

How often should you repeat background checks for employees, workers, and volunteers?

A local church administrator recently surveyed our local NACBA chapter about how often to repeat background checks on volunteers and workers. Responses varied. Find below some very helpful information regarding the frequency of performing background checks on workers and volunteers: “How frequently to run background checks is a question that comes up frequently, however, there is no legal precedence that I am aware of on this issue. Most organizations have (or should have) policies that require an employee or volunteer to notify them of an arrest, but they do not always do this. Employers are slowly beginning to realize that a person hired today with a clear background report could commit a crime tomorrow. Therefore, a successful background screening program consists of ongoing background checks. It is certainly not practical or financially viable to do daily or weekly background checks. Organizations must define the frequency for themselves, taking into account the safety of children, members, visitors, staff and the ministry. Many law enforcement agencies conduct background checks every five years. The majority of churches I have worked with that conduct ongoing background checks require them to be renewed every two to five years. The downloadable resource on ChurchSafety.com, “[Using Background Screening](#),” will give you further insight into this topic.” Source: <http://www.churchsafety.com/discussion/askouexperts/michaelmccarty/q4.html>

“There is no case law that says a background check is valid for 2 years or 5 years. So I am going to answer the question by throwing it back to you: how long do you think background checks should be good for? A sampling of our nearly 2,000 clients shows that the majority are NOT conducting ongoing screening. Pre-employment background checks are one piece of a comprehensive background screening program. Employers that have transitioned to an ongoing screening program have adopted 5 years as the magic number for a new criminal background check. Why 5 years? Possibly because this has been the law enforcement benchmark for many years.” Source: <http://info.safehiringsolutions.com/bid/67238/How-Long-Are-Background-Checks-Good-For>

“While there’s no set response for every situation, the following are a couple principles that can help guide churches in addressing this issue:

- If your church operates a daycare or preschool that is licensed, certified or accredited by a governing authority or an outside organization, they may have requirements on the frequency of criminal background checks for such workers.
- Check with those organizations regarding how frequently they require that background checks be run.
- If there’s a break in service in which the individual stops working or volunteering with children or youth and then seeks to return, a background check should be strongly considered at that point.

For other situations, the frequency of background checks is left to the judgment of the church. While it is common to see organizations choose to re-run background checks every two to five years, screening companies increasingly suggest that annual background checks are becoming the industry standard.” Source: <http://www.majesticeagle.com/news-you-can-use/how-often-should-you-run-background-checks/>

Some of many helpful articles:

- <http://www.churchvolunteercentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Background-Check-Programs.pdf?7a2653>
- <http://info.safehiringsolutions.com/bid/67238/How-Long-Are-Background-Checks-Good-For>
- <http://www.majesticeagle.com/news-you-can-use/how-often-should-you-run-background-checks/>