fragmented or not unified, which means not all charges from all courts may be found in the discovery process of a standard search.

Dispositions and case numbers differ from state to state ("T" is traffic one place while "T" means criminal in others).

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Many non-public access courts charge an out-of-pocket expense in order to conduct a criminal record search. These are typically referred to as “disbursement fees” or “statutory fees.”

Requests for copies and file retrieval may incur an additional expense, depending upon the court. County Fee structures for the access and retrieval of records vary. Fees may include copies, access, clerk pulls, and file pulls.

Court records are not always stored onsite at the court house. Obtaining records from off-site facilities may cause delays in turnaround time.

If a court cannot locate a file, in some instances the court will provide documentation of the lost or misplaced file on court letterhead to provide to your client.

County Civil History

AKA: Civil Check, County Civil Check, Suit Check, Civil Search

A county civil history is a county level search that reports information about an individual regarding his or her involvement in lawsuits, bankruptcies, divorce and other matters. Civil history differs from the criminal history in that the subject can be either the plaintiff or the defendant.

Misconceptions:

A record is always negative toward the applicant.

All records contain name, social security number, date of birth.

All issues, regardless if they were dealt with in court or not, appear on this index.

Source of report:

County repository (same as criminal).

The source comes either directly from the court or from the court via a “wholesale provider.”

Some County results are available online or through dial-in access, although the years of information may not consistently be 7 years.

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Service Insights:

Almost always name only matches.

Turnaround time is usually longer than a County Criminal History.

Lawsuits can be filed against an individual or company and they can be filed in any number of venues, including county of residence of plaintiff, county of residence of defendant, county of location of corporate headquarters of company (if suit involves one), county of location of any branch location of company, or any other venue stipulated in a contract if suit involves breach of contract. This makes civil research extremely difficult and often returns limited results.

May include information pertaining to:

- Divorce
- Personal injury claims
- Tax liens
- Wrongful death claims
- Adoption
- Tendencies to sue or be sued
- Bankruptcies – (which may not be used to make a hiring decision pursuant to federal laws)

Not very popular in the industry

Court structure varies from state to state

Automation varies from highly sophisticated docket tracking systems to microfiche or card index catalogues.

Counties have varying access. Not all are computerized or searched using the same identifiers.

Some counties do not allow the public or a provider to do the search. The clerk must complete the search. There are sometimes referred to as “Mercy of Court” area or “mercy courts.”

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A common identifier that is typically returned on civil searches is first and last name. Identifiers that may be available include address, Driver's License Number (on a very limited basis), and others. Personal identifiers may vary from county to county.

Most civil searches are name only searches, with only a select few courts utilizing a SSN.

It is a very common misconception that all courts are indexed for searching the same way.

Access to the length of years that may be searched varies from court to court.

As with all records requiring a lot of manual handling, there may be errors in the records.

County court structures can be fragmented or not unified, which means not all charges are found in the discovery process of a standard search.

Requests for copies and file retrieval may incur an additional expense, dependant on the court. County Fee structures for the access and retrieval of records vary. Fees may include copies, access, clerk pulls, and file pulls.

Court records are not always stored onsite at the court house. Obtaining records from off-site facilities may cause delays in turnaround time.

Department of Corrections

AKA: DOC, DRC - Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections

Incarceration records for prisons Rehabilitation and Correction.

DOC can contain information for individuals that have been sentenced to probation but were sentenced through the DOC.

Source of report:

DRC or DOC Repository, depending on the state

Repository information, if available, is often searched via the Internet. Some states offer only telephone access.

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Service Insights:

Overall availability of inmate records varies from state to state.

Access to current versus past incarceration records varies by state.

Generally, "privately" managed facilities do not report to the DOC repository.

Some of this data can be found in the Multi-State Criminal database products sold by some background screeners.

A common misconception is that a DOC search is the same as a state-wide (repository) criminal history. State-wide repository data is different information than DOC data.

All DOC records relate to felony convictions, though some are reduced to a misdemeanor in the sentencing phase.

Federal Criminal History

Referred to as non-jurisdictional crimes.

A common misconception is that "Federal" is synonymous with national coverage or fingerprinting. Actually, it refers to cases conducted in a Federal District Court.

There are 94 Federal Judicial Districts in the U.S. These checks represent a small percentage of criminal cases, but are usually serious offenses, but not always. For example, any criminal offense committed in a National Park is also a federal crime. These may include offenses such as speeding, fishing without a license, hunting violations and even removing leaves or pinecones.

Typical charges may include: homicide, interstate trafficking, robbery of a bank or Post Office, fraud, embezzlement, Immigration, firearm or explosives charges, certain sex offenses, and crimes aboard an aircraft.

Source of report:

U.S. Party Case Index

PACER access

Direct court search

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Service Insights:

Federal Criminal charges are NOT found in the county and state repositories.

Typically, the results are name-only matches, with no other identifiers.

Validation of the record can be time-consuming and there is no guarantee that pulling the file will result in additional verifiers.

Dismissed and Pending cases will never have IDs.

