



City of Riverside, California
Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual

Approved:

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SUBJECT: REFERENCE/BACKGROUND CHECKS

PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for pre-employment reference checks of potential new hires from outside the City and for the release of personal or reference information to other employers regarding current or former employees while minimizing the City's risk of liability.

POLICY:

1. Obtaining References - The City of Riverside is responsible for confirming information provided by applicants in their employment application. Information concerning an applicant's education and employment history may be verified by either Human Resources or by the hiring department before a formal employment offer is extended. This responsibility includes verification of an applicant's credentials and previous work experience.

It is the responsibility of the hiring department to verify all references. The Human Resources Department is available for guidance and assistance. Reference information obtained in confidence by the City of Riverside from other employers is considered confidential and may be legally withheld from the applicant. Any information obtained from public records, however, as the result of a reference or background check must be released to the applicant within seven days unless the applicant waives their right to the information in accordance with Civil Code section 1786.53.

The purpose of reference checking is to gather additional facts and information about your leading candidate(s). Reference checks help verify information gathered in the interview (experience, skills and capabilities), and is a valuable tool in gauging the candidate's interpersonal communication skills (i.e. teamwork, ability to get along with others, communication style, etc.). A thorough reference check may also provide new facts and information (strengths, weaknesses and constructive criticism) to consider in making a final hiring decision.

It is important to verify all degrees, certifications, licenses and educational history listed in an employment application. Education can be verified by calling the campus Registrar or Student Records Office, although some campuses now refer you to a central registry service to obtain information. The student's name, social security number and dates of attendance or graduation

are usually required in order to verify attendance and degrees earned. In most cases, this can be done over the telephone or online.

Candidates for jobs that require a Commercial Driver's License shall complete the following forms providing information about their driving history and authorizing the City of Riverside to obtain past Motor Vehicle Safety Performance information about that candidate;

- a. Commercial Driver's Application for Employment
- b. Consent for Information From Previous Employer(s) for Alcohol and Controlled-Substance Testing records.

All newly appointed employees required to have a valid motor vehicle license shall provide a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) abstract to verify Driver's License validity and minimum past three (3) year's driving history.

The Human Resources Department Recruiting Division shall submit a "Request For Release of Information of Drug and Alcohol Test Results" to the previous employer(s) of all leading Commercial Driver candidates who have been selected for follow up interviews.

Past employers may be reluctant to share negative information about past employees but employers should verify, at a minimum, dates worked and positions held. Some employers will also state whether an employee is eligible for rehire.

Any written information obtained in the reference check will be retained and destroyed in accordance with Government Code Sections 34090, et. seq. and the Records Retention Schedule of the Human Resources Department.

Authorization to use an outside investigator or agency to conduct any reference or background check must be obtained in advance from the Human Resources Director.

Applicants who submit an application for employment with the City of Riverside agree to the following:

- a. To answer all questions completely and accurately;
- b. To allow the City to contact all employers and educational institutions listed, including current employer, and if applicable the appropriate supervisor within the City of Riverside (for former employees);
- c. That all statements made within application are true and complete; and
- d. That making false statements may lead to disqualification or dismissal.

California Law prohibits employers from posing questions to applicants that express discrimination based upon an applicant's race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital status, sex or sexual orientation. Federal law also prohibits discrimination in the hiring process.

Some examples of questions you cannot ask regarding an applicant are:

- a. When an applicant graduated from elementary or high school, or other questions concerning an applicant's age other than minimum age requirements;
- b. Where an applicant was born;

- c. Whether an applicant is a U.S. citizen;
- d. Questions regarding an applicant's race or ethnicity;
- e. Questions regarding an applicant's financial assets or debts, or whether an applicant owns or rents their residence;
- f. Questions concerning an applicant's height or weight;
- g. Questions concerning an applicant's family responsibilities such as the existence of dependents, childcare or child support, or about childbearing or fertility;
- h. Questions concerning an applicant's sexual orientation; and
- i. Questions concerning an applicant's religion or religious practices.

The Human Resources Department can assist you with questions to ask during a reference check.

- 2. Providing References - Express written authorization must be provided by current or former City employees before requests for earnings-related data or detailed employment history will be released. The City of Riverside will only release basic factual information to other employers regarding current or former City employees without written authorization from the employee.

In accordance with California Civil Code, the City of Riverside reference policy permits providing references to other employers including written verification of employment, dates of employment, job classification and salary range of an employee's classification. The Human Resources Director may authorize individual supervisors or managers to respond to requests for detailed employment information when a signed release is on file with the Human Resources Department.

Whenever there is any doubt concerning the legitimacy of a request for information, the inquiry will not be honored by the City.

