

SAFIS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQS)

GENERAL BACKGROUND

PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING FINGERPRINTS

Q: I am a school employee, a childcare provider, or an authorized Massachusetts state agency employee. Where do I go to submit my fingerprints for the state and national criminal history check?

Fingerprint enrollment centers have been established by Identigo® by IDEMIA throughout the Commonwealth for individuals to submit their fingerprints. The process involves scheduling an appointment via the Identigo® registration web site [here](#). Fingerprints are taken by appointment only.

Q: I have been directed by my school or school district to register for an appointment with Identigo. How do I locate my Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Organization Code that will serve as the Provider ID for the Identigo® registration process?

Each public school district and private school has been assigned an Organization Code by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). This code will serve as the Provider Identification Number for SAFIS registration. Please contact your Human Resource Department or School Administrator to obtain your ESE-assigned Organization Code.

Q: I am a Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification Services (SAFIS) Program Point of Contact, how do I locate my Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) organization code that will serve as the Provider ID for the purpose of registration with Identigo® to provide to employees/applicants/volunteers?

To locate your DESE Organization Code, please click [here](#). If you are unable to locate your organization code, please contact Sarah Ainsworth at (781) 338-6606. If an information change is required, please go [here](#) for your specific DESE update.

Q: How do I locate my Massachusetts State agency Organization Code that will serve as the Provider ID for Identigo® registration process?

Each State agency has a specific Program Identification Number that will be provided to you once you have been deemed suitable based on a preliminary background check.

Q: What are the methods of payment?

An applicant can either choose to pay online or pay onsite at the time of appointment. Online payment options include: credit card (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa), or electronic check. Onsite payment options include: business check, personal check, or money order. **On-site payment is not available for out-of-state applicants utilizing the Identogo® Card Scan Processing Program.**

Q: What do I need to bring with me to the Identogo® Enrollment Center?

You must bring your registration confirmation number and an acceptable form of identification to the appointment. Complete information on acceptable forms of identification can be found [here](#).

Q: Can I go to my local Massachusetts police station or Massachusetts State Police barrack to have my fingerprints taken?

No. Fingerprints can only be taken at one of the Identogo® enrollment centers.

Q: Can I use my background check from another state or from another background check conducted in-state (i.e., Firearms License)?

No. Under federal and state law, fingerprint-based criminal history record check results obtained for one purpose or under one authority (e.g., for a Firearms license or for a record check in another state) cannot be used for another purpose, nor can they be disseminated outside the original receiving entity.

Q: If I live outside of Massachusetts can I go to a local/state police department or fingerprint enrollment center to have my fingerprints taken?

You can obtain a set of fingerprints from a local law enforcement agency or an Identogo location that offers "Print-n-GO!" retail services (<https://enroll.identogo.com/workflows/1111G2>) utilizing the Identogo® Card Scan Processing Program by registering online.

STATE AND NATIONAL BACKGROUND CHECK REPORTS

Q: What information is contained in the State Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) Report?

A State CHRI report contains information on arrests for which fingerprint cards have been submitted for the subject to the Massachusetts State Police (MSP) State Identification Section (SIS). Arrests for which fingerprints have not been submitted to the SIS **will not** be listed. The State CHRI report may contain disposition information for one or more charges. **IMPORTANT:** the offenses listed on the State CHRI report are those for which the subject was charged at arrest. These offenses may not be the same as those appearing on a subject's CORI record. In addition, there may be offenses listed in a CORI report which do not appear at all in a State CHRI report.

Q: What information is contained in the National Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) Report?

A National CHRI report contains information on arrests for which fingerprint cards have been submitted for the subject to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Identification Division. The arrest information can be submitted by any law enforcement or criminal justice agency in the United States, as well as by any Federal law enforcement or criminal justice agency. Arrests for which fingerprints have not been submitted to the FBI **will not** be listed. In addition, Wanted Person and Sex Offender notices may also appear on a National CHRI report. **IMPORTANT:** there may be arrest information, including Massachusetts information, on a National CHRI report that does not appear on the State CHRI report. Similarly, there may be information in a State CHRI report that does not appear in the National CHRI report.

Q: I received a State and/or National CHRI report for an individual whose name is different than the name of the person for whom fingerprints were submitted. Why did this happen?

State and National criminal record checks are conducted via fingerprint, not by Name or other personal identifiers. A positive State or National criminal record response is based on a match of the fingerprints submitted to those contained in a criminal record on file at the MSP or the FBI. The Name and other personal information contained within a State or National CHRI response are those submitted by the arresting agency/agencies and may be different than the Name and other personal information provided by the applicant or employee.

Q: Who will receive and review my national criminal record check results?

The recipient of State and National CHRI reports will depend upon the purpose for which the fingerprints were taken. For example, the results of a fingerprint-based criminal record check for a day care provider will be returned directly to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The results of criminal record checks performed for school teachers and other school employees will be returned to the requesting school or school district, but only after the results have been reviewed by the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS).

Q: How will state and national criminal record check results be returned to the requesting entity?