Judgment of Conviction page must usually be ordered for all convictions to see if ID is available.

National Crime Information Center

AKA: NCIC

The NCIC is a computerized index of criminal justice information available to federal, state, and local law enforcement.

Source of report:

<http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/doj/fbi/is/ncic.htm>

Service Insights:

If an individual has a criminal record supported by fingerprints and that record has been entered in the NCIC III file, criminal history record information will be available for review through the FBI and state law enforcement. It is illegal for most private companies to obtain criminal information from law enforcement computer databases without specific legal authorization.

Records on file are verified through comparison of fingerprints – The FBI only has records where a fingerprint was taken; fingerprints are not consistently taken nationwide.

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The FBI database is only as good as the information provided by the states. They do not have parameters on what the state sends so the content of the record, the charge levels of the record depend on state policy. The state will have a policy if and when fingerprints are taken. The FBI cannot assist in policy making in each state. The quality of the state's information depends upon the efforts of the counties and their diligence of submission to the state.

National Criminal Database

Database criminal records. Also referred to as "Multi jurisdictional search."

A database of criminal records collected from a patchwork of state and local records that is NOT all inclusive.

These are offered by some background screeners. National searches allow a client to look at a wider scope of coverage.

Source of report:

National Criminal Database Reports are generally created by large background screening companies and other data aggregators who have specialized in the collection of criminal data for resale purposes.

Service Insights:

National Criminal Databases are unique to the company hosting the database. Although many records are similar, the providers use different mixes of sources and methods to match results.

National databases should be used as a supplement or pre-screen to the normal scope of work.

No National database has ALL criminal records.

Some states do not sell criminal data to the aggregators who maintain these databases.

National databases should not be considered up-to-date in all jurisdictions. If a criminal record is identified, further verification may be required to confirm subject identity and current disposition of the criminal case.

Special care should be taken to understand how far back information is collected from a specific source and the frequency the data is updated.

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National Sex Offender Public Registry

This is public information regarding the location of individuals who are required to register through a State Sex Offender Registry. Information about individuals who appear on these lists is dependant on the individual states' registry requirements but typically will contain information on individuals who have committed sexually violent offenses against adults and children, as well as certain sexual contact and other crimes against victims who are minors.

Source of report:

Department of Justice

NSOPR: <http://www.nsopr.gov/>

The DOJ portal allows access to and may search participating state registries.

Be sure to review the conditions of use. (For example, some states will not allow use for employment purposes).

Individual state sites can also provide sex offender information along with the details about offender levels.

Service Insights:

Sexual offender data is sometimes confused with Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections data DOC/ DRC.

The NSOPR search is not incorporated in all Multi-State Criminal database searches or national criminal databases.

Age and physical characteristics may be provided, along with pictures.

Registration in a state SOPR is a requirement or condition of sentencing for convicted offenders in most states. However, if an offender moves or relocates, he or she can sometimes evade the registration requirements.

It is important to know that some states only publish sex offender names associated with certain levels of offenses. A person may be a lower level sex offender (according to that state's guidelines) and that state may not make the information available to the public. In these cases, the sex offense may show up in a multi-state criminal, county criminal or state criminal search.

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Members of the public should be aware that not all state internet sites provide for public disclosure of information about all sex-offenders who reside, work, or attend school in the state. For example, a given state may limit public disclosure over its web site concerning offenders who have been determined to be high-risk, while another state may provide for wider disclosure of offender information but make no representation as to risk level of specific offenders. In sum, members of the public may be able to obtain certain types of information about specific offenders who reside, work, or attend school in the state and have been convicted of one or more of the types of offenses specified, depending on the specific parameters of a given State's public notification program. (As an example in Minnesota, only level 3 offenders, who are more likely to be a repeat offender, are posted on the public website, while level 1 or 2 offenders, who are less likely to be a repeat offender will not. Typically with level 1 or 2 offenders the local law enforcement agency will privately notify any daycare or school in the area as needed.)

Not all states allow the sale or exchange of sex offender information for profit. Misuse of this information may be punished by a fine and/or imprisonment. State requirements can be found at <http://www.nsopr.gov>.

National Wants and Warrants

AKA: Wants and Warrants, Warrant Check

National Wants and Warrants (database) provides a wide scope of various states, counties, and law enforcement agencies revealing if a person has an outstanding warrant (If this is obtained via Georgia, these are only extraditable offenses).

Misconceptions:

Contains information on all warrants currently active.

Contains information on every city, county, state in the country.

Information is complete, accurate and does not need further investigation.

This is an "FBI" check or finger print check.

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Source of report:

Typically a background screening company either buys this information from a 3rd party or compiles the data itself. The information can be purchased or compiled from various state, county and federal agencies from around the country.

The other source of this information is for law enforcement use and that is the FBI NCIC Database. (Federal Bureau of Investigations – National Criminal Information Center).

Service Insights:

This is a database search and should not be used as a stand alone search.

All warrants should be followed up with a county criminal check to confirm the information.

Requires an authorization and disclosure up front.

No National Wants and Warrants database has all warrants.

