

New Authorization for Criminal Background Check FAQs:

1. Why is the BSA requiring this?

As part of our on-going commitment to safety for our youth, the BSA is enhancing our criminal background check process. Currently, background checks are run when an adult registers and when they change positions (complete a new application). The new authorization form grants permission for the BSA to run additional background checks without requiring an additional application from the adult.

2. Why is the being done now?

Starting in 2020, rechecks will be performed every five years, but it will take several years to recheck all leaders. Unfortunately, technical limitations and changes in the law over the last five years prevent us from using existing authorizations from older applications. As such, new disclosure had to be sent and new signed authorization forms obtained. Rechartering provides the best window to collect and verify they have been received before the council processes the recharter application.

3. What is different about this authorization form?

Past versions of the authorization for a background check granted permission for the BSA to obtain a background check. The new authorization expands this permission to state the volunteer's authorization remains valid throughout their volunteer relationship with the BSA and that the BSA can procure additional reports during their volunteer relationship without obtaining additional authorizations.

4. Is the BSA doing credit checks on volunteers?

No. The BSA will only use these signed authorization forms for approval to obtain a criminal background check. State and federal laws regulating background checks and consumer credit checks require that both items be mentioned on the form since a full background check includes both parts. Again, the BSA is only using this form for authorization to obtain a criminal background check.

5. The authorization form states the BSA can share my background with other entities. Which entities are those?

Background checks are conducted by the National organization of the Boy Scouts of America and shared with local councils for purpose of conducting Scouting business. Local councils are separate organizations from the Boy Scouts of America.

6. Will this form be required annually moving forward?

No. The new form will be included on new membership applications. Once an adult has completed this form, they will not need to complete it again until they change positions (all new applications require completion of all parts including the authorization).

7. How do I submit this form?

Volunteers in local Scouting programs (Packs, Troops, Crews, Ships & Posts) should submit their form to their unit for inclusion in their annual recharter, which are due December 12. District volunteers should submit their form to the District Committee or District professional to include with the District recharter. Council volunteers should submit their form to the chair of the committee they serve on or to their professional staff partner.

8. Can the council accept a faxed copy or scanned copy sent via email of the signed authorization?

Yes, so long as it is legible and is sent by the individual who signed it.

9. When are these forms due?

The new authorization form is required for registration in 2020. All new authorization forms should be received by December 12, 2019.

10. What about volunteers that are not registered with units?

All currently registered adults and employees will need to complete this authorization form. Those who have not had a criminal background check in the last five years will be rechecked.

11. What about those who did not get the forms by e-mail?

Forms will be printed and available at the Scout Achievement Center, Roundtables, and other meetings. Each volunteer will receive both the disclosure form as well as the authorization form. Only the authorization form is required to be turned in with the recharter form for units. District volunteers should submit their form to the District Committee or District Executive to include with the District recharter. Council volunteers should submit their form to the chair of the committee they serve on or to their professional staff partner.

12. What about those with multiple registrations?

To ensure smooth registration for all volunteers, it is strongly recommended that volunteers with multiple registrations provide an authorization form to their unit. In the case that a volunteer is in several units, it may be advisable to give a copy to each unit. This can be a copy of one signed original or separate forms with original signatures. This process will prevent a lag in registration with one program while waiting on another to turn in your authorization form.

13. What happens if a volunteer does not provide an authorization?

Volunteers who do not provide a new authorization will not be able to renew their registration.

14. Why can't the volunteer just reply to the original e-mail and attach their signed authorization form?

The best way for us to ensure compliance is to require that the council registrar verify that a signed authorization form is physically in hand before processing a unit's recharter. This removes much of the potential error and associated penalties that could result from other methods.