



Sterling's Canadian Criminal Record Check (CCRC) Service and the RCMP Certified Criminal Record Product

A Comparison

August 23, 2024

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Introduction

Sterling Backcheck processes approximately 1 million Canadian Criminal Record Checks (CCRCs) each year. About 94% of these checks return clear results, indicating that a criminal record was not found. This implies that around 60,000 CCRCs that we process annually are not clear.

Federal policy allows applicants to declare their adult convictions, and while most do so accurately, roughly 2% of cases require further verification through a fingerprint check and obtaining a Certified Criminal Record to reach a resolution.

This document compares Sterling's CCRC service, consisting of a name-based search, with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's (RCMP's) certified criminal record product, relying on a fingerprint-based search. It outlines the differences and describes how they relate to each other.

The Name-Based Criminal Record Check: A Biographical Information Search

The Canadian Criminal Record Check service involves searching the National Repository of Criminal Records using the Criminal Name Index (CNI), a query function of the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) as conducted by Sterling's Police Partner Agencies. The CNI query efficiently searches a database of biographical information collected by police during each criminal booking. This information may be derived from the identification the individual provides, or from undocumented or falsely documented names and dates of birth they have presented, known as criminal aliases.

Sterling Backcheck's CCRC service is highly reliable due to performing thorough identity verification, including the collection of all name variants. Of the 1 million CCRCs processed annually by Sterling, only 1,600 are inconclusive, resulting in a recommendation for fingerprinting. This represents less than 0.2% of total service volume.

Fingerprint-Based Process Using Biometric Searches

When a name-based Criminal Record Check (CCRC) doesn't provide conclusive results, a fingerprint-based search using biometrics is required to ensure accuracy and definitiveness.

Criminal bookings involve collecting fingerprints and photographs from charged or convicted individuals. Canadian criminal records are created, maintained, and closed based on fingerprint submissions, not names. Therefore, to obtain a certified criminal record, individuals must submit their fingerprints for comparison with those held in the National Repository.

A properly conducted and compliant name-based CCRC rapidly and effectively yields conclusive results in most cases, but not 100% of the time.

Obtaining the RCMP-certified Criminal Record Product

When Sterling Backcheck reports that a CCRC is inconclusive, we recommend to clients that they obtain the RCMP-certified criminal record product for that applicant. This requires the applicant to be fingerprinted, either by a Canadian police service (where supported) or, more typically, by an RCMP-certified Private Fingerprinting Company (PFC).

Through our partnership with Corps of Commissionaires Canada, Sterling Backcheck offers a fingerprinting service to help applicants obtain a certified criminal record. Applicants can visit a Commissionaires location, where their fingerprints are captured via live scan device for submission to the National Repository.

A fingerprint submission to the Real Time Identification system (RTID) generates a unique Document Control Number (DCN). That DCN, along with the individual's name and date of birth, enables tracking for each submission. Applicants provide their consent for the certified criminal record product to be routed to Sterling. Upon receipt from the RCMP, the product is uploaded to Sterling's platform and shared with the client.

The certified product generated by RTID is on paper and includes the following:

- RCMP markings
- Applicant's information
- Miscellaneous Application (MAP) type, which designates the workflow used
- Signature of the Director General – Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services (CCRTIS).

The product is mailed to the authorized recipient, who may be the applicant, or, for several transaction types, can be a third party that the applicant authorizes.

Turnaround times for a Certified Criminal Record Product

“No Record” responses: The RCMP currently maintains a published service level for “no record” responses, which typically takes three business days.

“Record” responses: When a submission to RTID matches a criminal record, the relevant information is compiled manually and included in the certified criminal record check’s result. According to the RCMP’s website, this process can take up to 120 days.

Inquiries about the status of certified criminal record checks may only be made by the authorized recipient after 120 days have elapsed. To make an inquiry, the recipient must provide the Document Control Number along with the applicant’s name and date of birth.

Resolving “Not Clear” Canadian Criminal Record Check Results

In situations where the Canadian Criminal Record Check result is “Not Clear” due to an inaccurate declaration, revisiting and correcting the applicant’s declaration often leads to resolution in subsequent CCRCs. To assist applicants, clients should follow a “checklist” aligning with the instructions provided during the service request.

This checklist should ensure the following disclosures:

- Adult convictions only: Includes convictions for which the applicant was fingerprinted.
- Excludes any convictions related to youth offenses.
- Omit convictions for which a pardon was granted, or a record suspension was ordered.
- No charges for which an absolute or conditional discharge was granted (these are not convictions)

In rare cases where the CCRC result remains inconclusive, clients may mistakenly believe that sending applicants to their local police to obtain a faster over-the-counter product is a solution. However, this approach often exacerbates the issue, since applicants who receive documents from the local police during their CCRC process may rely on these documents for future disclosures. Unfortunately, local police documents are not equivalent to the RCMP’s certified criminal record product.

Why are the local police documents not aligned with my applicant’s criminal record?

1. Local police services should only release conviction information that they contributed to the National Repository – not the convictions an applicant may have received in other jurisdictions.
2. Police jurisdictions, with the exception of RCMP detachments, are not federal entities. This means that the information they disclose may not adhere to the legal requirements followed by the RCMP when generating certified criminal record products.

Clarifying Criminal Convictions and Records for Applicants

Applicants often do not understand the [distinction between a criminal conviction and a criminal record](#). Occasionally, an applicant will declare a conviction, but the search in the CPIC’s Criminal Name Index yields a negative result.

This discrepancy may arise because the applicant was never fingerprinted in connection with the offense.

To address “Clear” CCRC results when an applicant declared a record, consider a straightforward approach: ask the applicant whether or not they were fingerprinted. This simple inquiry can help uncover the underlying cause and ensure an accurate declaration.

Guidelines for Referring Applicants to Local Police Jurisdictions

Referring applicants to their local police jurisdiction should be reserved for cases where a Local Police Information (LPI) search was completed and then resulted in an “Unable to Complete” outcome. The LPI service does not allow applicants to declare their history or obtain confirmation, unlike when a Canadian Criminal Record Check (CCRC) is ordered. This is because LPI contains locally-held and managed information under the authority of police jurisdictions, and is therefore subject to local policies and legislation on disclosure.

Efficiency and Reliability of CCRCs

CCRCs are highly efficient, dependable, and secure, successfully concluding for over 99% of applicants. Sterling’s CCRC service combines robust applicant identity verification with applicant declaration as prescribed in federal policy.

However, in cases where the CCRC result remains inconclusive, resolution hinges on submitting fingerprints to the National Repository to obtain a certified criminal record product. While this process can be frustrating, there is no viable alternative.

Whether clients can direct applicants to police front counters for certified criminal record products depends on the specific police service. Sterling is a partner with Corps of Commissionaires to provide the highest and most reliable off-ramp for applicants when fingerprinting is required.

ABOUT STERLING BACKCHECK

Sterling (NASDAQ: STER) is a leading global provider of background and identity services, helping clients create people-first cultures built on a foundation of trust and safety. With operations around the world, Sterling’s tech-enabled services help organizations across all industries establish great environments for their workers, partners, and customers.

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