



Outdoor Service Guides

Criminal History Checks

General Provisions

OSG is committed to the protection of all people who are associated with its programs, including registered scouts, volunteers, guests, and organization members. Safety is the highest priority. As required by the National OSG standards, OSG shall conduct criminal history checks of all adult Rovers (18 years of age and older) and any non-Rover adult leaders who are expected to have direct contact with children while participating in our programs for at least 1 hour per month over the course of 6 months, regardless of any other external criminal history checks. OSG will carry out these checks in a fair, consistent, and non-discriminatory manner, complying with all applicable state and federal laws, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Rovers and Non-Rover Adults will consent to these checks via their registration within their OSG chartered group, and at the time of registration within the OSG Dashboard system. All criminal history checks are handled by a third party service, Sterling Volunteers. OSG will not accept criminal history checks from any other service.

OSG uses standard criminal history check methods, which utilizes name, date of birth, and SSN based systems to obtain data for adults seeking participation and volunteer opportunities with the organization.

Each criminal history check shall include:

1. Verification of the individual's identity and legal aliases.
2. A local and national search of sex offender registries
3. A local and national search of criminal records

Criminal history checks will be conducted when a person joins the organization and before they participate or volunteer. These checks will be renewed every two years, with a standard renewal date of March 15.

California

To comply with CA AB 506, Rovers serving as Youth Leaders in California must undergo a one-time Live Scan Fingerprint Background Check in addition to their biennial criminal history check with Sterling Volunteers. A list of locations is available at <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>. The cost for this check may be submitted to National for reimbursement in the case of financial hardship.

Eligibility Assessment

All criminal history check findings shall be assessed in a fair, impartial and confidential manner by the Registrar or Secretary. Criminal history check findings that reveal criminal charges, and convictions for certain crimes will serve to automatically disqualify the applicant, and render the applicant ineligible for participation, and volunteer service. A person will be ineligible for participation, and volunteer service, if the person:

1. Refuses to consent to a criminal history check,
2. Makes a false statement in connection with such criminal history check,
3. Is registered, or required to be registered on any sex offender registry,
4. Has been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor involving:
 - a. physical assault or battery
 - b. domestic violence or crimes against the family
 - c. cruelty to animals
 - d. harassment, intimidation

A person *may* be ineligible for participation, and volunteer service, if the person:

1. has been convicted within the past 5 years of any felony or misdemeanor
2. has a history of arrest or conviction for DUI (driving under the influence of intoxicants) within the past five years.

OSG reserves the right to evaluate and determine eligibility status based on any and all criminal convictions not listed above, considering some of the following factors:

1. The nature and gravity of the offense;
2. The time that has passed since the offense or completion of sentence;
3. The nature of the applicant's participation and volunteer intentions;
4. The facts and circumstances surrounding the offense or conduct;
5. The number of offenses for which the individual was convicted;
6. The age of the applicant at the time of the conviction or release;
7. Evidence that the individual performed the same type of participation or volunteer duties, post-conviction, within a similar organization with no known incidents of criminal conduct;
8. The length and consistency of participation and volunteer history before and after the offense or conduct;
9. Rehabilitation efforts; such as, education or training;
10. Character references and any other information regarding fitness for the particular opportunity interest;
11. Whether the individual is bonded under a federal, state, or local bonding program.

In the case of minor allowed convictions, OSG also reserves the right to bar an individual from related activities. For instance, a history of DUI might preclude the individual from driving as part of scout activities, a history of fraud may preclude the individual from handling money, and so forth. In such cases, the GSM will be made aware of this allowance.


OSG shall alert the applicant to the possibility of their exclusion due to past criminal conduct, and provide the applicant with an opportunity to submit an explanation. All personal data, criminal history check data and adverse action letters shall be treated as confidential and maintained in a secure location. All screening procedures shall be consistent with the highest standards of OSG safety and security expectations. Any negative criminal history check results will be responded to within seven business days.


In addition to the above, all adults (18 and over) registered with OSG must disclose, within one week, any new criminal convictions. Such convictions will be reviewed according to the above guidelines and may result in the adult being removed from OSG and their membership revoked. Failure to disclose such convictions will result in a temporary suspension from OSG and may result in permanent removal.

The original policy¹ was approved on 2018-06-03. An update² was approved on 2024-07-08. This current policy reflects the original with amendments to reflect the current needs and state of the organization.

This policy was reviewed and revised by members of the OSG-US Board of Directors.

The final version of this policy was approved by the OSG-US Board of Directors on 2025-04-07.

¹  OSG-US Criminal History Check Policy - DEPRECATED 2024-07-08

²  Criminal History Check Policy - DEPRECATED 2025-04-07