State and National fingerprint-based criminal record check results will be made available to authorized users with direct access to an electronic system. An email notification will be sent to authorized users when fingerprint results have been completed.

Q: How long does it take to receive the results of a State and National fingerprint-based criminal record check?

Results of State and National fingerprint-based criminal record checks are generally available within 72 hours. However, there will be situations in which results will not be available for a longer period of time. For example, there are instances where fingerprints submitted will not be accepted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) due to a quality issue. Some factors which may impact the ability to capture a high quality fingerprint include age, health and occupation. When this occurs, the FBI requires the State to submit a second set of fingerprints. If the first submission is rejected by the FBI, Identigo will contact the applicant to schedule a retake appointment within ten (10) days of the original fingerprint appointment. If the second submission is also rejected by the FBI, the Massachusetts State Police is authorized to request the FBI to conduct a name based search. Per the FBI, a name based search can take up to thirty (30) days to process.

Q: My CHRI contains incomplete or incorrect Massachusetts arrest information. How do I correct or update this information?

Detailed information on the process for correcting Massachusetts arrest information can be found [here](#). You will need to obtain a certified copy of the docket sheet from the court of jurisdiction. The docket sheet and the Massachusetts State Police Record Correction Form will then need to be submitted to the MSP State Identification Section.

Q: My CHRI contains incomplete or incorrect arrest information from an out-of-state law enforcement agency. How do I correct or update this information?

Detailed information on the process for correcting out-of-state arrest information can be found [here](#).

STORAGE, DESTRUCTION and USE OF CHRI

Q: May I store a CHRI result?

Yes. However, CHRI, and any summary of CHRI data, may only be retained and used for the purpose originally requested. CHRI, and any summary of CHRI data, shall not be retained and used for other purposes.

Q: How do I store CHRI?

CHRI, and any summary of CHRI data, may be either stored in a locked file or electronically stored. In accordance with the FBI CJIS Security Policy, paper copies of CHRI must be securely stored when not being used and only accessed by authorized individuals. Electronically stored CHRI must be encrypted and stored in accordance with the FBI CJIS Security Policy.

Q: How should CHRI be destroyed when no longer needed?

CHRI, and any summary of CHRI data, must be destroyed by shredding paper copies and/or by deleting all electronic copies from the electronic storage location, including any backup copies or files.

Q: May a vendor shred our CHRI records?

Yes. However, if you choose to use an outside company, an organization employee must accompany the vendor while he/she shreds the CHRI records.

Q: May I disseminate CHRI outside of my organization?

Generally, CHRI may not be disseminated outside of your organization. There are four exceptions to this rule:

1. You may provide a copy of the CHRI to the individual to whom it pertains.
2. You may disseminate CHRI information to law enforcement agencies, including, but not limited to, the FBI or the DCJIS.
3. You may disseminate the CHRI if the dissemination is otherwise authorized by law. For example, school districts and private schools may disseminate CHRI to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with 42 USC 16962 and Chapter 459 of the Acts of 2012 as amended by Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2013.
4. You may also disseminate CHRI to defend against an action brought as a result of a decision made based on the CHRI.

Q: What documentation is required when a CHRI is disseminated outside of my organization?

Each organization must maintain a secondary dissemination log. This log must be used to record the dissemination of CHRI outside of the organization. The log must record the following information:

1. Subject name;
2. Subject date of birth;
3. Date and time of the dissemination;
4. Name of the individual to whom the information was provided;
5. Name of the agency for which the requestor works;
6. Contact information for the requestor; and
7. The specific reason for the request.

Q: Do I need to record when a CHRI is disseminated within my organization?

You may record dissemination of CHRI within your organization to other authorized persons, but you are not required to do so.

Q: What are the penalties for misuse of CHRI?

Your organization's access to CHRI is subject to cancellation or revocation upon a finding of misuse. In addition, you or your organization may be subject to civil fines of up to \$11,000 per violation as well as to criminal prosecution.

Q: How long will Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) results be available for re-dissemination?

After six months from the time an applicant is fingerprinted, access to the results in the SAFIS-R system expires for registered SAFIS-R user retrieval.

SEALED RECORDS

Q: My CORI is sealed under Massachusetts Laws. Will this information appear on my national fingerprint-based criminal history results?

Yes. The sealing of CORI records only applies to Massachusetts court files and the CORI record. When a record is sealed in Massachusetts, the fingerprint-based arrest information in the State and Federal Bureau of Investigation CHRI responses remains. Generally, this information is disseminated upon request unless there is an exemption that restricts the dissemination of this information to a specific entity (i.e. schools Pre K-12).

Q: I am a school employee, a childcare provider, or an authorized state agency employee and have a Massachusetts sealed record. Will this information be provided to the agency that I submitted fingerprints to?

Depending on different factors, your level of fingerprint-based criminal record check access may vary.

Q: My out-of-state criminal history has either been sealed or expunged. Will this information appear on the FBI CHRI result?

