Licensure Requirements Include Background Checks

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, to comply with House Bill 1, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) will require initial applicants for any license or permit that it issues to complete both an Ohio criminal background check and an FBI criminal background check, conducted by the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII). These checks need to be less than 365 days old to be considered valid for licensing purposes.

Educators who are renewing a license or permit and have lived continuously in the State of Ohio for the previous five years, and have a BCI background check on file with ODE, will need to complete only an FBI criminal background check once every five years. Currently, they must complete both BCI and FBI checks whenever they renew.

Educators who have not lived continuously in the state for the past five years will need to complete both a BCI and FBI background check.

Further, educators with multiple licenses only need to submit the required background checks when they are applying for the renewal of the license or permit that is of the longest duration. Educators who hold a permanent certificate are still required to submit the required background checks once every five years. Permanent certificate holders who have lived continuously in Ohio for those five years, however, will only need to submit FBI background checks.

(In addition to the information on this page, ODE has posted a page of frequently asked questions on the Web site.)

If an application is received for these applicants on or after Jan. 1, 2010, without the appropriate background check results on file, ODE will place the application on hold pending receipt of the results.

House Bill 79, which took effect in March 2007, requires individuals teaching under a professional teaching certificate to undergo a background check upon a date prescribed by the State Board of Education and every five years thereafter. Sept. 5, 2008, was selected as the initial date by which professional certificate holders (eight year, permanent, and permanent non-tax) must submit fingerprints for background checks to BCII.

With HB 190, professional certificate holders, including eight-year, permanent, and permanent non-tax, were to submit fingerprints for both the BCI and FBI checks by Sept. 5, 2008.

ODE requests that both background checks (Ohio and FBI) be completed through WebCheck, which allows for the fingerprints to be sent immediately to BCII. This provides for a quicker process for reading the prints and having the results reported to ODE.
It is recommended that educators first check with their local school district, then neighboring school districts or the region’s Educational Service Center, for availability of WebCheck. If none of these options is available, possible sites are listed on the Attorney General’s Web site.

Educators should ask whatever agency they use for the background checks if they have both the Ohio and National WebCheck machines. Please be sure to tell the agency to complete the section on the form that asks where you want the results sent by checking Teacher Certification.

Background checks are good for one year, so if the educator recently completed the checks they may have them sent to ODE for use in completing the requirement. They need to contact BCII at 877-224-0043 to request the background check results be sent to ODE.

HB 190 also requires all non-licensed school employees to undergo BCI and FBI background checks. Sept. 5, 2008, is the date by which all non-licensed school employees, excluding van and bus drivers, should have submitted fingerprints for the background checks. The checks for non-licensed employees must be redone every five years. Background checks for non-licensed school employees should be sent to the local school district and not Teacher Certification.

School bus and van drivers must complete 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 the Ohio Department of Education. 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.

Contact Information for licensed or certificated educators:
Office of Educator Licensure
Educator Licensure Questions
(614) 466-3593
1(877) 644-6338 (toll free)