Be careful of companies claiming to be selling actual FBI Wants and Warrants searches (also know as Hot Files). Per the FBI, this information is not to be used in a commercial nature.

“The commercial dissemination of hot file information is prohibited.” Control Terminal Operators Manual – FBI Section 8.2.2.2 “Access and Dissemination for Other Purposes”

***As there is debate in the industry regarding the legality of such searches and the sources they come from, it is advised to consult counsel before buying, selling, or using this type of information.

State Criminal History

A search of the state centralized database either through State Law Enforcement or Administrative Office of the Court- others listed below.

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Source of report:

State Repository from Law Enforcement

Bureau of Criminal Investigation

Administrative Office of the Court

Department of Public Safety

Service Insights:

States have different requirements for accessing the data. Many charge an access fee.

These checks are sometimes slow and less accurate than a county criminal search.

Not all states have a repository or make their repositories available to the public (or to background screeners).

Many states require Fingerprints in order to access the data.

Many states lack a process for keeping the state repository up-to-date and accurate or for verifying compliance with reporting requirements. It is possible that one or more counties may not report all case information to the state repository.

Often data that may affect the usability of the record is not updated (for example a disposition).

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Section 2 – Fingerprinting

Fingerprint Terminology

ABA: American Banking Association. One of the Channeling Agents for banks.

AAA-E: American Association Airport Executives. Channeling Agent for airports.

AFIS: (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) receives the NIST data package.

Card Scanner: Reads fingerprints cards and transfers them into electronic format (digitizes the ink fingerprint card).

Channeling Agent/Clearinghouse: The third party processor of fingerprint images (example: NASD, New York Stock Exchange, American Banking Association, etc.).

Core: The pattern located in the center of the finger (arch, loop, whirl).

Delta: The point at which the fingerprint ridges change direction.

Demographics: Personal information, i.e. hair color, eye color, height

Flat Fingerprints: A fingerprint impression created by pressing all of the fingerprints directly onto a surface.

IAFIS: Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System. Database where fingerprints are matched and Rap Sheets are generated.

IEEE1394: Known as a FireWire, hooks up the laptop to the scanner.

Live Scan: An automated fingerprint identification system (portable and non-portable) which captures a subject's fingerprints and puts them into electronic format (also known as digitizing).

NIST: File format used to transmit fingerprint files to and from the FBI.

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ORI: (Originating Agency Identification) a nine character identifier assigned to an agency. Agencies must identify their ORI Number on the requisition forms in order to receive fingerprint supplies and training aids.

Output of the fingerprint machine: Digital by Firewire Transfer agent.

Resolution of the fingerprint: 500 dpi, +/- 5 pixels.

Ridges: The raised fingerprint edges.

Rolled Fingerprints: Fingerprint images captured by “rolling” the fingers from cuticle to cuticle.

Slap Print: A four finger print.

Store & Forward: A machine that is able to save fingerprinting files and forward them onto the appropriate channeling agency and/or client.

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Section 3 – Verifications

Education Verification

An Education Verification is generally completed on the highest level of education listed and available from institutions throughout the United States. This service, typically, verifies the school attended, dates of attendance, field of study, degree earned, if any, and date of graduation or last attendance. It is essential to have the name used at time of attendance.

Source of report:

Education Institutions

Some schools allow verification directly through them, usually through the Registrar. Some subscribe to fee-based verification systems, contracted by the education institution and will **not** allow direct contact. The primary fee-based verification service is provided by National Student Clearinghouse, although there are other companies providing this service.

Service Insights:

Schools often require a signed authorization form before releasing the information. An electronic signature is often **not** accepted by schools.

Schools may freeze records due to offenses committed by the student or if a student owes the school money. The record is released when the student fulfills his or her obligations to the school.

Schools' privacy policies may freeze the student record from being reported to a 3rd party.

The most common identifiers used to verify education are the name used while attending, dates of attendance, graduation date or month and year, type of degree and date of birth.

Most Education Institutions do not use Social Security Numbers as a way to categorize records. The name used by the applicant while attending is very important, along with the dates attended or graduated.

Having the date of attendance helps speed up the search time, especially if you are verifying High School.

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The school name, city, and state are important in identifying the educational institution to search.

An additional fee is generally associated with the request for transcripts.

An additional fee may be charged when the use of a fee-based verification system is required.

End users of these verification services may be required to participate with the background screening firm that provides the verification service in audits when a fee-based verification system is used.

Employment Reference / Verification

This search verifies the information provided by the applicant about his or her employment history. The questioning of a listed supervisor attempts to learn more about the applicant such as: dates of employment, position, job duty, work habits, performance, dependability, special skills and training, interaction with customers and co-workers, salary, reason for leaving and rehire status.

Under some circumstances, Employment and Personal References are considered by the FCRA to be Investigative Consumer Reports, primarily if subjective questions are asked as part of the reference. The employer is responsible for additional actions under the FCRA. See the FCRA § 606. Disclosure of investigative consumer reports [15 U.S.C. § 1681d]

A report is generally **not** considered an Investigative Consumer Report as long as only factual information is obtained from the reference. Some state regulations may consider reports Investigative.

