

Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Background Check Requirements

As required by Ohio law, deadlines have been established for licensed educators, certificate holders and all non-licensed school employees to submit fingerprints for both an Ohio criminal background check (BCI) and an FBI criminal background check to the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII). It is recommended that you first check with your local school district, then neighboring school districts or your region's Educational Service Center, to see if they can process electronic fingerprints for both BCI and FBI background checks for submission to BCII. If none of these has the ability to process electronic fingerprints, contact your local law enforcement agencies or use the Ohio Attorney General's website: www.webcheck.ag.state.oh.us to find a location.

Special FAQ on the Sept. 5, 2008, Deadline

The questions and answers below outline requirements regarding the Sept. 5 deadline to submit fingerprints for some educators.

Who must complete the background checks by Sept. 5?

Educators currently **working under an eight-year, permanent or permanent non-tax certificate** must have their BCI and FBI background checks submitted to BCII by Sept. 5, 2008, and every five years thereafter. All permanent, eight-year and non-tax credentials will become inactive if educators do not submit fingerprints for BCI and FBI checks. This may not negatively affect retired persons or educators not working under that particular credential. If the educator or former educator wants the credential to remain active, however, they will need to submit fingerprints for BCI and FBI background checks.

In September, ODE will begin checking records with the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) to determine which educators have attempted to submit fingerprints for BCI and FBI checks. We understand that BCII can get backlogged and results of the background checks may take some time to reach us. ODE will not inactivate a license or certificate of an individual who has **attempted to submit** fingerprints for BCI and FBI, even if we do not yet have the results.

I have a permanent certificate but I am currently not teaching. Do I need to do the background checks by Sept. 5?

If you do not submit fingerprints for the background checks to BCII by Sept. 5, the process will begin to inactivate your certificate. If you decide to resume teaching in the future, you can submit your fingerprints to BCII and your license will be re-activated once ODE receives results of the background checks.

I have a permanent certificate and a five-year license and am currently working under the five-year license, which does not expire for three years. Do I need to have fingerprints done by Sept. 5 to continue working?

Persons with **both** a certificate **and** a license who are **currently working under a two-year or five-year license** are not required to comply with the Sept. 5 deadline in order to continue working. You will need to meet the background check requirements when you renew your five-year license. **The key is to determine the license under which you are currently teaching.**

Will my certificate be inactivated on Sept. 5, 2008, if I do not have the background checks completed?

Not immediately. ODE will make every attempt to work with the certificate holder. As long as you have **submitted** your fingerprints to BCII by Sept. 5, your credentials will not be inactivated. If no attempt is made to submit the fingerprints, ODE will begin the process of inactivating the certificate in question.

I have an eight-year certificate but I transitioned to a five-year license and I am working under the five-year license. Does this deadline apply to me?

If you are working under the five-year license, you do not need to complete background checks until you renew the five-year. (Your eight-year certificate will be “inactivated” but this should not affect you since you are working under the five-year license.)

General FAQ on Background Check Requirements

Who is affected?

Please look at the categories below to see how the requirements affect you:

I am a two-year or five-year educator license holder

Two-year and five-year licensed educators will complete both background checks when they renew their licenses.

I am a professional certificate (eight-year, permanent, or permanent non-tax) holder

Educators currently **working under an eight-year, permanent or permanent non-tax certificate** must have their BCI and FBI background checks submitted to BCII by Sept. 5, 2008, and every five years thereafter. [See first Q&A under “Special FAQ” section above for details.]

I hold both a two-year (or five-year) educator license and a professional certificate (eight-year, permanent or permanent non-tax)

If you have **both** a certificate and a license but are presently **teaching under** an eight-year or permanent certificate, you need to submit fingerprints by **Sept. 5**. But if you are **teaching under** the five-year or two-year license, you can wait for the renewal period of your license. **The key is to determine the license under which you are currently teaching.**

I hold a one-year or four-year Educational Aide Permit or one-year Student Monitor Permit

Permit holders will complete both background checks when they renew their permits.

I hold a one-year or four-year Adult Education Permit

Permit holders will complete both background checks when they renew their permits

I am a substitute teacher

As with educators who are employed under a contract with a school district, any substitute teacher who is working under an eight-year or permanent teaching license must submit fingerprints for both the BCI and FBI background checks by **Sept. 5, 2008**. If the substitute teacher is working under any other type of teaching license then they would complete the background checks at the time of renewal of the license.

I have a pupil activity permit

All pupil activity permit holders must have both background checks when they apply for a new or renewal permit. Since background checks are valid for **365 days**, you may be able to use a previous background check that you obtained for another license or application.

I am a non-licensed school employee

All non-licensed school employees, excluding van and bus drivers, must submit fingerprints for both the BCI and FBI background checks by **Sept. 5, 2008**. The checks for non-licensed employees must

be redone every five years. **Non-licensed school employees do not report their results to ODE. Those results should be forwarded to the employing school district.**

I am a school bus or van driver

School bus and van drivers must submit fingerprints for both BCI and FBI background checks when they **renew their six-year certificates**. The results of these background checks should be sent to the employer, and not to Teacher Certification. Additional information about driver qualifications and background checks, including frequently asked questions, are available on the pupil transportation page at www.ode.state.oh.us, search keywords: *Pupil Transportation*.

I am a school volunteer

There is no mandate under HB 190 for school volunteers to complete both the BCI and FBI background checks. The legal requirements for background checks for volunteers are listed in Ohio Revised Code Sections 109.574 to 109.577.

