



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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TO: MARGARET SCHULTZE, Commissioner
Virginia Department of Social Services

FROM: ELLEN FULMER MALENKE *elm*
Assistant Attorney General

DATE: July 28, 2016

SUBJECT: Exempt Regulation Section - 22VAC40-191 (Amend Background Checks for Child Welfare Agencies)

I am in receipt of the attached regulation. You have asked the Office of the Attorney General to review and determine if the State Board of the Virginia Department of Social Services has the statutory authority to promulgate the proposed regulation and if the proposed regulation comports with applicable state and federal law.

This regulatory action serves to bring the Background Checks for Child Welfare Agencies regulation into compliance with amendments made to §§ 63.2-100 and 63.2-1719 of the Code of Virginia, to comply with House Bill 1570 and Senate Bill 1168 (2015). The legislation lowered the licensure threshold for family day homes, and amended the definition of the term "offense."

It is my opinion that the State Board of DSS has the authority to promulgate this regulation, subject to compliance with the provisions of Article 2 of the Administrative Process Act ("APA") and has not exceeded that authority.

Further, it is my view that this regulation is exempt from the procedures of Article 2 of the APA pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-4006(A)(4)(a). If you have any questions or need additional information about these regulations, please contact me at 786-4856.

cc: Kim F. Piner, Esquire
Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Amend Background Checks for Child Welfare Agencies

22VAC40-191-10. Defining words and phrases.

The following words and terms when used in this regulation shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Agent" means a person who is empowered to act on behalf of the applicant that is an association, partnership, limited liability company, business trust, public agency, or corporation in matters relating to a child welfare agency.

"Applicant" means the person or persons applying for approval as a (i) licensed family day home; (ii) licensed family day system; (iii) licensed child-placing agency; (iv) licensed independent foster home; (v) voluntarily registered family day home; (vi) family day home approved by a licensed family day system; (vii) foster and adoptive home approved by a licensed child-placing agency; (viii) religious exempt child day center or (ix) licensed child day center. In the case of a sole proprietorship, the applicant is the individual owner. In the case of a partnership, the applicants are all the partners. If the applicant is a corporation, association, or business trust, the applicants are officers. If the applicant is a limited liability company, the applicants are the members or managers. If the applicant is a public agency, the applicant is the person responsible for the overall operation of the public agency.

"Approved" means having obtained the status of approval through the process required in Minimum Standards for Licensed Family Day-Care Systems (22VAC40-120) or Standards for Licensed Child-Placing Agencies (22VAC40-131). Approved facilities are family day homes approved by licensed family day systems. Approved foster and adoptive parents include resource, foster, adoptive, treatment foster, and short-term foster parents and families approved by child-placing agencies.

"Background checks" means a sworn statement or affirmation, a criminal history record report, and a child protective services central registry check.

"Barrier crime" means a conviction identified at § 63.2-1719 in the Code of Virginia. The convictions, and Code of Virginia references, are: a felony violation of a protective order as set out in § 16.1-253.2, murder or manslaughter as set out in Article 1 (§ 18.2-30 et seq.), malicious wounding by mob as set out in § 18.2-41, abduction as set out in subsection A or B of § 18.2-47, abduction for immoral purposes as set out in § 18.2-48, assault and bodily woundings as set out in Article 4 (§ 18.2-51 et seq.), robbery as set out in § 18.2-58, carjacking as set out in § 18.2-58.1, extortion by threat as set out in § 18.2-59, felony stalking as set out in § 18.2-60.3, a felony violation of a protective order as set out in § 18.2-60.4, sexual assault as set out in Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, arson as set out in Article 1 (§ 18.2-77 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2, burglary as set out in Article 2 (§ 18.2-89 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2, any felony violation relating to possession or distribution of drugs as set out in Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2, drive-by shooting as set out in § 18.2-286.1, use of a machine gun in a crime of violence as set out in § 18.2-289, aggressive use of a machine gun as set out in § 18.2-290, use of a sawed-off shotgun in a crime of violence as set out in subsection A of § 18.2-300, failure to secure medical attention for an injured child as set out in § 18.2-314, pandering as set out in § 18.2-355, crimes against nature involving children as set out in § 18.2-361, incest as set out in § 18.2-366, taking indecent liberties with children as set out in § 18.2-370 or § 18.2-370.1, abuse and neglect of children as set out in § 18.2-371.1, obscenity offenses as set out in § 18.2-374.1, possession of child pornography as set out in § 18.2-374.1:1, electronic facilitation of pornography as set out in § 18.2-374.3, abuse and neglect of