Source of report:

HR Departments

Former Supervisors

Payroll Departments

Fee-based Verification Systems, contracted by the employer.

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Service Insights:

Providing the contact name and phone number, in addition to employer name, address, city, and state, will help improve the completion rate and reduce the completion time of a reference check.

A hidden, or developed, reference can be obtained when the person interviewed was not listed by the applicant as a point of contact.

The quality of the reference is dependent on the questions asked and the manner of asking the questions.

Employers may limit the amount of information they can release.

The employer may require a signed authorization form before releasing the information.

An applicant may indicate to the potential employer that their current employer should not be contacted. The employer and the CRA have an obligation to follow this request.

Results may be unobtainable because employers are on vacation, out of business, or do not return phone calls.

Some employers refuse to give out any information, may provide only limited information, or may contract with a fee-based verification service.

End users may be required to participate with background screeners in audits when a fee-based verification system is used.

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Military Record Verification

This search involves verifying an applicant's military history. The military history in this case often serves as a type of employment verification.

Source of report:

Military Branch

National Personnel Records Center

Base location

Department of Defense

Veterans Administration

DD Form 214 (Discharge papers)

Service Insights:

The National Personnel Records Center generally does not guarantee a response time due to the high volume of requests. The response time can be as long as 3 months.

To obtain job related information a direct supervisor may be hard to locate or never found.

Translation of the codes on a DD-214 can be confusing. The codes were meant for internal military use, not general public use, and may not be related to job performance.

Personal References

This search will reveal information about the applicant's overall image as perceived by others. A personal reference may answer questions concerning the applicant's character as it relates to the job opening.

This report is generally considered an Investigative Consumer Report since the line of questioning generally refers to the person's character, behavior or relationship with other people.

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Source of report:

Friends

Co-workers

Former Co-workers

Relatives

Business Associates

Religious Affiliation members

Service Insights:

A personal reference is generally a person the applicant believes will provide positive information about him/her.

A personal reference could be asked to provide the name and phone number of another person who might be acquainted with the applicant. This is generally called a developed reference.

A personal reference may be hard to reach. Phone numbers change or become disconnected; they may be on vacation or not return phone calls, or need to be called after business hours.

Cell phone numbers for the reference are very helpful.

Professional/ Occupational License Verification

Almost all licenses can be verified. A wide variety of professionals such as architects, attorneys, tax preparers, pilots, private investigators, engineers and contractors may be issued a status on the license.

Common searches in the medical field may include physicians, nurses, radiologists, and pharmacists.

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Source of report:

State/ Federal Agency or party considered the licensing authority.

Service Insights:

The license is normally a requirement of employment.

It is helpful to have the state where the license was issued and the license number.

A license verification may list previous disciplinary actions.

Expiration dates of the license or registration are not always available.

Often status of a license may not include details.

Sometimes the agency does offer a process for gaining more information - usually with an associated fee.

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Section 4 - Driving Records

Commercial Driving Records

AKA: CDL

This type of search will reveal an individual's driving record and history filed with the State Department of Motor Vehicles. A CDL license is required to operate any type of vehicle with a gross weight of 26,001 lb or more, including but not limited to tow trucks, tractor trailers and buses.

Source of report:

State Department of Motor Vehicles

MVR Wholesale Vendors

Service Insights:

Same as Service Insights for Driving Records, plus:

The Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) and the National Driver Register (NDR) exchange information on traffic convictions and disqualifications on commercial license holders. This information is maintained by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Driving Records

AKA: MVR, Motor Vehicle Records, DMV Search

This search reveals an individual's driving record and history filed with the State Department of Motor Vehicles. Information yielded varies by state, but typically encompasses personal identifiers, driving history, license type, and driving restrictions or infractions. These records may also provide insight to vehicle related criminal convictions and/or DUI type convictions that may not be found elsewhere. This search is normally conducted on staff that will be traveling for a company or if driving is a function of their employment. It is also very useful for developing a subject's legal name and confirming the date of birth provided by the subject, prior to conducting criminal court research.

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Source of report:

State Department of Motor Vehicles

MVR Wholesale Vendors

Service Insights:

MVR data is maintained by each state and there is no National MVR search available for driving histories.

Specific state access laws vary depending on individual state privacy laws and administrative rules.

The ways the records appear vary from state to state and no consistency is followed. Violations, and their level of severity, are categorized differently in each state.

Some states require specific contract language, additional release form requirements, or other handling requirements. These may vary according to the permissible purpose used to conduct the search.

For employment screening purpose reports, some states provide limited information.

Some states restrict the posting of MVR information on the Internet.

Some states have specific record retention requirements.

Many states audit the end user for proper authorization to request the report.

For some states, you must request a commercial driver's license ("CDL") or hazardous material driver license ("Haz Mat") check separately.

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Section 5 – Social Security Number / Credit Reports

Employment Credit Report

AKA: Soft Credit Report

Employment Credit Reports are used by employers as tools to evaluate an applicant's financial stability and other potentially valuable data. These reports are primarily used to screen applicants with financial responsibility roles and show patterns and promptness of an applicant's ability to meet regular financial obligations.