Out of state criminal history data that has been sealed or expunged under the laws of the submitting state will appear in the FBI CHRI result unless it has been removed by the submitting state. The DCJIS will redact this information from a result sent to a school district provided there is information in the FBI CHRI result to indicate that the record has been sealed or expunged under the laws of the submitting state. When the FBI CHRI result does not contain information indicating that the arrest data has been sealed or expunged, the record will be released to school districts. To change, correct, or update your national criminal history record go [here](#).

UNKNOWN OFFENSE DESCRIPTIONS

Q: I received a SAFIS result that shows “Unknown” in the offense description field. What does this mean?

Any offense appearing as “Unknown” means that the offense description is not available for this charge. However, the date of arrest (DOA) listed in the SAFIS record should correspond with an arraignment date on the individual’s CORI. This date is usually within three days of the DOA. **IMPORTANT:** In some cases, the DOA will not correspond with the CORI results. In this instance, you may ask the individual to obtain this information from the arresting department in accordance with MGL c. 71, s. 38

Q: I received a SAFIS result that shows “Unknown” in the offense description field and the date of arrest (DOA) does not correspond with any of the arraignment dates listed on the individual’s CORI. What does this mean?

In some cases, the DOA will not correspond with the CORI results. There are various reasons why this may occur. In some cases, the DCJIS is unable to confirm whether this offense may have been dismissed prior to arraignment in accordance with MGL c. 277, s. 70C. Cases that have been dismissed prior to arraignment are considered civil in nature and not criminal. The DCJIS makes every effort to ensure that this information is redacted from SAFIS results prior to release, but the source documentation for these records is, at times, incomplete and the DCJIS cannot confirm the data.

A second explanation involves the name used on the CORI. The SAFIS result is based on fingerprints and will, therefore, yield a result regardless of the name that was used by the subject. A CORI record, on the other hand, is based on the name provided to the court at the time of arraignment. Therefore, a SAFIS result may not correspond with a CORI arraignment because the CORI arraignment is listed under another name, date of birth, or other piece of identifying information.

Lastly, an individual may have been printed and arrested but failed to appear in court for arraignment. The CORI record is arraignment based. Therefore, if there was no arraignment for the offense, there will be no corresponding CORI information for the arrest listed in the SAFIS record.

Schools are authorized in accordance with MGL c. 71, s. 38R to ask applicants about these offenses.

READING A SAFIS RESULT

Q: What do the codes on the SAFIS result mean?

Please refer to SAFIS Terms and SAFIS Examples for a complete description of the codes contained within a SAFIS response.

Q: A CORI result shows whether an offense is a misdemeanor or felony, and also indicates whether the case ended in a conviction or non-conviction, or whether the case is still pending. Will the SAFIS result include the same classification information?

Generally, no. The State AFIS portion of the SAFIS result will not include the case status or offense description in the same manner as presented on a CORI result. FBI CHRI records are organized by arrest date and contributing arresting agency by state. Therefore, information about the type of offense or whether or not the offense resulted in a conviction, non-conviction, or is pending will also likely not be included. For information regarding out-of-state offenses, please contact the state directly. Out-of-state contact information is available [here](#).

Q: I received a SAFIS result that includes no available arrest information, but the individual's CORI includes criminal charge(s). Why did the CORI information not appear on the SAFIS result?

SAFIS results are based on fingerprint arrest data. An individual that was arraigned in court may not have been arrested and fingerprinted. An example of this would be an individual summonsed into court on a criminal complaint.

Q: I received a SAFIS result that includes Massachusetts arrest information. However, the CORI result for the individual was "no available CORI." Why did the SAFIS result include arrests that do not appear on the CORI report?

SAFIS results are based on fingerprint arrest data. In contrast, CORI is based on name and date of birth as reported to the court at the time of arraignment. The information in the CORI system may not match the information that the applicant provided to you to run his or her CORI. For example, the individual's CORI may be listed under a maiden name and the applicant did not provide you with the maiden name when the CORI check was processed. (Also refer to the unknown offense description questions and responses for additional information).

ACCOMODATIONS

Q: Is the Identogo® by IDEMIA registration website accessible to individuals that use screen reader technology?

Yes. The Identogo® by IDEMIA registration website can be used with screen reading technology applications.

Q: Are the Identogo® by IDEMIA fingerprint enrollment centers accessible to individuals with physical disabilities?

Yes. The Identogo® by IDEMIA fingerprint enrollment centers are accessible.

Q: Do the Identogo® by IDEMIA fingerprint enrollment centers allow service animals?

Yes. Service animals

may accompany an individual to his/her appointment.

Q: How do I request an accommodation for my disability?

For information on disability accommodations, please contact the DCJIS via phone at 617-660-4640 or via TTY at 617-660-4606. If you are scheduling your fingerprinting appointment online, please allow at least three weeks of lead time in order to provide the DCJIS with sufficient time to coordinate your accommodation request.

Q: If I have questions regarding the SAFIS-R system or receiving SAFIS results who do I contact?

Please contact the DCJIS SAFIS Response Unit at (617) 660-4790 or via email at safis@mass.gov for assistance.