

GET THE JOB

About Background Checks

How to Prepare and What Employers Are Looking For

You've made it through the interviews, and now the employer mentions a background check. For many job seekers, this step brings up questions — and sometimes a bit of anxiety. But background checks are a common part of the hiring process, and understanding what to expect can help you move through it with confidence.

WHAT A BACKGROUND CHECK INCLUDES

Most background checks are used to verify the basics: your identity, employment history, education and any criminal record. Depending on the job, an employer might also check your credit history, driving record or professional licenses.

In general, employers are looking to confirm that what you've presented is accurate — and that there are no major red flags related to the role. For example, a driving offense may be more relevant if you're applying for a delivery job than for an office position.

Background checks are typically conducted after a conditional offer is made, and in many states, employers are required to get your permission before proceeding.

HOW TO PREPARE AND AVOID SURPRISES

One of the best ways to feel ready is to know what's on your record before anyone else does. Request a copy of your credit report, review your public records and double-check your résumé for accuracy.

If there's something in your past that might raise questions, it's often better to address it upfront. Being honest and pro-

active shows integrity — and gives you a chance to explain the context, especially if the issue is old or already resolved.

If you've been convicted of a crime, many employers will consider how long ago it happened, what the offense was and how it relates to the job. In some cases, sharing what you've done since — such as further education, steady work or community service — can

help put your experience in perspective.

ACCURACY MATTERS — SO CHECK IN IF NEEDED

Background checks aren't perfect. Occasionally, they contain outdated or incorrect information. If something unexpected comes up, you have the right to review the report and dispute anything that's inaccurate.

Most employers will give you a chance to respond before making a final decision, especially if the information conflicts with what you've shared.

Knowing what to expect takes the mystery — and some of the stress — out of this step in the hiring process. With a little preparation, you can move through it calmly and confidently.



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