Source of report

Credit Bureaus

The origin sources of a credit report are the three Credit Bureaus:

Trans Union

www.transunion.com

<http://www.transunion.com/>

800-888-4213

Equifax

www.econsumer.equifax.com

<http://www.econsumer.equifax.com/>

888-532-0179

Experian

www.experian.com

<http://www.experian.com/>

800-972-0322

Service Insights:

Credit Reports used for employment purposes do not reveal credit scores, account numbers, or spousal information.

Reports may indicate pertinent information of public records such as: collections, lawsuits or judgments, liens, and past employer information, including dates worked with particular prior employers.

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Information contained in reports may be helpful in determining credit worthiness in positions where this is a critical issue.

Credit reports are often used only in limited positions - specifically high risk or those involving fiduciary responsibility. Due to the potential discriminatory nature of credit reports, end users should take care to use credit reports only when appropriate and to make sure any actions taken are not perceived as discriminatory.

Also, like the SSN Trace, this will assist in confirming identifying data such as past addresses, names, and applicant's Social Security Number (even past employment as mentioned above).

Credit reports will leave a "footprint" or "inquiry" on the consumer's credit report, indicating the end user of information. The inquiry may or may not be visible to creditors but should be clearly marked as employment related and is **not** counted in credit scoring models.

Social Security Number (SSN) Services

AKA: SSN Verification, SSN Check, Residence Trace, Address Verification, Credit Header, Positive ID, Social Security Number Trace.

Social Security "traces" provide a history of the subject's names and addresses as used in commerce. A common misunderstanding amongst employers is that these are "official" government validations. These searches do not directly validate a Social Security number of an applicant with the Social Security Administration. However, these searches, conducted through databases, are extremely powerful, effective, and revealing. They provide detailed information regarding the names and address histories associated with a particular applicant's SSN, and can help indicate whether the SSN is likely accurate or not. They are a good supplemental tool for locating addresses linked to the applicant that he or she may have omitted from the application purposely. Many companies use this product to determine in which counties to conduct a criminal record search.

Source of report:

Database companies

Credit Bureaus

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Service Insights:

SSN Traces are pulled from credit bureau databases. These searches do not provide an "official" government review of Social Security records, but an indication that the number has a credit history associated with the applicant.

Some results may include whether or not the number issuance is valid. Also, they may include a check against Social Security Administration's Death Master Index, to determine if the number has been reported retired.

Two versions of this search exist. One is run using the SSN and returns the names and addresses associated with the input SSN. The other (sometimes referred to as a "Reverse Trace") is run on the subject's name, address and optionally SSN and returns the names, addresses, and SSNs associated with the name, address, SSN input.

Some "Residence Traces" are the results of a database company compiling data from multiple sources such as Utility Bills, Lines of credit etc. Such a report may yield additional addresses as compared to a credit header.

SSN Trace results may return names, addresses, or SSNs of individuals who have been linked to the subject as a result of a data entry error at a creditor or credit bureau source.

SSN Traces run through the credit bureaus will leave a "footprint" or "inquiry" on the consumer's credit report, indicating the end user of the information. The inquiry may or may not be visible to creditors but should be clearly marked as employment related and is not counted in credit scoring models.

SSA Employer Verification Service

AKA: SSA Verification

A service that allows private businesses and government agencies to verify that the name and Social Security Number obtained from a customer matches or does not match the data in Social Security Administration's (SSA) records.

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Source of report:

The Social Security Administration (SSA) houses the "official" government records for Social Security numbers.

www.ssa.gov

<http://www.ssa.gov/>

1-800-772-6270

Service Insights:

The Social Security Administration allows employers to conduct an official validation of an employee's Social Security number, but only within three days after they have been hired.

This SSA search simply provides an official validation of an employee's Social Security Number.

SSA gives these guidelines for a CRA offering this service to a client:

Be cautious not to suggest to your clients that this service is only available through you.

Advise all customers that this service is available at no cost from Social Security and that this service is not a unique or exclusive arrangement between SSA and your company.

Be sure not to give any impression when describing your SSN verification service to your clients that your company has an arrangement that allows direct access to Social Security databases, program software, etc.

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Section 6 – Sanction Screening

Excluded Parties List System

The purpose of EPLS is to provide a single comprehensive list of individuals and firms excluded by Federal government agencies from receiving federal contracts or federally approved subcontracts and from certain types of federal financial and non-financial assistance benefits. The EPLS is used to keep agencies abreast of administrative, as well as, statutory exclusions taken throughout the Federal Government. Actions may be taken under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) or supplements thereto, under specific agency regulations or under the Government-Wide Non-procurement Suspension and Debarment Common Rule [68 FR 66533] or other specific statutory authority.

Source of report:

THE EPLS database located at

<http://www.epls.gov>

Service Insights:

General Services Administration oversees and maintains the EPLS database.

EPLS data is received and maintained by Federal debarring/excluding agencies only.

