

Firefighter Criminal Records Checks

On July 1, 2009, SLED implemented a new policy regarding procedures for name based criminal records checks. This change was necessary due to budget cuts and to enhance the efficiency of the program.

As of the effective implementation date of July 1, 2009, billing is no longer an option and the payment must accompany the request. All fire departments qualify for the \$8.00 charitable organization rate vs. the standard rate of \$25.00. The acceptable method of payment by internet is credit card. The acceptable method of payment via mail is certified check, cashiers check and money order payable to SLED.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal and SLED has met on two occasions to discuss options and determine the best course of action. The desired solution is to provide a mechanism of direct electronic payment at SC LLR expense to avoid out of pocket expenses for fire departments. However, the technical aspects of this solution are not yet determined.

In the interim, payment for SLED Criminal Records Checks by the requesting fire department must accompany the request as stated above. The OSFM will reimburse the fire departments accordingly as required by law. The OSFM spends approximately \$30,000 dollars per year for firefighter criminal records checks. A request for a criminal records check should be used **only for hiring purposes, and not part of a screening process**. New forms for the reimbursement process will be posted on the web page when available. I assure you that SLED, SC LLR and the Division of Fire and Life Safety are working collaborately to avoid any inconvenience and financial hardships to the fire service of South Carolina.

Respectfully,
John G. Reich, State Fire Marshal