incapacitated adults as set out in § 18.2-369, employing or permitting a minor to assist in an act constituting an offense under Article 5 (§ 18.2-372 et seq.) of Chapter 8 of Title 18.2 as set out in § 18.2-379, delivery of drugs to prisoners as set out in § 18.2-474.1, escape from jail as set out in § 18.2-477, felonies by prisoners as set out in § 53.1-203; or an equivalent offense in another state.

"Board" means State Board of Social Services.

"Central registry" means the record of founded complaints of child abuse and neglect maintained by the Department of Social Services.

"Central registry finding" means the record of founded complaints of child abuse and neglect for an individual.

"Central Criminal Records Exchange" or "CCRE" means the information system containing conviction data of crimes committed in Virginia. The system is maintained by the Department of State Police.

"Child day program" means a regularly operating service arrangement for children where, during the absence of a parent or guardian, a person or organization has agreed to assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child under the age of 13 for less than a 24-hour period.

"Child-placing agency" means any person or agency licensed to place children in foster homes, adoptive homes or independent living arrangements pursuant to § 63.2-1819 of the Code of Virginia or a local board that places children in foster homes or adoptive homes pursuant to §§ 63.2-900, 63.2-903 and 63.2-1221 of the Code of Virginia. Officers, employees, or agents of the Commonwealth, or any locality acting within the scope of its authority as such, who serve as or maintain a child-placing agency, are not required to be licensed.

"Child welfare agency" means a child day center, child-placing agency, children's residential facility, family day home, family day system, or independent foster home. For purposes of this regulation, the requirements for child welfare agencies also apply to foster or adoptive homes requesting approval or with approval by child-placing agencies and family day homes requesting approval or with approval by family day systems.

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services or his designee.

"Contract agency" means an entity with which the facility or a parent has an agreement to provide services to a child or children while attending the facility.

"Contract employee" means a person with whom the facility or a parent has an agreement to provide services to a child or children while attending the facility.

"Contracting organization" means an agency that has been designated by the Department of Social Services to administer the voluntary registration program for family day homes.

"Criminal history record check" means the process the Department of State Police uses to generate a criminal record report on a person. The check may be a state check generated solely through the Central Criminal Records Exchange or a check forwarded through the Central Criminal Records Exchange to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purpose of obtaining national criminal history record information.

"Criminal history record report" means either the criminal record clearance or the criminal history record issued by the Central Criminal Records Exchange, Department of State Police. The report identifies convictions within the Commonwealth.

"Department" means the Department of Social Services.

"Department representative" means an employee of the department who carries out regulatory duties or an agency acting as an authorized agent of the department carrying out

approval functions. Licensed family day systems have authority to approve family day homes. Licensed child-placing agencies have authority to approve foster and adoptive parents.

"Disqualifying background" means ~~(i) having been the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect even if his record has been purged from the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry system, (ii) a barrier crime conviction, or (iii) any other felony not included in the definition of "barrier crime," unless five years have elapsed since the conviction~~ an offense, as defined in § 63.2-1719 of the Code of Virginia. For the purpose of this regulation, having been the subject of a founded abuse or neglect complaint as described in "offense" includes records that have been purged from the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry system. However, no person is considered to be the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect until a decision upholding the finding has been rendered by the hearing officer after the administrative hearing, provided the person complies with the requirements for requesting an administrative hearing. No person is considered to be the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect if the child abuse or neglect finding is overturned by an administrative hearing or a subsequent court decision.

"Employee" means a person hired by a facility or with whom the facility has an employment agreement. A provider assistant in a family day home is considered an employee in this chapter.

"Facility" means (i) a licensed family day home; (ii) a licensed family day system; (iii) a licensed child-placing agency; (iv) a licensed independent foster home; (v) a voluntarily registered family day home; (vi) a family day home approved by a licensed family day system; (vii) a licensed child day center; (viii) a religious exempt child day center; and (ix) an applicant seeking a waiver in order to establish one of the above listed entities.