A federal agency may maintain an internal agency system similar to EPLS. However, the EPLS database maintained by GSA is the official government-wide system of records of debarments, suspensions and other exclusionary actions.

EPLS is not a subset of or a supplement to any other system. GSA cannot guarantee the accuracy of data provided by other systems.

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Office of Inspector General

AKA: OIG

OIG exclusion has national scope and is important to many institutional health care providers because the Congress of the United States established a Civil Monetary Penalty for institutions that knowingly hire excluded parties.

Accordingly, the OIG maintains the List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE), a database which provides information to the public, health-care providers, patients and others relating to parties excluded from participation in the Medicare, Medicaid and all Federal health-care programs.

Source of report:

<http://www.oig.hhs.gov>

Service Insight:

Department of Health and Human Services oversees and maintains the LEIE which contains the names of individuals and entities who have been investigated and found to have violated the fraud and abuse laws resulting in their exclusion from participation in the federal to state health care reimbursement programs.

The Online Searchable Database enables users to enter the name of an individual or business and determine whether exclusion is currently in effect.

If a match is made on an individual, the database can verify with an individual's Social Security Number (SSN) that the match is unique.

Employer Identification Numbers (EIN) also known as Tax Identification Numbers (TIN) are being included for recently excluded entities.

The OIG search is also available on the EPLS website.

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Section 7 - Drug Testing

Drug Testing Terminology

Adulterant

Any substance that is added to a urine specimen for the purpose of interfering with the normal testing process or altering the test results. May be either ingested by the donor or put directly into the specimen.

Adulterated specimen – AKA Spiked Specimen

A specimen containing either a substance that is not a normal constituent for that type of specimen or containing an endogenous substance at a concentration that is not a normal physiological concentration.

Air Blank

In evidential breath testing devices (EBTs) using gas chromatography technology, a reading of the device's internal standard. In all other EBTs, a reading of ambient air containing no alcohol.

Alcohol

The intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol, ethyl alcohol or other low molecular weight alcohols, including methyl or isopropyl alcohol.

Alcohol Concentration

The alcohol in a volume of breath expressed in terms of grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath as indicated by a breath test under this part.

Alcohol Confirmation Test

A subsequent test using an EBT, following a screening test with a result of .02 or greater, that provides quantitative data about the alcohol concentration.

Alcohol Screening Device (ASD)

A breath or saliva device, other than an EBT, that is approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and placed on a conforming products list (CPL) for such devices.

Alcohol Screening Test

An analytic procedure to determine whether an employee may have a prohibited concentration of alcohol in a breath or saliva specimen.

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Alcohol Testing Site

A place selected by the employer where employees present themselves for the purpose of providing breath or saliva for an alcohol test.

Alcohol Use

The consuming of any beverage, liquid, mixture or preparation (including any medication), containing alcohol.

ATF

Alcohol Testing Form, the form mandated for use for all DOT breath alcohol testing.

Blind Sample/Specimen Blind Performance Test Specimen

A sample with a known drug concentration or a certified drug free sample used to evaluate the ability of a laboratory to test a specimen for drugs and/or metabolites. The laboratory does not know either the concentration of the drug or that it is a blind sample.

Breath Alcohol Technician (BAT)

Breath Alcohol Technician, a person specially trained and certified to perform DOT mandated breath alcohol testing.

CFR

Abbreviation for Code of Federal Regulations.

Cancelled test

A drug or alcohol test that has a problem identified that cannot be or has not been corrected, or which 49 CFR Part 40 otherwise requires to be cancelled. A cancelled test is neither a positive nor a negative test.

Chain of custody

The procedure used to document the handling of the specimen from the time the employee gives the specimen to the collector until the specimen is destroyed. This procedure uses a Drug Testing Custody and Control Form (CCF).

Collection Container

A container into which the employee/donor urinates for the purpose of providing a urine sample for testing.

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Collection site

A place selected by the employer where employees present themselves for the purpose of providing a specimen for a drug test.

Collector

A person who meets the requirements of 49 CFR Part 40.33, instructs and assists employees at a collection site, receives and makes an initial inspection of the specimen provided by those employees, and who initiates and completes the CCF.

Confirmation (or confirmatory) drug test

A second analytical procedure using GC/MS performed on a specimen to identify and quantify the presence of a specific drug or drug metabolite, or to further support the results of a validity test. Also refers to a second breath alcohol test done at least 15 minutes after the initial positive test to confirm the presence of breath alcohol.

Confirmation (or confirmatory) validity test

A second test performed on a urine specimen to further support a validity test result.

Confirmed drug test

A confirmation test result received by an MRO from a laboratory.

Consortium/ Third-party administrator (C/TPA)

A service agent that provides or coordinates the provision of a variety of drug and alcohol testing services to employers. C/TPAs typically perform administrative tasks concerning the operation of the employers' drug and alcohol testing programs. This term includes, but is not limited to, groups of employers who join together to administer, as a single entity, the DOT drug and alcohol testing programs of its members. C/TPAs are not "employers" for purposes of 49 CFR Part 40.

