

Options For Background Vetting Your New Hire



8 common employee background screening options

You posted the job, reviewed the resumes, conducted the interviews and identified the candidate you believe is the best fit for your organization. The offer is on the table. You've also included the addendum, 'please accept our offer of employment conditional upon successfully completing our background screening process'.

There are many issues involved in the decision to conduct a background check. When should you do it? What are you looking for? Who will conduct the check? Background checks are time consuming, complicated and costly. They do not always reveal anything worth the time and money spent. However, conducting a background check may afford you protection and peace of mind.

Hiring the 'wrong' candidate can mean many things. More often than not, it refers to a bad fit, either culturally or skills wise. Sometimes hiring the wrong candidate has more serious implications. The wrong candidate might steal money, have fraudulent qualifications. The wrong candidate may harm your staff, clients and reputation. Background checks are not perfect, they often miss key information. The mere fact that you are conducting a background check may dissuade the wrong candidate from sticking around through the process.

Be Careful What You Look For

The majority of employers in Canada are not conducting detailed background checks. The typical background check includes confirming past employment and checking references. Additionally, some employers will confirm educational credentials. If the position being offered to you deals with sensitive information, money management or involves working with vulnerable people, employers may choose to run a basic police screening.

Conducting a thorough background check in Canada is not an easy task. As part of your decision-making process you need to understand exactly what you are looking for, what you are able to look for and how you will use and store what you find. Between Canadian privacy legislation (privacy protection PIPEDA) and the Human Rights Code (anti-discrimination) employers must be careful about what they find and how they find it. You may conduct a background check that discovers a person has a criminal record and you may then find that the criminal record itself is not enough to give

you grounds to stop the hiring process.

Components of a Background Check in Canada

8 common components of a background check in Canada include:

1. Identity Check (requiring two pieces of official identification)
2. Employment history verification
3. References check
4. Education/Credentials verification
5. Internet and Social Network screening
6. Criminal Records check (upon making a conditional offer and you must notify candidate)
 - Name search
 - Finger print check
 - Vulnerable sector report
7. Driving Record (upon making a conditional offer and you must notify candidate)
8. Credit History ((upon making a conditional offer and you must notify candidate)

Additional Screening Options

In addition to background checks some organizations will screen for a variety of other items including:

- Drug and alcohol use
- Request a medical exam
- Psychometric, personality and ethics assessments
- Competencies, cognitive, job relevant and general skills screening

Some of these may be part of the screening process and others upon conditional offer being conferred. Each of these options is subject to different restrictions depending on the job and your Province.

Neutral Third Party Background Checks

When reviewing any of these pieces of information you find in a background check you must be careful that the information does not reveal protected human rights information such as age, race, religion, gender, disability (health) or family status. If you are collecting this information you might consider either using a neutral third party, such as a background screening agency or an in-house person who checks the relevant information but does not reveal any non-relevant information to the hiring authority. This information can be filtered out of any reports provided as part of the decision-making process.

Before conducting any background checks you need to:

- Stop and clearly identify what you are looking for and why it is relevant.
- Create a policy that includes your process for conducting a background check and what you will do with the information once you obtain it.
- Notify candidates of the components of the background check (if conducting a

criminal records check or driving records one way to notify a candidate is to ask them to provide you with the records themselves)

- Apply your process consistently in all cases (this means if your brother applies for a job you need to follow the same procedures as you would for a stranger)

In Canada, you can't discriminate against a candidate because of a criminal record, bad credit (including bankruptcy), a disability, past medical issue, or poor driving record. You must be blind to these factors during the hiring process unless you can demonstrate legitimate and relevant ways in which these items make a candidate ineligible. A previous conviction for a DUI (driving under the influence) may allow you to turn away a candidate as a school bus driver, but it may not allow you to turn the candidate down for a job as a mechanic fixing school buses.

We have created a tool that you can use to help conduct a basic background check including confirming employment history and checking references. This tool includes checklist, questions to ask and sample scripts for emails and phone calls.

If you take the time to check the background of your new hire make certain you do it right.

Resources

[How To Conduct Criminal Records Checks](#)

[Equifax Canada](#)

[Transunion](#)