

**RCW 18.130.064 Authority and duties—Secretary and disciplining authority—Background checks.**

(1) (a) The secretary is authorized to receive criminal history record information that includes nonconviction data for any purpose associated with investigation or licensing and investigate the complete criminal history and pending charges of all applicants and license holders.

(b) Dissemination or use of nonconviction data for purposes other than that authorized in this section is prohibited. Disciplining authorities shall restrict the use of background check results in determining the individual's suitability for a license and in conducting disciplinary functions.

(2) (a) The secretary shall establish requirements for each applicant for an initial license to obtain a state background check through the state patrol prior to the issuance of any license. The background check may be fingerprint-based at the discretion of the department.

(b) The secretary shall specify those situations where a background check under (a) of this subsection is inadequate and an applicant for an initial license must obtain an electronic fingerprint-based national background check through the state patrol and federal bureau of investigation. Situations where a background check is inadequate may include instances where an applicant has recently lived out of state or where the applicant has a criminal record in Washington. The secretary shall issue a temporary practice permit to an applicant who must have a national background check conducted if the background check conducted under (a) of this subsection does not reveal a criminal record in Washington, and if the applicant meets the provisions of RCW 18.130.075.

(3) In addition to the background check required in subsection (2) of this section, an investigation may include an examination of state and national criminal identification data. The disciplining authority shall use the information for determining eligibility for licensure or renewal. The disciplining authority may also use the information when determining whether to proceed with an investigation of a report under RCW 18.130.080. For a national criminal history records check, the department shall require fingerprints be submitted to and searched through the Washington state patrol identification and criminal history section. The Washington state patrol shall forward the fingerprints to the federal bureau of investigation.

(4) The secretary shall adopt rules to require license holders to report to the disciplining authority any arrests, convictions, or other determinations or findings by a law enforcement agency occurring after June 12, 2008, for a criminal offense. The report must be made within fourteen days of the conviction.

(5) The secretary shall conduct an annual review of a representative sample of all license holders who have previously obtained a background check through the department. The selection of the license holders to be reviewed must be representative of all categories of license holders and geographic locations.

(6) (a) When deciding whether or not to issue an initial license, the disciplining authority shall consider the results of any background check conducted under subsection (2) of this section that reveals a conviction for any criminal offense that constitutes unprofessional conduct under this chapter or the chapters specified in RCW 18.130.040(2) or a series of arrests that when considered together

demonstrate a pattern of behavior that, without investigation, may pose a risk to the safety of the license holder's patients.

(b) If the background check conducted under subsection (2) of this section reveals any information related to unprofessional conduct that has not been previously disclosed to the disciplining authority, the disciplining authority shall take appropriate disciplinary action against the license holder.

(7) The department shall:

(a) Require the applicant or license holder to submit full sets of fingerprints if necessary to complete the background check;

(b) Require the applicant to submit any information required by the state patrol; and

(c) Notify the applicant if their background check reveals a criminal record. Only when the background check reveals a criminal record will an applicant receive a notice. Upon receiving such a notice, the applicant may request and the department shall provide a copy of the record to the extent permitted under RCW 10.97.050, including making accessible to the applicant for their personal use and information any records of arrest, charges, or allegations of criminal conduct or other nonconviction data pursuant to RCW 10.97.050(4).

(8) Criminal justice agencies shall provide the secretary with both conviction and nonconviction information that the secretary requests for investigations under this chapter.

(9) There is established a unit within the department for the purpose of detection, investigation, and prosecution of any act prohibited or declared unlawful under this chapter. The secretary will employ supervisory, legal, and investigative personnel for the unit who must be qualified by training and experience.

(10) For purposes of issuing multistate licenses under chapter 18.80 RCW, the board of nursing is authorized to receive criminal history record information that includes nonconviction data for any purpose associated with licensing and investigate the complete criminal history and pending charges of all applicants and license holders. [2023 c 123 s 22; 2008 c 134 s 7.]

**Short title—2023 c 123:** See RCW 18.80.900.

**Finding—Intent—Severability—2008 c 134:** See notes following RCW 18.130.020.