

Criminal Background Check FAQ

October 2019

1. Is the BSA doing credit checks on volunteers?

No. The BSA will only use these signed authorization forms for approval to obtain a criminal background check. State and federal laws regulating background checks and consumer credit checks require that both items be mentioned on the form since a full background check includes both parts. Again, the BSA is only using this form for authorization to obtain a criminal background check.

2. Why is this being done now?

Starting in 2020, rechecks will be performed every five years, but it will take several years to recheck all leaders. Unfortunately, technical limitations and changes in the law over the last five years prevent us from using existing authorizations from older applications. As such, new disclosure had to be sent and new signed authorization forms obtained. Re-chartering provides the best window to collect and verify they have been received before the council processes the re-charter application.

3. What about volunteers that are not registered with units?

All currently registered adults and employees who have not had a criminal background check in the last five years will be rechecked. The Greater St. Louis Area Council will individually track district and council registered employees and leaders, including merit badge counselors.

4. What about those who did not get the forms by e-mail?

Ample copies of the background check disclosure and agreement were provided in all unit re-charter packets that were distributed at the October Roundtable meetings.

Your unit leader, or the leader responsible for completing your unit's annual charter renewal, will ensure that each registered adult volunteer leader receives both the disclosure form as well as the authorization form. The council will collect all of your unit's authorization forms (we will not need to collect the separate disclosure page) at the time that your unit submit's their annual charter renewal packet to one of our service centers. District and council volunteers, including merit badge counselors, should submit the authorization to your district executive or council staff advisor at the time that they collect your renewal and fees for 2020.

5. What about those with multiple registrations?

Only one authorization form per person needs to be collected and retained by the council. An authorization should be submitted with their primary BSA registration.

6. What happens if an adult volunteer leader does not provide an authorization?

Volunteers who do not provide new authorization will not be able to renew their registration.

7. Why can't the volunteer just reply to the original e-mail and attach their signed authorization form?

The best way for us to ensure compliance is for the council to verify that a signed authorization form is physically in hand before processing a unit's re-charter. This removes much of the potential error and associated penalties that could result from other methods.

This will facilitate the process of ensuring that a current form is on file at the council service center before processing a volunteer leader's registration.

8. Are there different forms for different states?

Federal and state laws prescribe what must be in the disclosures and how they are to be provided. A form compliant with federal and various state laws was sent to all volunteer leaders except those in California (Leaders with a California home address or whose council territory includes California received California-specific forms due to the specific requirements of California law).

9. Will the council accept a scanned or photocopy of the signed authorization?

Yes, so long as it is legible and is sent by the individual who signed it.

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10. Can the council accept an electronic signature?

Digital signatures from third-party providers are acceptable. E-mail confirmations, permissions or typed names on the form are not acceptable substitutes for wet signatures.

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11. What about unit renewals that have already been processed or will not re-charter until after January 1, 2020?

For unit renewals that have already been posted because the unit renewal date was prior to the email notification or the unit renewal date is after January 1, 2020, authorization forms still need to be collected as soon as possible. All new authorization forms should be received by December 31, 2019.