



ORCA TALES



February 2013

Tenant Background Investigations

Volume 20 Issue 2



In accordance with the Revised Code of Washington 19.27.530 (Effective January 1, 2013) nearly all existing buildings, classified as Residential Occupancies, are required to have Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarm devices installed. For more detailed information visit the WA State Department of Health website, at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/HomeSafety/Contaminants/CarbonMonoxide.aspx>

Follow these DO's and DON'Ts for optimum safety:

- DON'T** use an oven or stove to heat your home
- DON'T** use a charcoal grill or generator indoors
- DON'T** sleep in any room with an unvented space heater

- DO** have fuel-burning appliances inspected every year
- DO** run kitchen vents or exhaust fans anytime the stove is in use
- DO** seek fresh air if you experience symptoms of CO poisoning
- DO** leave your home immediately and call 911 if a CO alarm sounds
- DO** test alarm function monthly and replace batteries every six months



Winter Alert! - For Home Owners, Property Managers & Tenant Preventing Winter Time Damage to Your Home.

After the beautiful summer and fall that we had this past year here in the Northwest, forecasters are predicting an unusually harsh winter. If their predictions are correct, it will drastically increase the possibilities of frozen water pipes followed by bursting pipes and flooding.

As property owners and managers it's very important to plan ahead and follow the necessary steps to prevent the devastating damage that cold weather can bring.

If you have a tenant in the house, basic education on this subject is imperative so that damage, the resulting financial losses and inconvenience can be drastically reduced. Please follow suggestions below:

Do this BEFORE a major freeze occurs

- Keep indoor temperatures at least 60 degrees. This is also important when you are out of town.
- When out of town make arrangements with your neighbors or family members to check house often, when weather is below 32 degrees. Have them check pipes and furnace or other heat source.
- Encourage tenants to advise you or property manager when absent.
- Water hoses must be disconnected from outside faucets. Those faucets must be covered with foam protectors or wrapped in newspaper and then plastic.
- At least one inside faucet should drip lukewarm water so both hot and cold water pipes are involved.
- Pipes under kitchen and bathrooms sinks are vulnerable, so keep cabinet doors slightly open. Warm air from the inside of the house will enter and prevent pipes from freezing.
- Don't forget to pay your power bill to avoid shut-off.

In the event that pipes freeze

- Thaw an inside faucet with a good hair dryer and plenty hot water.* (**When using electrical appliances near water always use extreme caution*)
- Water should be shut off at the main valve. If the break is a hot water pipe the valve on a top of the water tank should be closed.
- Make sure that the breaker to the hot water tank is turned off.
- In case of heavy snowfall, remove snow from the roof as well as shrubs to avoid breakage.

NOTES: A pipe does not necessarily burst the first time it freezes. It make take several freezes and thaws before damage occurs. **One more important point:** If you have a yard sprinkler system you must have it winterized by a professional company.

By: Camille Besset—RHA Associate Member

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Pre-Employment Screening and Consumer Credit Reports

Volume 20 Issue 2

EMPLOYMENT SCREENING 10 Steps to Effective Screening

Kudos to you for taking strides to hire safe, honest and qualified employees. The following steps will help you implement the most effective and compliant background screening process to easily select the right people for your organization.

Once you've reviewed these steps, know that you can take your precautions one step further with Orca Information, Inc. With more than 20 years of industry leading experience, we make it easy to hire the right people. Find the solutions you've been looking for with our Criminal Court Records and Driving Records.

Develop a Screening Policy

Policies can be geared toward specific job positions or be broken out according to the types of background checks you will complete on all applicants.

Use a Professional Employment Application

Both employment applications and assessments can enhance the efficiency of your screening program. They help you qualify and narrow your pool of applicants; ultimately delivering added cost savings since you will conduct fewer interviews and background checks.

Interview

From those interviewed, chose your top few final candidates.

FCRA Compliance

As part of your background screening process, you will need to ensure compliance with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting ACT (FCRA), which governs the use of consumer reports (i.e. criminal court records) for employment purposes. The Following forms are necessary for abiding by the FCRA:

- Notice and Disclosure Form
- Release Authorization Form
- "Summary of Your Rights under the FCRA"

Background Check Reports

Order the same set of background checks for all applicants applying for the same position. Treat everyone the same.

Compare Results to Standard Criteria

Once you have the background check results in hand, compare them to the same criteria to create consistency.

Make a conditional Job Offer

At this point, you can send your applicant a conditional job offer stating that employment is contingent upon passing a drug test, medical exam or worker's compensation records check.

**Note: Some states require you to make a conditional job offer before completing any type of background check. Review your state's pre-employment state laws to ensure your screening process is compliant.*

Complete a Drug Test, Medical Examination or Worker's Compensation Check

Have the applicant take a drug test. If you use a vendor, provide the name, address and telephone number of the testing site and any further instructions or paperwork.

Have the applicant schedule a medical examination to determine if s/he can meet the physical requirements of the job without causing harm to her/himself.

Perform Adverse Action

Once again, assess whether your finalist is eligible for employment by comparing the results of his/her medical exam and drug test results against your company policy.

Whenever you decide not to hire an applicant based on information provided in his/her background check, the FCRA requires you to complete a process known as Adverse Action. To simplify this process for you, Orca provides helpful information. Federal law requires you to give the applicant a chance to correct or dispute any inaccurate information contained in his/her background check report (s).

Rejection Letters and Offer Letter

Send rejection letters to all the applicants you did not select.
Provide an offer letter to the selected candidate.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have now hired a thoroughly screened employee!

For a more detailed information on 10 Steps to Effective Screening click here.

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"We can tell you more about them than their mother"