"Family day home" means a child day program offered in the residence of the provider or the home of any of the children in care for one through 12 children under the age of 13, exclusive of the provider's own children and any children who reside in the home, when at least one child receives care for compensation. The provider of a licensed or registered family day home must disclose to the parents or guardians of children in their care the percentage of time per week that persons other than the provider will care for the children. Family day homes serving six ~~five~~ through 12 children, exclusive of the provider's own children and any children who reside in the home, must be licensed. ~~However, no~~ No family day home shall care for more than four children under the age of two, including the provider's own children and any children who reside in the home, unless the family day home is licensed or voluntarily registered. However, a family day home where the children in care are all grandchildren of the provider related to the provider by blood or marriage is not required to be licensed.

"Family day system" means any person who approves family day homes as members of its system; who refers children to available family day homes in that system; and who, through contractual arrangement, may provide central administrative functions including, but not limited to, training of operators of member homes; technical assistance and consultation to operators of member homes; inspection, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of member homes; and referral of children to available health and social services.

"Good character and reputation" means that the person (i) maintains business, professional, family, and community relationships that are characterized by honesty, fairness, truthfulness and dependability and (ii) has a history or pattern of behavior that demonstrates that the person is suitable and able to care for, guide, supervise, and protect children.

"Independent foster home" means a private family home in which any child, other than a child by birth or adoption of such person, resides as a member of the household and has been placed there independently of a child-placing agency except (i) a home in which are received only children related by birth or adoption of the person who maintains such home and children of personal friends of such person and (ii) a home that receives a child or children committed

under the provisions of subdivision A 4 of § 16.1-278.2, subdivision 6 of § 16.1-278.4 or subdivision A 13 of § 16.1-278.8 of the Code of Virginia.

"Involved in the day-to-day operations" means:

1. In a supervisory or management position, making daily decisions regarding the operation of the facility;
2. Counted by the facility for purposes of staff-to-children ratios;
3. Providing casework services for a child-placing agency;
4. Employed by a licensed family day system as a home visitor; or
5. Having access to child-related and client-related records or to facility personnel records.

"Licensed" means having met the requirements of and obtained licensure as a licensed family day-care system, licensed independent foster home, licensed private child-placing agency, or licensed family day home.

"Living in" means to reside in a place for an extended or permanent period of time.

"Local agency" means local department of social services.

"May" means has permission.

"Must" means the action is a requirement.

"Must not" means the action is prohibited.

"National criminal background check" means criminal history record information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Offense" means a (i) conviction of a barrier crime, (ii) conviction of any other felony not included in the definition of barrier crime unless five years have elapsed since conviction, or (iii) founded complaint of child abuse or neglect within or outside the Commonwealth, or (iv) a conviction of an offense set forth in § 9.1-902 or a finding that a person is not guilty by reason of insanity in accordance with Chapter 11.1 (§ 19.2-182.2 et seq.) of Title 19.2 of an offense set forth in § 9.1-902 that results in the person's requirement to register with the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry pursuant to § 9.1-901, or any similar registry in any other state. Convictions include prior adult convictions and juvenile convictions or adjudications of delinquency based on a crime that would be a felony if committed by an adult within or outside the Commonwealth.

"Other felony" means conviction for any felony in the last five years that is not a barrier crime felony.

"Parent-volunteer" means someone supervising, without pay, a group of children that includes the parent-volunteer's own child in a program that operates no more than four hours per day, provided that the parent-volunteer works under the direct supervision of a person who has received a clearance pursuant to § 63.2-1720 or § 63.2-1724 of the Code of Virginia.

"Registered" means having obtained the status of registration through the process required in Voluntary Registration of Family Day Homes - Requirements for Providers (22VAC40-180).

"Registered family day home" means any family day home that has met the standards for voluntary registration for such homes pursuant to regulations adopted by the board and that has obtained a certificate of registration from the commissioner.

"Religious exempt center" means an unlicensed child day center operated or conducted under the auspices of a religious institution that has filed with the commissioner a satisfactory annual statement of intent to operate a child day center and other information as specified in § 63.2-1716 of the Code of Virginia and has a letter of exemption from the commissioner.

"Search of central registry" means the process the Virginia Department of Social Services' Child Protective Services Unit uses to generate a central registry report on a person.

