



## Maximizing Your Background Screening ROI

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Did you know that one in six workers has a drug problem<sup>1</sup>, or that on-the-job violence costs employers \$36 billion each year<sup>2</sup>, or that 9% of job applicants falsify their resume as it pertains to their college degree, previous employer, or job title<sup>3</sup>? Unfortunately, these are just a handful of the many statistics which point to how important it is that you as an employer reduce your risk of hiring potentially fraudulent or predatory applicants.

As a staffing firm, certainly you want to protect your business and clients from theft, as well as provide a safe working environment for your employees. When used properly, background screening is an excellent and proven method of protecting your company from such liabilities. RCS fields many questions about how and when background checks should be run and what method is most effective. While background screening is not an exact science, there are certain tips and recommendations any employer can follow to make sure they are maximizing their efforts and investment.

A good starting point is to run a criminal history search for ALL of your applicants, regardless of the position or title for which they are applying. You can then use this information to identify applicants with violent tendencies or a history of theft. However, there are many types of criminal searches such as national instant database searches, county criminal courthouse searches, and more. What type of search is most accurate?

An instant criminal database search is one that accesses a database which is comprised of data provided by various county, state, and federal agencies. Yet, there is no guarantee that a database search will completely cover all criminal records within a state. While instant database searches are good “complimentary searches,” in most cases the database does not contain all of the criminal records. It is also important to note that according to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, these database searches may not be accurate enough (in and of themselves) for you to make an informed hiring decision. Since criminal records are charged on the county level, you will find more accurate and complete information by conducting a county criminal courthouse search based on the counties in which the individual has lived over the last seven years.

To determine the counties in which the applicant has lived, first look at the individual’s application. However, many times applicants DO NOT disclose a location where they have had a criminal history. As a result, RCS strongly encourages first conducting a social security trace. Upon entering the applicant’s social security number, the social trace produces a report showing the known locations where the applicant has lived, usually within the last seven years. Compare the results with the applicant’s listing of previous addresses and, if needed, add additional counties to your search. Some background screening systems, like the one RCS provides, actually allow you to do the social security trace and county criminal search with one click so you do not have to find the applicable counties yourself.

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<sup>1</sup> *Don’t Hire A Crook*, Dennis DeMay and James R. Flowers Jr., 1999 Facts on Demand Press

<sup>2</sup> *Workplace Violence Research Institute*

<sup>3</sup> *Two Wrongs May Mean No Rights*, Barbara Kat Repa

For more sensitive positions, such as internal staff, professional/technical employees, healthcare workers, and positions involving handling money, RCS also recommends conducting the following searches in addition to the social security trace and county searches mentioned above:

- Employment Verification
- Education Verification
- License Verification (if applicable)
- Credit Check
- FACIS Search (Fraud Abuse Control Information System)

Of course, the more extensive the search, the more expensive it can become. On the other hand, this is a small price to pay when you consider your workers compensation rates, potential legal expenses, client relationships, and most importantly, the safety and lives of your employees.

*RCS and RiskProducts.com has partnered with World Wide Specialty Programs to provide you with the most accurate background information while equipping you with cost-effective and convenient solutions. Our online system allows you to securely log in at any time and access both instant searches and hand-pulled courthouse records. Please visit [www.riskproducts.com](http://www.riskproducts.com) or call 800-807-7475 for more information.*

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