



Staffing Insider

Issue 7

Pre-employment Screening

Employers are becoming increasingly wary of the risks associated with hiring people who may not be who they claim to be. Where reference checks once served as satisfactory employment screening, the process may now include verification of education, professional accreditation, credit information, identification and immigration employability status, but the real emphasis is shifting toward security clearances and criminal background checks. Comprehensive pre-employment background screening and identity verification have become common steps in the recruitment selection process.

The terms “Security Clearance” and “Police Record Check” are often used interchangeably, but they are two very different screening processes. A “Security Clearance” is a background screening process facilitated by the federal government that assigns an individual’s eligibility to access certain sensitive information or to perform specific classified tasks. Levels of security clearance range from categories known as Basic Reliability and Enhanced Reliability to Secret and even Top Secret. Government employees and the employees of private sector companies providing services to the federal government are required to have various levels of security clearance corresponding to the type of work being performed.

On the other hand, a “Police Record Check”, often referred to as a “Background Check”, is a review of the Canadian Police Information Centre or “CPIC” national database administered by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It contains information used by law enforcement officials including a history of criminal offences. The CPIC database is populated by Canadian police forces and government agencies, and can only be queried by authorized “CPIC Agencies”, including authorized commercial service providers. CPIC is the only official national database of criminal records available to employers and volunteer based groups with a need to screen new hires. The most basic CPIC check available to employers identifies whether

an individual has a record of a conviction. A more comprehensive “Vulnerable Sector” check is available to organizations such as schools and not-for-profits hiring individuals or volunteers to care for children. The amount and type of information available is determined by the Criminal Records Act of Canada. Recently, the RCMP announced that they would only release a Yes or No response for criminal checks performed by third parties. “Yes” means that there is a name match for a criminal offense for which a pardon has not been granted. No other information concerning the offense is disclosed. The RCMP also announced that the more comprehensive Vulnerable Sector checks must be done by the person, in person, at the local police station. This takes several weeks and involves finger print verification. Two pieces of government issued identification must accompany each request for a CPIC Police Record Check. Interestingly, photo health cards and Social Insurance cards are not permitted.

Human resource professionals, temporary staffing services and professional recruiters are constantly grappling with the balance of protecting individual privacy and human rights while using criminal history investigations for employee selection criteria. Human Rights and Privacy laws require that selection criteria are relevant to the specified employment. At The People Bank, we are industry leaders in the areas of security clearances, criminal back ground checks, employment verification and the relevant employment legislation. Don’t take risks in your hiring decisions. Call The People Bank.

We will continue to share insider information about the employment and recruitment marketplace in future issues of the *Staffing Insider*. We would encourage you to [subscribe to our electronic newsletter](#) if you are interested in joining the discussion about HR issues and solutions in the upcoming recovery.

The People Bank, a division of Design Group Staffing Inc., was recently re-awarded Platinum Status, one of the country’s most elite business designations, by Deloitte, CIBC Commercial Banking, National Post, and Queen’s School of Business for consistently being selected as one of Canada’s Best Managed Companies for over nine consecutive years.

This issue of the Staffing Insider was written by Steve Jones, President of The People Bank with content contributed from Shelley Trenouth, President of Placement Group. The Staffing Insider is a regularly published insider’s view of human resources issues and staffing industry best practices, trends and success stories. Aimco Staffing Solutions, Allen Professional Search, La Banque de Personnel, Placement Group and The People Bank are all specialty divisions of Design Group Staffing Inc.