



**NSW Police Force
Criminal Records Section**

Information Sheet No. 1

**What is the National Police
Checking Service?**

This Information Sheet provides information and responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the National Police Checking Service (NPCS).

This information should be read in conjunction with Information Sheet Number 2 – How to apply for a National Police Check.

The NSW Police Force provides an opportunity for NSW residents aged 14 years and above to apply for a National Police Check for visa, adoption, employment (including authorisation as an authorised carer), approval as a household member of an authorised carer, some occupational licensing purposes, student placements and for volunteers working in Commonwealth supported aged-care facilities.

Individuals requiring a criminal record check for Australian citizenship, residency, spouse visa, guardianship of a child from another country, working visa or whilst travelling or living abroad, must apply via the Australian Federal Police (AFP). Details on applying for a criminal record check via the AFP is available at www.afp.gov.au

Individuals requiring a National Police Check must:

- complete an application form online at www.police.nsw.gov.au,
- present the printed confirmation page and proof of identity documents used to a NSW Police station and
- pay the appropriate fee either online at the time of application by credit card or at a police station.

Completing the Application online

Individuals must apply online at www.police.nsw.gov.au. If internet access is not available, a paper application may be used. Paper application forms are available by contacting the Criminal Records Section and must be lodged in person at a Police Station.

**Criminal Records Section
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Q: What is the National Police Checking Service?

A: The NSW Police Force provides an opportunity for NSW residents aged 14 years and above to apply for a National Police Check for visa, adoption, employment (including authorisation as an authorised carer), approval as a household member of an authorised carer, some occupational licensing purposes, student placements and for volunteers working in Commonwealth supported aged-care facilities.

Q: Who can apply for a National Police Check?

A: NSW residents aged 14 years and above. Non-NSW residents must apply in the state they usually reside.

Q: Can I lodge an application for child-related employment purposes?

A: Persons requiring a Working With Children Check for child-related employment purpose should refer to the [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) website.

However, some employers of persons in child-related work may also require a National Police Check to assess the suitability of a person for employment in a particular position. A Working With Children Check clearance only provides that a person may legally work with children – it does not provide the employer with broader information as to a person's probity or suitability for employment. Persons in child-related work may separately apply to the NSW Police Force for a National Police Check.

Q: Can I lodge an application for Australian citizenship, residency, spouse visa, guardianship of a child from another country, working visa or whilst travelling or living abroad?

A: No. Applications for these purposes must be made to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) www.afp.gov.au or by contacting 02 6202 3333.

Q: How do I apply for a National Police Check to volunteer in an aged-care facility?

A: Volunteers working in Commonwealth funded aged-care facilities should apply online at www.police.nsw.gov.au. Applicants should select the *name & date of birth check – volunteer - Commonwealth funded care services*.

These checks will have "aged care volunteer use only" printed on the certificate. Therefore, the certificate is not suitable for any other purpose. This type of check should only be used for volunteers in Commonwealth funded aged care facilities. Other types of facilities must select "Employment" and state the details of the check.

Q: How do I apply for a National Police Check?

A: Individuals requiring a National Police Check must:

- complete an online application form available at www.police.nsw.gov.au,
- print and present the confirmation page and proof of identity to a NSW Police station and
- pay the appropriate fee either online at the time of application by credit card or at a police station.

Q: How much does a National Police Check cost?

A: The fee for a National Police Check is:

- *National name and date of birth check*: \$58.60
- *National name, date of birth and fingerprint check*: \$197.20
- *National name and date of birth check for volunteers working in Commonwealth supported aged-care*: \$15

Q: Can I pay online?

A: Yes. Credit card payments may be made online at the time of application or in person at any NSW Police station. However, proof of identity must still be presented at a Police station.

Q: Can I pay in person at a police station?

A: Yes. Payment may be made at any NSW Police station. Applicants may wish to contact their Police station to ensure police are available to accept an application at a convenient time.

Q: Can I apply via mail?

A: No. All applications must be made online and proof of identity documents must be presented in person by the applicant at a NSW Police station.

Q: Do I have to apply in person?

A: Yes. Applications will not be accepted unless proof of identity is presented in person.

Q: What if I do not have internet access?

A: A paper application form is available by contacting the Criminal Records Section on 02 8835 7888.

Q: Do I need access to a printer?

A: Applicants are required to present the printed confirmation page and proof of identity documents at a NSW Police station. Alternatively, if no printer is available, the Document ID number provided on the confirmation screen MUST be provided when attending the Police station.

Q: What are acceptable types of identification?

A: Applicants must provide three (3) types of acceptable identification from the drop down list provided on the online form or as listed on page two of the paper application form. Identification must be original (not copies) and should include at least one type of photographic ID and identification that contains a signature and date of birth. Applicants must record the identification type (eg Medicare card) and number (if applicable).

Acceptable types of identification are:

- Current passport
- Current drivers licence
- Birth Certificate
- Citizenship Certificate
- Certificate of Marriage or Change of Name
- Government issued identity card
- Medicare Card and/or Private health care fund card
- Senior Citizens / Govt. concession card
- Rates notice
- Utility account (eg electricity, gas, telephone)
- Government issued proof of age card
- Current student identity card
- Union/Professional membership card
- Licence issued by a Government authority
- Employee identity card with photograph

Q: Who can apply for a NPCS fingerprint check?

A: Fingerprint checks are restricted to applications for visa and adoption purposes when requested by the overseas country or adoption organisation. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine if a fingerprint check is required. Applicants requiring a fingerprint check should select the Name, date of birth and fingerprint check box.

Q: How will I receive the result of a National Police Check?