~~"Sex offense felony for family day homes" means conviction of a felony in violation of §§ 18.2-48, 18.2-61, 18.2-63, 18.2-64.1, 18.2-67.1, 18.2-67.2, 18.2-67.3, 18.2-67.5, 18.2-355, 18.2-361, 18.2-366, 18.2-369, 18.2-370, 18.2-370.1, 18.2-371.1 or § 18.2-374.1 of the Code of Virginia that prohibits a sex offender or founded child abuser from residing in a family day home, whether or not the home is regulated or subject to regulation. The descriptions of the Code of Virginia sections are abduction; actual or attempted rape; carnal knowledge of a child between 13 and 15 years of age; carnal knowledge of a juvenile under the purview of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, or juvenile committed to the custody of the State Department of Juvenile Justice; actual or attempted forcible sodomy or object sexual penetration; aggravated sexual battery; attempted sexual battery; taking or detaining a person or consenting to the taking of a person for prostitution or unlawful sexual intercourse; crimes against nature; incest; abuse and neglect of incapacitated adults; taking indecent liberties with children; abuse and neglect of children; indecent liberties by a person in a custodial or supervisory relationship; and production, publication, sale, possession with intent to distribute, financing, etc. of sexually explicit items.~~

"Sworn statement or affirmation" means a statement completed by a person attesting to whether he has ever been (i) convicted of or the subject of pending charges of any crime within or outside the Commonwealth or an equivalent offense outside the Commonwealth or (ii) the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect within or outside the Commonwealth. Additionally for family day homes, the provider affirms if he, or any person known to the provider who resides in the home, has a sex offense conviction or is the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect within or outside the Commonwealth. Any person making a false statement regarding any such offense shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor pursuant to §§ 63.2-1720 and 63.2-1721 of the Code of Virginia.

"22VAC" means Title 22 of the Virginia Administrative Code. This is the social services title.

"Visit" means a stay or sojourn as a guest for no longer than 30 calendar days.

"Volunteer" means a person who provides services without pay and who is alone with a child or children in performance of his duties.

22VAC40-191-50. Explaining requirements for satisfactory background checks.

A. The department and registering and approving authorities must require documentation of satisfactory background checks for applicants, agents, employees, volunteers, and others living in family day homes and foster and adoptive homes as specified in 22VAC40-191-40.

1. A satisfactory sworn statement or affirmation is:

a. A fully completed original that states that the person:

~~(1) Does not have a criminal conviction that is a barrier crime or is any felony conviction within the last five years; and~~

~~(2) Is not the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect within or outside the Commonwealth; and does not have an offense; and~~

b. ~~When there~~ There is no other knowledge that the individual has an unsatisfactory background.

Criminal convictions include prior adult convictions and juvenile convictions or adjudications of delinquency based on a crime that would be a felony if committed by an adult within or outside the Commonwealth. Convictions also include convictions in other states that are equivalent to those specified in this section.

2. A satisfactory central registry finding is one in which:

- a. A copy of the department's child protective services check form is returned to the requesting agency or state or local Department of Social Services indicating that, as of the date on the reply, the individual whose name was searched is not identified in the Central Registry of Founded Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations as an involved caregiver with a founded disposition of child abuse/neglect; and
 - b. There is no other knowledge that the individual has a founded disposition in Virginia or elsewhere.
- 3. A satisfactory criminal history record check report is one in which:
 - a. An original hard copy or Internet inquiry reply from the Department of State Police is returned to the agency, individual or authorized agent making the request with:
 - (1) No convictions indicated; or
 - (2) Convictions indicated, but no barrier crimes, offenses, or other felony convictions in the last five years;
 - b. A letter is received from the Office of Background Investigations with a finding of "eligible"; and
 - c. There is no other knowledge that the individual has a ~~barrier crime, or other felony conviction in the past five years,~~ an offense in Virginia or elsewhere.

The facility must have viewed an original criminal history record report maintained by a contract employee or contract agency that is dated less than six months before the independent contract employee or contract employee is hired by a contract agency begins providing services at the facility. (See also 22VAC40-191-90.)

