
Employee Background Check Policy Sample

This **Employee Background Check Policy** template is ready to be tailored to your company's needs and should be considered a starting point for setting up your employment policies.

Policy brief & purpose

Our employee background check policy refers to our guidelines for investigating our job candidates' backgrounds as part of our hiring process. Background checks help us:

- Get insight into candidates' background.
- Ensure we hire reliable employees.
- Verify candidates' information for truthfulness and accuracy.
- Screen candidates convicted of serious criminal behavior.

Scope

This employee background check policy applies to candidates who go through our company's hiring process. It may also apply to internal candidates who are being considered for a [promotion](#) or transfer.

Policy elements

Background checks may include:

- Criminal records.
- Credit reports.
- Drug testing.
- Verification reports (e.g. identity, previous employment, education, SSN)
- Driving records.
- Reference checks.

All candidates aren't required to pass every type of background check we offer before our company hires them. Each position has its own requirements. For example, driving records may be relevant to field reliable salespeople and taxi drivers, but not to hire office managers. The basic background screening includes [*verification reports and reference checks.*]

Local laws may prohibit or restrict certain types of background checks. We'll comply with legal guidelines at all times.

Criminal record checks are essential if candidates are interviewing for positions where they will:

- Represent our company and deal with our clients or stakeholders. [*Example: Legal Counsel.*]
- Have access to sensitive and confidential information [*Example: VP of Human Resources.*]
- Handle money and finances [*Example: Accountant.*]
- Have any contact with children or the elderly [*Example: Kindergarten Teacher, Nurse.*]

When should you conduct an employee background check?

In most cases, background checks cost time and money. We advise hiring managers and HR staff to conduct checks sparingly: preferably, on the final round of shortlisted candidates in the hiring process or a candidate they've chosen to hire. Local laws may require a candidate to have an offer in hand before we ask permission for a background check. We'll comply with all laws.

Background screening shouldn't be used as a way to disqualify someone or reduce the number of applicants for a position. Background checks are meant to [reinforce a hiring decision](#) and ensure candidates who have been selected for a job are suitable.

Our company's responsibilities

Hiring managers and HR staff must:

- Inform candidates that a background check is required in the position's job advertisement.
- Ask candidates to provide written permission before conducting a background check and let them know how long the process will take.
- Hire a reputable and reliable background check provider. Criteria to consider when choosing a provider are: cost, legality, commitment to confidentiality and turnaround time. If our current provider doesn't meet our requirements for these criteria, HR should search for a new provider.
- Inform candidates of the results of their background checks and what we plan to do (reject or move candidates to the next hiring phase.) Background check providers should give candidates copies of their results.
- Conduct a background check on all candidates who pass through the [*interview phase*] for a specific position without discriminating against certain individuals.
- Give candidates information they need to dispute a report or address any issues a background check turns up.

Hiring managers/HR must tell candidates a clean background check doesn't guarantee employment, unless they've already received a verbal job offer.

What to make of negative findings

Criminal records don't automatically disqualify candidates from the hiring process, unless they are convicted of serious criminal acts (e.g. sexual assault.) We will judge the substance of criminal records according to these criteria:

- Number of criminal convictions for the same offense.
- Time elapsed from the most recent criminal conviction.
- How the criminal conviction relates to the position.

Note that HR/hiring managers will consider convictions, not arrests, when reviewing a candidate's background check.

HR and hiring managers should keep the company's interests in mind when rating the seriousness of any issues background checks uncover. For example, candidates who are considered for a position that involves driving a [company vehicle](#) should have at least a two-year clean driving record. HR and hiring managers should reject candidates convicted of driving while intoxicated within the last two years.

Generally, if hiring managers and HR decide a particular candidate would bring high or unreasonable risk to our company, they should [reject the candidate](#).

HR and hiring managers can call candidates to discuss the results of their background checks in cases of minor discrepancies (e.g. a suspended license.) If candidates answer satisfactorily, they may still be hired to work with our company.

Procedure

We aim for a transparent hiring process that respects candidates' rights. We advise hiring managers and HR staff to follow this procedure for background screening:

1. Hiring managers and HR discuss whether a background check is needed for a position and what the check will include.
2. Hiring managers note in the job ad that a background check is required before employment.
3. When the final candidates (one or more finalists) are selected, hiring managers or HR contact the candidates to get written permission for background checks and explain the process. This can be done through an Applicant Tracking System (ATS.)
4. If candidates refuse to go through background screening, HR informs them that they won't be considered for the position. If candidates provide written permission, background-check

providers can initiate the review.

5. Once HR receives background check results, staff discusses them with hiring managers to decide next steps for the candidates and the position.
6. Hiring managers inform candidates of their decisions and ensure they get copies of their individual background check reports. If there are negative findings, HR/hiring managers must let candidates know how to dispute the report.

Our [confidentiality](#) and [data protection](#) policies always apply to information background checks uncover.

Disclaimer: This policy template is meant to provide general guidelines and should be used as a reference. It may not take into account all relevant local, state or federal laws and is not a legal document. Neither the author nor Workable will assume any legal liability that may arise from the use of this policy.

Further reading:

- [What employers need to know about background checks](#) – Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- [Pre-employment screening: tips to navigate awkward conversations](#)
- [The 8 employer essentials on employment background checks](#)
- [Tips for choosing the best background check service](#)