

## Importance of Background Verification

Today's society has created an environment that requires businesses to be equipped with numerous tools to protect their employees and investments. One tool, though not emphasized often enough, is to prescreen employment applicants and to conduct background checks. Failing to complete these simple steps could be a result of employers being hard-pressed to find new workers, but the consequences of not taking these precautions can be staggering.

Consider:

- A service company recently paid \$750,000 to a customer who was raped by a service technician. His employment application indicated no criminal convictions and the employer did not perform a complete background check.
- After driving for a telephone company for one week, an employee was in a traffic accident. The jury learned that the company never saw the employee's driver's record which had five tickets within 18 months. They awarded the injured party \$550,000.

Bad hires can be devastating for a firm. Background checking cannot give employers everything they want, but there are sources for information; criminal databases, sex-offender registries, workers compensation histories, etc. While it might be impossible to safeguard against every potential act of dishonesty, companies can minimize the chances for unscrupulous behavior by developing easy to institute background checking procedures.

To help avoid problems like the examples above, MEP Jobs recommends every new hire be screened. According to American DataBank's research statistics from 2002 and 2003:

- 40% of the information on résumés is misrepresented.
- 30% of all business failures are caused by employee theft and dishonesty.
- Workplace theft tops out at more than \$120 billion annually.

Businesses today cannot afford to bypass these precautionary measures. The small cost you may incur to complete a background check on an applicant may save you hundreds, thousands, or even millions of dollars later on. It is important to know whom you are really hiring and to verify the information in that person's employment application. Following the proper procedures with an applicant is critical to making informed decisions and building your firm's reputation. With the necessary tools and measures in place, any business can successfully protect themselves and their employees against a bad hire.