PROCEDURE:

Responsibility	Action
Prospective Employee	1. Provides written consent to Human Resources to provide information pertaining to employment and/or payroll and/or Commercial Driver's License (if applicable) information.
Hiring Department (Human Resources, if requested)	2. Verifies information provided on application after final interviews and leading candidates are identified. 3. Coordinates with the Police Department on background checks for Department Heads.
Outside Agency	4. Responds to requests from City staff regarding reference and/or payroll information on employee.

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5. Provides DOT required forms to Commercial Driver applicants.
6. Receives "Request for Release of Information of Drug and Alcohol Test Results", and provides information to hiring department.
7. Provides reference information to outside agency.

Attachment: Telephone Reference Check form
Commercial Driver's Application For Employment
Consent for Information From Previous Employer(s) for Alcohol and Drug Testing Records
Request For release of Information of drug and Alcohol Test Results

**CITY OF RIVERSIDE
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

TELEPHONE REFERENCE CHECK

The purpose of reference checking is to gather additional facts and information about your leading candidate(s). The reference check helps verify information on the application form (education, experience, training) and information gathered in the interview (experience, skills, and capabilities), and is a valuable tool in gauging the candidate's interpersonal communication skills (teamwork, ability to get along with others, communication style, etc.). A thorough reference check may also provide you with new facts and information (strengths, weaknesses, and constructive criticism) to consider in making your final hiring decision.

Initiate your reference call with a brief introduction and the purpose of your contact, indicating that your candidate has listed them as a reference and you are following up to gather facts and information. Be sensitive to their time and make sure they are able to give you approximately 10 to 15 minutes to conduct a thorough reference check. A "rushed" reference check will be ineffective in eliciting quality information.

To assist you in the reference check process we have developed a list of suggested questions. These will be helpful to you in collecting necessary information to make an "informed" hiring decision. You may ask additional specific or substitute questions related to the particulars of the position you are filling. These questions serve as a guideline for you and have been very effective in gathering pertinent information about candidates.

Name of Candidate: _____

Reference Contact: _____ Telephone: (____) _____

Organization: _____

1. Employed from _____ to _____

2. Salary: Beginning - _____ Ending - _____

3. Were you involved in the selection process when _____ was hired in your organization? If so, what influenced you to hire him/her? _____

4. How would you rate their customer service skills? _____

5. How did he/she get along with:

• Co-workers? _____

• Supervisors/Managers? _____

6. If I were to call his/her co-workers, what do you think they would tell me about his/her teamwork and interpersonal skills? _____

7. Was he/she dependable? _____
8. What was his/her attendance record like?
• Was he/she absent often? _____
• Was he/she tardy often? _____
9. How well did he/she follow instructions? _____
10. How would you rate him/her on their ability to do their job?
_____ Unacceptable _____ Needs Improvement _____ Acceptable
_____ Good _____ Superior _____ Outstanding
11. If you could offer him/her one bit of constructive criticism, what would it be? _____

12. Why did he/she leave your organization? _____
13. What one thing about his/her employment with you do you recall the most? (name major accomplishment, event, work product, etc.) _____

14. What was his/her reputation within your organization? _____
15. What else can you share with me about _____ that might help us in evaluating his/her candidacy for this position? _____

**REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION
DRUG AND ALCOHOL TEST RESULTS**

Company Name _____

Candidate _____

Social Security Number _____

The candidate listed above has applied for employment in a safety sensitive function requiring a commercial motor vehicle driver license.

The candidate has indicated that he/she performed safety sensitive functions while in your employ. The candidate has signed the attached consent form to release information concerning his/her participation in a controlled substances and alcohol testing program.

Pursuant to 49 CFR 382.405, 49 CFR 391.21, and 49 CFR 40.25, complete this form and forward by facsimile to: **City of Riverside, Human Resources Department ATTN: Recruitment (951) 826-5943.**

Was the candidate subject to controlled substances or alcohol testing during his/his employment with your company? **Yes** __ **No** __

If yes, during what time period was the candidate subject to testing? _____

If the candidate was subject to testing, did the candidate have:

- (1) Alcohol test(s) with a result of 0.04 or higher alcohol concentration;
Yes __ **No** __
- (2) Verified positive drug tests;
Yes __ **No** __
- (3) Refusals to be tested (including verified adulterated or substituted drug test results);
Yes __ **No** __
- (4) Other violations of DOT agency drug and alcohol testing regulations; and/or,
Yes __ **No** __
- (5) Successful completion of DOT return-to-duty requirements (including follow-up tests). **Yes** __ **No** __

Completed by:

Signature

Print Name

Title

Date

CONSENT FOR INFORMATION FROM PREVIOUS EMPLOYER(S) FOR ALCOHOL AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TESTING RECORDS

I, (print) _____, Social Security Number _____, hereby authorize each of the following employers from the last two years, as listed below, to release and forward information on my alcohol and controlled substance testing records to the **City of Riverside**. This authorization is pursuant to 49 CFR 382.413.