- 4. A child-placing agency may approve as an adoptive or foster parent an applicant convicted of not more than one misdemeanor of assault and battery, as defined in § 18.2-57 of the Code of Virginia, not involving abuse, neglect or moral turpitude, or a minor, provided 10 years have elapsed following the conviction.
- 5. A child-placing agency may approve as a foster parent an applicant convicted of statutory burglary for breaking and entering a dwelling home or other structure with intent to commit larceny who has had his civil rights restored by the Governor, provided 25 years have elapsed following the conviction.
- 6. A child-placing agency must consider the results of background checks on a birth parent prior to placing the child of the birth parent with the birth parent, when the child is in a foster care placement (unless the birth parent has revoked an entrustment agreement pursuant to § 63.2-1223 or 63.2-1817 of the Code of Virginia or a local board or the birth parent revokes a placement agreement with legal custody remaining with the parent, parents, or guardians pursuant to § 63.2-900 of the Code of Virginia).
- 7. No petition for adoption shall be granted if an adoptive parent has been convicted of a sexually violent offense or an offense requiring registration pursuant to § 9.1-902 of the Code of Virginia.
- 8. A child-placing agency may approve as an adoptive or foster parent an applicant convicted of felony possession of drugs, who has had his civil rights restored by the Governor, provided 10 years have elapsed following the conviction.
- 9. A child-placing agency may approve as a kinship foster care parent an applicant convicted of the following offenses, provided that 10 years have elapsed from the date of the conviction and the local board or child-placing agency makes a specific finding that approving the kinship foster care placement would not adversely affect the safety and well-being of the child: (i) a felony conviction for possession of drugs as set out in Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2 of the Code of Virginia, but not including

a felony conviction for possession of drugs with the intent to distribute; (ii) a misdemeanor conviction for arson as set out in Article 1 (§ 18.2-77 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2; or (iii) an equivalent offense in another state.

10. A licensed child day center may hire for compensated employment persons who have been convicted of not more than one misdemeanor offense as defined in § 18.2-57 of the Code of Virginia if 10 years have elapsed following the conviction, unless the person committed such offense while employed in a child day center or the object of the offense was a minor.

B. Background checks results are not open ended.

1. When a minor living in a family day home turns 18, the operator is responsible for making sure that the 18-year-old complies with all background check requirements for adults pursuant to 22VAC40-191-40 D 4.

2. Operators must submit new background checks as part of the renewal application packages of registered family day homes. With the exception of those facilities that are exempt per § 63.2-1716 of the Code of Virginia, background checks are required every three years for all other persons required to have background checks pursuant to 22VAC40-191-40 D.

3. If a person leaves a facility and the criminal history record report or central registry check finding is less than 91 days old, the person must be permitted to take the report or reports with him. The facility must keep a copy of any report a person takes and write on it that it is a copy, and that the original of any criminal history record report was verified.

4. Unless there is a criminal conviction or a founded complaint of child abuse and neglect during that period, a background check remains valid at a facility if no more than 12 consecutive months have passed from when a person:

- a. Began a leave of absence from that facility;
- b. Was terminated from employment at that facility; or
- c. Was transferred to a center owned and operated by the same employer or entity.

5. The facility, department, or registering or approving authority may require a new background check relevant to this suspicion if there is reason to suspect that a person who has submitted acceptable background checks, as required by this regulation, has:

- ~~a. A barrier crime conviction in Virginia or elsewhere;~~
- ~~b. A felony conviction that is not for a barrier crime within the last five years in Virginia or elsewhere; or~~
- ~~c. A founded complaint of child abuse and neglect in Virginia or elsewhere an offense in Virginia or elsewhere.~~

6. When the facility, department, or registering or approving authority chooses to require a new background check:

- a. The facility, department, or registering or approving authority may allow the person to continue the same relationship with the child welfare agency until the child care provider or licensing, registering, or approval authority receives the new Virginia background check information or equivalent documentation from another state; or
- b. If there is reason to suspect that a person has ~~a barrier crime conviction, a felony conviction in the last five years, or has a founded complaint of child abuse and neglect~~ an offense, the facility, department, or registering or approving authority may require that the person not be alone with children, even if the documentation is not Virginia background check information or equivalent information from another state.

C. Waivers of some criminal convictions are possible. Refer to 22VAC40-191-90 through 22VAC40-191-130 for an explanation of the waiver.