



MOTOR VEHICLE RECORD CHECKS BEST PRACTICES

Fire and emergency medical agencies rely on career and volunteer responders to operate fire or EMS vehicles or to use their private vehicles for emergency or routine business. As part of a comprehensive risk management program, emergency agencies must verify that all employees and volunteers who drive on the agency's behalf possess a valid driver's license and an acceptable driving record. A fire or EMS agency may check Motor Vehicle Records (MVRs) on its members under the Federal Driver's Privacy Act. MVRs should be reviewed at the following times:

- Once a year, for all full-time, part-time, per-diem, and volunteer members who drive an agency or personal vehicle as part of their job responsibilities,
- As part of the pre-employment screening process, and
- Before approving volunteer firefighters, EMTs, or OEM "Blue Light" applications or renewals.

In New Jersey, an MVR is verified through the NJ Customer Abstract Information Retrieval (NJ CAIR) Program, offered by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. Members must be made aware that their MVRs will be checked periodically. The Motor Vehicle Commission requires that they sign an acknowledgment that they are aware that the employer obtains driving history abstracts before operating a motor vehicle on employer business and periodically thereafter. The MEL Safety Institute (MSI) offers a Motor Vehicle Record Check Consent Form on MSI [Model Policies](#) as part of its model driving policy. Consult with your agency's attorney to verify that it conforms to the agency's operations and any collective bargaining agreements.

Designate one or two authorized individuals to order the MVR from the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. MVR may not be obtained through the local Police Department. Authorized individuals may be the Clerk, an Administrator, a Human Resource representative, or the Police Chief. Remember, these are confidential reports. The designated individual must understand they may not share the information with unauthorized individuals as required by the Driver Privacy Protection Act.

Fire and EMS agencies should establish evaluation standards for acceptable MVRs in consultation with their agency's attorney. Consider the following criteria:

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| Acceptable | No moving violations and/or preventable accidents over the last 36 months. |
| Probation | Up to 3 moving violations and/or a preventable accident within the last 36 months. |
| Unacceptable | 3 or more moving violations and/or a preventable accident within the last 36 months, or serious violations such as, but not limited to, Driving Under the Influence (DWI or DUI), Reckless Driving, Homicide or Assault through the Use of a Motor Vehicle, or attempting to elude a police officer. |

The policy must be enforced consistently and without discrimination.