I am a volunteer coach who holds a pupil activity permit

All individuals who coach for an Ohio school need to have a Pupil Activity permit and to receive this permit you need to complete BCI and FBI background checks.

I am a private contractor hired by a school

Private contractors hired by school districts, educational service centers, community schools, STEM schools, and chartered nonpublic schools must request background checks for employees who will work in the schools.

I am a physical therapist, occupational therapist, nurse or speech therapist in a school

These individuals follow the same process as licensed educators. Those with a permanent or eight-year certificate must submit fingerprints for the BCI and FBI checks by **Sept. 5, 2008**. Those working under a five-year or temporary license must have the checks at time of license renewal. As with educators, **the key is to determine the license under which you are currently working.**

Process

Where can I go to complete the BCI and FBI background check requirement?

It is recommended that you first check with your local school district, then neighboring school districts or your region's Educational Service Center. If none of these have the ability to electronically complete both background checks, then check with your local law enforcement agencies or use the Ohio Attorney General's website: www.webcheck.ag.state.oh.us to find a convenient location.

How do I have the background checks done?

ODE requests that both background checks (BCI and FBI) be completed **electronically** through WebCheck so the fingerprints will be sent immediately to BCII. This allows for a much quicker processing of the prints and results reported to ODE. Please ask the agency you use if they have both Ohio and National WebCheck machines.

PLEASE NOTE: Beginning **June 1, 2008**, everyone in Ohio must use WebCheck **unless:**

1. The individual lives 75 miles away from the nearest WebCheck facility; or
2. The individual has a history of 'bad quality prints' that cannot be captured on a WebCheck screen.

Where do I send the results of the background check?

Licensed educators need to have the results sent to the Ohio Department of Education. Please be sure **Teacher Certification** is checked on the form. That will tell the agency you use to send those results to ODE. **Non-licensed school employees** should have results sent to their **employing school districts**.

How long does it take to complete the background checks?

Completing the fingerprinting process should take no longer than five minutes.

How long does it take for ODE to receive my background checks results?

The time is dependent on the results of the background check. If you have the results sent to **Teacher Certification**, it will help shorten the processing time. ***[Please see next question and answer.]** Results may take longer as BCII processing time varies and/or if a record is found during the course of the criminal background check. If a record is found, it could lengthen the process to several weeks.

***How is ODE addressing the reported backlog of processing background checks at BCII?**

As a result of the significant increase in the number of teacher background checks, BCII is experiencing some delays in processing these requests. To accommodate BCII's increased timeline, the ODE's Office of Educator Licensure is extending the length of time the office will hold an application while waiting for the background check. In the past, applications were held for 90 days while awaiting background check results. This timeframe has been increased to **180 days** to accommodate the BCII delays. Teachers are encouraged to have their prints done as soon as possible, even if they need to complete coursework this summer. In that case, the print results can be held at ODE and matched up with the teacher's application when it arrives. **Remember: electronic prints are processed much faster, as a rule, than "inked" or "rolled" prints.**

Can I send ODE a hard copy of my background check?

ODE does not accept background checks from individuals. We only use the background checks that BCII send and report to us.

Validity period for background checks

For how long are the background checks valid?

Background check information is valid for one year, or **365 days**, from the date that the background check was completed.

I had my background checks done recently for another job; can I have those results sent to you?

If the results are less than one year old, you may have them sent by the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation to ODE for use in considering your initial or renewal application. Contact BCII at 740-845-2375.

Do I need to do the background checks every time I send in an application to ODE for a license?

Current BCI and FBI reports are necessary each time an application for a license or permit is submitted to ODE. Since background checks are valid for 365 days, depending on when you reapply you may still be able to use a previous background check for the newer application, if it is less than 365 days old.

Can I use my background check from another state?

No, due to differences in state statutes regarding the scope of educator criminal background checks, a clear criminal background check from another state would not necessarily be an indicator that a person would pass the Ohio criminal background checks.

Cost

How much should I expect to pay for the background checks?

Cost of the fingerprinting varies, depending on where you have it done. You may want to first check with your local school district, then neighboring school districts or your region's Educational Service Center, to see if they can process electronic fingerprints for submission to BCIII.

Who is responsible for paying for these background checks?

Unless a local district has made provisions to pay for the background checks, the licensed educator or school employee will be responsible for this cost.

Related questions and contact information

Who can I contact regarding the status of my background checks?

You can contact BCII at 740-845-2375 or P.O. Box 365, London, OH 43140. You also may check the ODE Educator Profile on the ODE Web site (www.ode.state.oh.us). (You must establish a SAFE account – look for the gray “Sign in” button on the home page.) You then will be able to see if ODE has a valid background check (BCI and FBI) on file for you. If you cannot find the information you need on Educator Profile, you may call the Office of Educator Licensure at 1-877-644-6338 (toll free) or (614) 466-3593 for assistance.

Special circumstances

My application is on hold for BCII results; do I need to do the FBI background check now?

If ODE received your application prior to Nov. 14, 2007, you do not have to complete the FBI background check to fulfill your obligation on this application unless it would have required an FBI check prior to HB 190 due to the applicant living outside the state of Ohio within the past five years. If an application submitted prior to Nov. 14, 2007, was declined due to incompleteness or not meeting requirements, a new application would need to be submitted and would require both criminal background checks.

Am I notified if my application is on hold for a background check?

Yes, if your application is on hold pending receipt of the BCI and FBI background checks, you should receive a letter from ODE.

What if my fingerprints cannot be taken electronically or by ink?

You should contact BCIII at 740-845-2375 to learn the specifics regarding this and what needs to be done in order to have criminal background checks reported.