A: Results are presented in the form of a National Police Certificate posted to the name and address specified by the applicant. No copies or duplicates will be released.

Q: How long will it take to process my application?

A: Applicants should allow a **minimum** of ten (10) business days for *name and date of birth* checks to be processed and fifteen (15) business days for *name, date of birth and fingerprint* checks.

Q: What security features are included in a National Police Certificate?

A: Full details of the security features contained on the National Police Certificate are outlined on the front and back of the certificate. The primary overt security feature is two pink coloured images of Australia at the bottom of the certificate which will disappear momentarily if friction (rubbing by finger) is applied. It is a criminal offence to alter or present a fraudulent copy of a National Police Certificate. The Criminal Records Section should be contacted if there is any doubt regarding the authenticity, or content, of the Certificate.

Q: What is included in a National Police Certificate?

A: A National Police Certificate lists “*disclosable court outcomes*” released in accordance with state and federal legislation including the New South Wales *Criminal Records Act 1991*. Outstanding and unfinalised court matters may also be included.

Australian police criminal record information is generally limited to prosecutions initiated by police. Some offences are prosecuted by non-police organisations and details of convictions resulting from these prosecutions may not be included in the National Police Certificate.

Convictions considered “spent” under state and federal legislation may not be included in the National Police Certificate unless the category of employment or purpose of the check is exempt from relevant legislation.

The certificate is based upon a check of the National Names Index (NNI) using the name, date of birth (and if applicable) fingerprints supplied by the applicant. Given that fingerprints are not taken by police services in Australia in all instances, it is possible that the NNI may contain information recorded against the applicant under another name or alias.

The certificate issued in response to an application must be read in the following context:

1. It will not contain any convictions of the applicant which are recorded under another name or alias, unless the applicant has disclosed same in the application or has therein submitted to a fingerprint comparison search.
2. It will not contain convictions that have yet to be recorded upon NNI, due to the unavoidable time lapse between the conviction by a court and the updating of the NNI.
3. Some offences are prosecuted by non-police organisations and consequently details of those convictions may not have been submitted to the NNI.
4. It will not contain any convictions of the applicant which, under a State, Territory or Commonwealth law, cannot be disclosed because they are deemed “spent convictions”.

Q: Which convictions are capable of becoming spent?

Under NSW legislation, all convictions are capable of becoming spent except:

- convictions for which a prison sentence of more than six months has been imposed;
- convictions for sexual offences;
- convictions against companies and other corporate bodies; and
- convictions prescribed by the Regulations

Q: What are the consequences of a conviction becoming spent?

A: If a conviction of a person is considered spent, the benefit provided to the person is that s/he is not required to disclose to any other person, for any purpose, information concerning the spent conviction. Secondly, any question concerning the person's criminal history is taken to refer only to any convictions of the person which are not spent. Finally, where an Act or statutory instrument applies to a person, any reference to a conviction is taken to be a reference only to any convictions of the person which are not spent, and any reference to a person's character or fitness does not provide for consideration of spent convictions in that assessment.

Q: Are spent convictions ever released?

A: Spent convictions will only be released if required for a category of employment or purpose exempt from the *Criminal Records Act 1991*.

Q: How long is a National Police Certificate valid?

A: National Police Certificates are only valid at the date of issue.

Q: How do I dispute information contained on a National Police Certificate?

A: Employers and organisations receiving a National Police Certificate should discuss the content of the Certificate with the applicant to enable them an opportunity to verify or dispute the record.

Applicants who dispute information recorded on the National Police Certificate should complete Form P827 *Disputing criminal record information* and forward the completed form to the NSW Police Force, Criminal Records Section, Information Management Team, Locked Bag 5102, Parramatta, NSW, 2124.

Applicants must specify the offences or information in dispute and be prepared to provide comparison fingerprints. The Criminal Records Section will notify applicants in writing if comparison fingerprints are required. No fee will be charged and fingerprints will be destroyed by the Criminal Records Section upon resolution of the dispute.

Q: Can I have my finger-prints/palm prints destroyed?

A: In accordance with s137A of the *Law Enforcement Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*, a person from whom finger-prints or palm-prints are taken may request the Commissioner to destroy their finger-prints or palm-prints if the offence for which the prints were taken, is not proven.

An offence is "not proven" if a person is found not guilty or acquitted of the offence, if the conviction of the person for the offence is quashed and an acquittal is entered, on appeal, or at the end of the period of 12 months after the finger-prints or palm-prints were taken (or, if an extension to that period is granted under section 137B, at the end of the extended period) proceedings in respect of the offence have not been instituted against the person or have been discontinued.

Applications must be in writing, addressed to the Manager, Criminal Records Section, Locked Bag 5102, Parramatta NSW 2124 and must include;

- full name and date of birth under which the person was charged,
- date of the charge,
- details of the offence, i.e offence type (assault, etc,)
- court date and court outcomes

Security of information

NSW Police Force will only release the National Police Certificate directly to the person or organisation nominated by the applicant ("the Recipient") on the following conditions:

1. The information contained therein must only be used by the Recipient for or in compliance of a lawful purpose and must not be disclosed to any other agency, entity or person without prior written consent of the applicant.
2. The Recipient must take all responsible steps to prevent unlawful or unauthorised use or disclosure of the information provided.
3. The NSW Police Force will not be held liable for any unlawful or unauthorised use or disclosure of the information provided therein.

Q: How can I obtain further information on NPCCS?

A: For further information on the National Police Checking Service, visit www.police.nsw.gov.au or contact the Criminal Records Section by telephone (02) 8835 7888, fax (02) 8835 7193 or email crs@police.nsw.gov.au