Continuing Education

Training for medical review officers (MROs) and substance abuse professionals (SAPs) who have completed qualification training and are performing MRO or SAP functions. This training is designed to keep MROs and SAPs current on changes and developments in the DOT drug and alcohol testing program.

Cutoff

The concentration used to establish and report a specimen as negative or positive.

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Creatinine

A compound found in urine signaling kidney function. Creatinine levels are used to help establish whether a urine specimen has been adulterated.

Custody and Control Form (CCF)

The CCF must be a five-part carbonless manifold form. This form may be viewed on the DOT web site (<http://www.dot.gov/ost/dapc/>) or the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) web site <http://workplace.samhsa.gov/>. CCFs are also available from a number of different sources (e.g., laboratories, service agents). The Federal Drug Testing Custody and Control Form must be used to document every urine collection required by the DOT drug testing program.

Designated employer representative (DER)

An employee authorized by the employer to take immediate action(s) to remove employees from safety-sensitive duties or cause employees to be removed from these covered duties and to make required decisions in the testing and evaluation processes. The DER also receives test results and other communications for the employer, consistent with the requirements of CFR 49 Part 40. Service agents cannot act as DERs.

Dilute Specimen

A specimen with creatinine and specific gravity values that is lower than expected for human urine.

Donor

The individual from whom a specimen is collected.

DOT - The Department, DOT agency

These terms encompass all DOT agencies, including, but not limited to, the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), and the Office of the Secretary (OST). These terms include any designee of a DOT agency.

Drugs

The drugs for which tests are required under CFR 49 Part 40 and DOT agency regulations are marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), and opiates.

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EAP

Employee Assistance Professional a person who manages a company's programs designed to assist employees with personal problems that affect their job performance, including drugs and alcohol. The EAP may be an employee of a company, an employee by contract, or employed by a C/TPA.

EBT

Evidential Breath Testing device, a device approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the evidential testing of breath at the .02 and .04 alcohol concentrations. Must be on the Conforming Products List (CPL) and must conform to certain specifications in order to be used for DOT testing.

Employee

Any person who is designated in a DOT agency regulation as subject to drug testing. The term includes individuals currently performing safety-sensitive functions designated in DOT agency regulations and applicants for employment subject to pre-employment testing. For purposes of drug testing under this part, the term employee has the same meaning as the term "donor" as found on the CCF and related guidance materials produced by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Employer

A person or entity employing one or more employees (including an individual who is self-employed) subject to DOT agency regulations requiring compliance with this part. The term includes an employer's officers, representatives and management personnel. Service agents are not employers for the purposes of this part.

Error Correction Training

Training provided to BATs, collectors, and screening test technicians (STTs) following an error that resulted in the cancellation of a DOT drug or alcohol test due to their error. Error correction training must be provided in person or by a means that provides real-time observation and interaction between the instructor and trainee.

Failed to Reconfirm

The result reported when a laboratory is unable to corroborate the original result (i.e., positive, adulterated, substituted) reported to the Medical Review Officer.

Follow-up Test

A specimen collected from a donor to ensure that the donor remains drug-free after being reinstated to a testing designated position.

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FAA

The Federal Aviation Administration, one of the DOT operating administrations.

FMCSA

The Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration, one of the DOT operating administrations.

GC/MS

Abbreviation for Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry, the method by which forensic toxicology laboratories confirm testing for drugs of abuse.

HHS

The Department of Health and Human Services or any designee of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services.

Initial drug test

The test used to differentiate a negative specimen from one that requires further testing for drugs or drug metabolites.

Initial validity test

The first test used to determine if a specimen is adulterated, diluted, or substituted.

Invalid drug test

The result of a drug test for a specimen that contains an unidentified adulterant or an unidentified interfering substance, has abnormal physical characteristics, or has an endogenous substance at an abnormal concentration that prevents the laboratory from completing or obtaining a valid drug test result.

Laboratory

Any U.S. laboratory certified by HHS under the National Laboratory Certification Program as meeting the minimum standards of Subpart C of the HHS Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs; or, in the case of foreign laboratories, a laboratory approved for participation by DOT under this part. (The HHS Mandatory Guidelines for Federal Workplace Drug Testing Programs are available on the internet at <http://www.health.org/workpl.htm> or from the Division of Workplace Programs, 1 Choke Cherry Road, Room 2-1035, Rockville, MD 20857).

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Laboratory Litigation Package

Also known as the “full documentation package” or “data package”, it is a complete set of analytical data, chain of custody records, and other administrative documents associated with that specimen. The MRO, the donor, or the employer may request a litigation package from a laboratory and the laboratory must then provide it within 10 business days of the request and usually will assess a handling fee.

Medical Review Officer (MRO)

A person who is a licensed physician (Doctor of Medicine or Osteopathy) and who is responsible for receiving and reviewing laboratory results generated by an employer's drug testing program and evaluating medical explanations for certain drug test results. An MRO has specific knowledge and training requirements as outlined in 49 CFR Part 40.121.