Previous Employer	Contact Person	Telephone Number	Dates of Employment
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

I understand that if the City of Riverside is unable to obtain the requested information from my employers from the previous two years within 30 calendar days after the first time that I perform a safety sensitive function, I may be removed from duty until the information is obtained.

I further understand that the City of Riverside will terminate my employment if my employer(s) during the preceding two years provide information on alcohol tests with a concentration of 0.04 or greater, verified controlled substance test results, refusal to test, adulterated or substituted test samples, or other Department of Transportation agency drug and alcohol testing regulations **if** I am unable to provide information on subsequent substance abuse professional evaluation and/or determination under 49 CFR 382.401(c)(4) and compliance with 49 CFR 382.309 (return to duty testing).

I understand that the City of Riverside has the responsibility for protecting the confidentiality of this information.

The information provided on this form is true, correct, and complete.

Applicant's Signature

Date

**COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH THE CITY
OF RIVERSIDE
3900 Main Street, Riverside, California 92522**

Please Print

Applicant's Full Name _____

Applicant's Home Address _____

Date of Birth _____ **Social Security Number** _____

Addresses Occupied During the Previous 3 Years _____

The issuing State, number, and expiration date of each unexpired commercial motor vehicle operator's license or permit issued to the applicant: _____

What is the nature and extent of your experience in the operation of motor vehicles, including the type of equipment that you have operated? _____

Provide a list of all motor vehicle accidents in which you have been involved during the 3 years preceding this application. Specify the date and nature of each accident and any fatalities or personal injuries it caused. _____

Provide a list of all violations of motor vehicle laws or ordinances (other than violations involving only parking) for which you have been convicted or forfeited bond or collateral

within the 3 years preceding this application. _____

Have you ever had a driver license or permit denied, revoked, or suspended?

Yes ___ No ___ If you answered Yes, explain the facts and circumstances.

List the names and addresses of your employers during the 3 years preceding this application, together with the dates of employment and the reason that you left that employment.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Dates of Employment</i>	<i>Reason for Leaving</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

This certifies that this application was completed by me, and that all entries on it and information in it are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date



**CITY OF RIVERSIDE
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

**REFERENCE/BACKGROUND CHECK
SUPPLEMENT TO HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE I-12**

CHECK-LIST

The City of Riverside is responsible for confirming information provided by applicants in their employment application. It is the responsibility of the hiring department to verify all references. The Human Resources Department is available for guidance and assistance. This check-list should be used in conjunction with the Policy guidelines as stated in I-12. The checklist and verification documents shall be submitted to Human Resources along with the hiring P-2 for the selected candidate. Please refer to job announcement and/or consult with your Human Resources Recruiter for assistance in determining which items should be verified.

VERIFIED BY/DATE:	REFERENCE/BACKGROUND CHECK ITEMS
	<p>Degrees/Transcripts (High School, College)</p> <p><i>Obtain copies from the candidate and verify by contacting the campus Registrar or Student Records office.</i></p>
	<p>Certifications/Licenses/Registration (excluding Driver's License, e.g. Registration as an Engineer)</p> <p><i>Obtain copies from the candidate and verify by contacting the issuing source.</i></p>
	<p>Previous Employers</p> <p><i>Contact prior employers to verify experience, skills and capabilities. Use the "Telephone Reference Check" form for each employer contacted.</i></p>
	SAFETY SENSITIVE POSITIONS ONLY
	<p>Driver's License - Commercial Only - Class A or B</p> <p><i>Department/hiring authority to obtain a copy of the candidate's H6 Driving Record and review driving history. Seek the assistance of Risk Management/Safety staff as needed for interpretation of infractions.</i></p>
	<p>Commercial Driver's Application for Employment</p> <p><i>Department/hiring authority to obtain completed Driver's Application for Employment from candidate and submit to Human Resources. Use the form attached to Policy I-12.</i></p>
	<p>Consent for Release Forms for Information From Previous Employer(s) for Alcohol and Controlled-Substance Testing records.</p> <p><i>Department/hiring authority to obtain completed Consent from candidate and submit to Human Resources. Use the form attached to Policy I-12.</i></p>
	<p>Request for Release of Information – Drug and Alcohol Test Results</p> <p><i>Human Resources to send out Requests for Release to prior employers using the form attached to Policy I-12, upon receipt of the Commercial Driver's Application and Consent Forms from Department.</i></p>