



ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF MONTANA



10.57.201A CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK

- (1) The National Child Protection Act of 1993, as amended, (codified at 42 United States Code sections 5119a and 5119c) (the "Act") authorizes a state and national criminal history background check to determine the fitness of an employee, volunteer, or other person with unsupervised access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities. The purpose of this rule is to support the Superintendent of Public Instruction's duty to determine whether an applicant for licensure has been convicted of a crime that bears upon the applicant's fitness related to the safety and well-being of children and the integrity of the teaching profession.
- (2) Each of the following applicants shall provide to the Montana Department of Justice information and material sufficient to obtain a fingerprint-based national criminal history background check:
 - (a) any applicant for initial Montana educator licensure;
 - (b) any applicant seeking to reinstate a lapsed, surrendered, revoked, or suspended educator license; or
 - (c) an individual for whom a school district is seeking emergency authorization of employment pursuant to 20-4-111, MCA, and ARM 10.57.107.
- (3) Neither the Superintendent of Public Instruction nor the Board of Public Education shall bear the costs of the background check.
- (4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall not issue a Montana educator license pursuant to 20-4-101, et seq., MCA, until the applicant's background check has been completed and the results delivered to and reviewed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- (5) To initiate the criminal history background check process, the applicant must submit a set of fingerprints on the appropriate form to the Montana Department of Justice for the purpose of licensure. Criminal background checks submitted for other purposes will not be acceptable for licensure.
- (6) As part of the licensure application process, the applicant must provide character and fitness information to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. If the applicant has any criminal history record, the applicant must provide a description and explanation of the circumstances of the crime.
- (7) Each applicant who is the subject of a criminal history background check is entitled to receive a copy of the report from the Superintendent of Public Instruction with the appropriate identification and signed release. The applicant may challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in any such report through the Montana Department of Justice procedures.

- (8) The Montana Office of Public Instruction shall make a determination whether the applicant has been convicted of, or is under pending indictment for, a crime that bears upon the applicant's fitness related to the safety and well-being of children or the teaching profession.
- (9) Conviction, including conviction following a plea of nolo contendere, a conviction in which the sentence is suspended or deferred, or any other adjudication treated by the court as a conviction, may be considered by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the licensure process if the conviction was for a sexual offense, a crime involving violence, the sale of drugs, theft, or any other offense related to public health, welfare, and safety as it applies to the teaching profession.

Authorizing statute(s): Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

Implementing statute(s): Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-103, 20-4-104, MCA

History: NEW, 2002 MAR p. 3309, Eff. 11/28/02; AMD, 2003 MAR p. 554, Eff. 3/28/03; AMD, 2009 MAR p. 345, Eff. 3/27/09; AMD, 2014 MAR p. 2930, Eff. 7/1/15; AMD, 2016 MAR p. 2330, Eff. 1/1/17; AMD, 2022 MAR p. 799, Eff. 5/28/22.