



DCF BACKGROUND CHECKS

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REGISTRY

According to DCF regulations, the registry "is the confidential data file maintained as part of the department's computerized database, of persons who have been substantiated as individuals responsible for an act or acts of child abuse or neglect and for whom the commissioner has made a determination, based upon a standard of reasonable cause, that the individual poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children" [Conn. Agency Reg. § 17a-101k-1\(14\)](#).

QUESTIONS

Under what circumstances does the Department of Children and Families (DCF) perform background checks? How many employees perform the checks and how many are performed per year? What is the process for a batch file?

SUMMARY

By law, DCF maintains a confidential central registry of substantiated perpetrators of child abuse and neglect. DCF uses the registry to perform background checks for prospective employers, licensing authorities, and other public agencies permitted by law to request such checks. (This is different from criminal history background checks, which are conducted by law enforcement.) The registry background check request

must be accompanied by an "Authorization for Release of Information for DCF CPS Search" signed by the subject of the check. The law requires individuals applying for certain specified positions and licenses to submit to a background check from the registry.

According to DCF, in 2013 the department's Background Check Unit (BCU) processed 135,000 background checks. There are currently six processing technicians in the BCU that perform such checks.

According to DCF, the department currently has memoranda of agreement with four state agencies to run batch files (i.e., automated runs): the departments of Education, Motor Vehicles, Public Health, and Social Services. Depending on the agency, the frequency of the runs varies from once a week to once a month. The process, outlined below, generally takes DCF one week to complete.

MANDATORY REGISTRY BACKGROUND CHECKS

By law, a person must submit to a background check from the child abuse and neglect registry when applying:

1. for a public school position or issuance or renewal of a State Board of Education certificate, authorization, or permit ([CGS § 10-221d](#));
2. for a student transportation vehicle operator's license ([CGS § 14-44](#));
3. for a license to conduct a drivers' school or give driving instruction ([CGS §§ 14-69, 14-73](#));
4. for employment with DCF ([CGS § 17a-6a](#));
5. to be a licensed foster parent (anyone age 16 or older living in the applicant's household must also submit to a background check)([CGS § 17a-114](#));
6. for employment or a volunteer positions with Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services ([CGS § 17a-450c](#)); and
7. to work at a child day care center, group day care home, or family day care home in a position that requires child care provision ([CGS §§ 19a-80, 19a-87b](#)).

The law also permits the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) commissioner to require registry background checks of anyone seeking employment with DDS or with a provider licensed or funded by the department. According to DDS, in practice, it currently does not require such checks ([CGS § 17a-227b](#)).

Additionally, within available appropriations, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) must require anyone, other than a relative, who provides child care services in the child's home and receives a child care subsidy from OEC to submit to registry background checks ([CGS § 17b-749k](#), as amended by [PA 14-39](#)).

AUTOMATED RUNS

According to DCF, the process for automated runs is as follows:

1. DCF receives through Microsoft Outlook a batch in the form of an Excel document with 100 to 500 applicant names, addresses, birthdates, and social security numbers. The document goes directly into the batch system and DCF receives the results, including "hits" and "possible hits," the next day.

2. DCF submits the hits and possible hits into the background check data base to confirm the status of the hits. For each hit, the department conducts a more extensive search in the LINK system (DCF's case database), including to verify the applicant's identity. In rare circumstances, this may include requesting an old hard copy of records for the department's storage facility.
3. If there is insufficient documentation about one of the hits in the department's electronic records (i.e., a "fail"), the technician documents the fail in the "fail log" and takes computer snapshots of the fail in case it is questioned.
4. The department sends the batch back to the requesting agency with information about the confirmed hits.

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