Nanograms Per Milliliter (ng/mL)

The unit of measurement in which analyte concentrations in urine are usually presented. A nanogram is one billionth (10^{-9}) of a gram. A milliliter is one thousandth (10^{-3}) of a liter.

Non-Negative Specimen

A urine specimen that, upon initial screening, is an adulterated, substituted, positive (for a drug or drug metabolite), or invalid specimen.

Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance (ODAPC)

The office in the Office of the Secretary, DOT, that is responsible for coordinating drug and alcohol testing program matters within the Department and providing information concerning the implementation of CFR 49 Part 40.

Post Accident Test

A specimen collected from a donor after the donor is involved in a job-related accident.

Pre-employment Test

A specimen collected from a donor who is applying for a testing designated position.

Primary specimen

In drug testing, the urine specimen bottle that is opened and tested by a first laboratory to determine whether the employee has a drug or drug metabolite in his or her system; and for the purpose of validity testing. The primary specimen is distinguished from the split specimen, defined in this section. (Bottle A)

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Qualification Training

The training required in order for a collector, BAT, MRO, SAP, or STT to be qualified to perform functions in the DOT drug and alcohol testing program. Qualification training may be provided by any appropriate means (e.g., classroom instruction, internet application, CD-ROM, video).

Quality Control Sample

A calibrator, control, or blind sample.

Random Test

A specimen collected from a donor who is selected at random from a group of individuals who are included in a workplace drug-testing program.

Reasonable Suspicion/Cause Test

A specimen collected from a donor when there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the donor may have used an illicit substance.

Reconfirmation Test

Testing performed only on the split specimen bottle of the specimen when requested by the donor. The donor may request this test through the MRO after a positive, substituted, or adulterated test result.

Reconfirmed

The result reported when a laboratory is able to corroborate the original result (i.e., positive, adulterated, substituted) reported to the Medical Review Officer.

Refresher Training

The training required periodically for qualified collectors, BATs, and STTs to review basic requirements and provide instruction concerning changes in technology (e.g., new testing methods that may be authorized) and amendments, interpretations, guidance, and issues concerning CFR 49 Part 40 and DOT agency drug and alcohol testing regulations. Refresher training can be provided by any appropriate means (e.g., classroom instruction, internet application, CD-ROM, video).

Rejected for Testing

The result reported by a laboratory or test facility when it does not perform any tests on the specimen because of a fatal flaw or an unrecovered correctable error.

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Return to Duty Test

A specimen collected from a donor to ensure that the donor is drug free prior to being reinstated in a testing designated position.

SAMHSA

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Sample

A representative portion of a specimen or quality control material used for testing.

Screening Test Technician (STT)

A person who instructs and assists employees in the alcohol testing process and operates an ASD.

Service agent

Any person or entity, other than an employee of the employer, who provides services specified under CFR 49 Part 40 to employers and/or employees in connection with DOT drug and alcohol testing requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, collectors, BATs and STTs, laboratories, MROs, substance abuse professionals, and C/TPAs. To act as service agents, persons and organizations must meet the qualifications set forth in applicable sections of CFR 49 Part 40. Service agents are not employers for purposes of CFR 49 Part 40.

Shipping container

A container that is used for transporting and protecting specimens and associated documents from the collection site to the laboratory.

Specimen

Fluid or material derived from the body which may be subdivided, concurrently collected, or two near simultaneously collected (if a split specimen is required).

Specimen bottle

The bottle that, after being sealed and labeled, is used to hold the urine specimen during transportation to the laboratory.

Split specimen

In drug testing, a part of the urine specimen that is sent to a first laboratory and retained unopened, and which is transported to a second laboratory in the event that the employee requests that it be tested following a verified positive test of the primary specimen or a verified adulterated or substituted test result. (Bottle B)

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Stand-down

The practice of temporarily removing an employee from the performance of safety-sensitive functions based only on a report from a laboratory to the MRO of a confirmed positive test for a drug or drug metabolite, an adulterated test, or a substituted test, before the MRO has completed verification of the test result.

Substance Abuse Professional (SAP)

A person who evaluates employees who have violated DOT drug and alcohol regulations and makes recommendations concerning education, treatment, follow-up testing, and aftercare. SAPs have qualification and training requirements outlined in 49 CFR Part 40.281.

Substituted specimen

A specimen with creatinine and specific gravity values that are so diminished that they are not consistent with human urine.

Third Party Administrator (TPA)

See Consortium/TPA

Verified test

A drug test result or validity testing result from an HHS-certified laboratory that has undergone review and final determination by the MRO.

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Section 8 - Workers' Compensation

Workers' Compensation Records

These searches provide detailed information regarding the filing of an applicant's prior Workers' Compensation Claims and injuries.

Source of report:

Pre-Employment Screening Firms via:

State system

WCAB (Workers' Compensation Appeals Board)

Service Insights:

These records can only be searched after a conditional job offer is made.

The American with Disabilities Act maintains strict federal standards for compliance.

These records are also subject to additional federal and state laws.

Availability and access is restricted/varies by state.

Returned information varies widely by state, and may include all claims or only litigated claims.

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