

## **NM EMS Bureau – Criminal History Background Screening FAQs**

The following questions and answers will help guide you through the process of submitting your fingerprints electronically in applying for New Mexico Emergency Medical Services. Please read this material carefully in its entirety. If you have any questions you may contact:

### **NM EMS Bureau – Professional Standards Section**

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**Send questions or inquiries about application status to: [chbs.ems@state.nm.us](mailto:chbs.ems@state.nm.us)**

NMEMS Bureau administers the Criminal History Background Screening for EMS Providers (**CHBSEMS**) under the authority of the New Mexico Emergency Medical Services Act, §24-10B-5.2 NMSA, 1978. The NM EMS Bureau licenses all New Mexico Emergency Medical Services providers and evaluates the eligibility of applicants through criminal history background checks and monitors those currently licensed to ensure their continued eligibility.

***Please Note: The Emergency Medical Systems (EMS) Bureau's process for Criminal Background Checks differ slightly from the Department of Health, Division of Health Improvement Background Check process.***

***\*\* Please make sure you follow the NMDOH/EMS Bureau's instructions, if you are applying for initial licensure or renewal of Emergency Medical Services licensure.***

***Q: Is there a background check requirement?***

**A:** Yes. Every applicant for an initial EMS license and EMS license renewal must submit their fingerprints and undergo a criminal history background check.

**Q: Who Must Comply?**

**A:** Any person applying for licensure as an Emergency Medical Services provider must comply with this law. This includes any Emergency Medical Services First Responder, Emergency Medical Technician – Basic, Intermediate, Paramedic, Emergency Medical Dispatcher or Emergency Medical Dispatch Instructor.

**Q: Do I have to get the new criminal history record check performed at each licensure renewal?**

**A:** The background checks will be completed per the set schedule based on the spelling of your last name. This criminal history record check is required regardless of any previous background checks performed.

**Q: When must I complete a fingerprint background check?**

**A:** Background checks will be required on every initial licensure. Further, background checks for renewal of licensure will be completed on every other license renewal period (every 4 years). Due to the volume of background checks to be processed, the EMS Bureau will require fingerprint backgrounds by the following alpha schedule:

**Renewals due 3/31/2016; Last name A-M**

**Renewals due 3/31/2017; Last name A-M**

**Renewals due 3/31/2018; Last name N-Z**

**Renewals due 3/31/2019; Last name N-Z**

The cycle will then roll over using the same calendar schedule for following years.

**Q: I'm applying for a license. What happens if I do not get my criminal history record check performed; will I lose the licensure application fee?**

**A:** Criminal history record checks are required for all new applications and every renewal license. If fingerprints are not submitted to the New Mexico Department of Public Safety through its vendor, 3M Cogent, the application will not be processed. If an application is submitted and the fingerprint submittal is not completed, the incomplete application will be denied. License application fees are not refundable.

**Q: What information do I submit to the NM EMS Bureau for initial licensure or renewal?**

**A:** For application instructions, please refer to the appropriate licensure instructions at: <http://www.nmems.org/Licensing/>

**Q: How do I register to complete my criminal history background screening at 3M Cogent?**

**A:**

1. The applicant must register with 3M Cogent at [www.cogentid.com](http://www.cogentid.com). Click **New Mexico** and click **Register Online** ([https://www.cogentid.com/nm/index\\_NM.htm](https://www.cogentid.com/nm/index_NM.htm)).
2. After registration and payment are complete, the applicant will receive a Registration ID number.
3. Once the Registration ID number is provided to the applicant, the applicant may take it and a valid identification to any 3M Cogent fingerprint site to complete fingerprinting.

**Q: When I go to the fingerprinting site, what am I required to bring with me?**

**A:** After you have registered with Cogent, you may go to the appropriate fingerprinting location. You are required to:

- Present photo ID;
- Provide your Registration ID;
- Pay the \$44.00 Criminal History Check fee, if you did not pay at the time of Cogent registration.

You will be fingerprinted and you will receive a TCN Number and a receipt.

Transaction Control Number (TCN): The TCN Number is proof that your fingerprints were collected and submitted to NMDPS. The TCN Number may be retrieved via your online receipt at [www.cogentid.com](http://www.cogentid.com). Click New Mexico and Click Print a Fingerprint Submission Receipt.

You should submit your application to the NM EMS Bureau WITHIN 30 DAYS of your fingerprint-scan to avoid inconvenience and possible additional expense.

Be sure to include the following items with your licensure application: Registration ID and Transaction Control Number (TCN).

**Q: What is an ORI number?**

**A:** The Originating Agency Identification (ORI) Number identifies the agency requesting the criminal history check and for the purpose the background check is requested. The NMDOH/EMS Bureau's ORI number is: **NM931162Z**. This number is to be entered with other 3M Cogent information, when having your fingerprint scan taken.

**Q: 3M Cogent is requiring a fee of \$65.00 for a NM DOH background check, yet the EMS Bureau website says the fee is \$44.00, why is that?**

**A:** A different Division of the Department of Health (Division of Health Improvement) requires a fee of \$65.00 to complete backgrounds for care providers that work in home health, group homes, developmental disability services, etc. Their greater fee is needed to operate their background check program. The EMS Bureau's background check fee for EMS personnel is \$44.00; all fees for the EMS Bureau background screening are paid directly to 3M Cogent.

**Q: How long does it take for Clearance to be received?**

**A:** A final clearance may be determined in as little as 7 days, or as many as 90 days, depending on criminal charges, or other inter-agency processing.

**Q: Where can I get my fingerprints digitally scanned?**

**A:** There are a number of established electronic fingerprint service sites across the state. Fingerprint sites and their hours are listed at [www.cogentid.com](http://www.cogentid.com) > New Mexico > Fingerprint Location Map.

Please select one of the regions below for specific store information:

[https://www.cogentid.com/nm/Docs/NM\\_FPMap.htm](https://www.cogentid.com/nm/Docs/NM_FPMap.htm)

Fingerprint site hours of operations and procedures may differ from site to site; please review the 3M Cogent website (www.cogentid.com) for a list.

**IMPORTANT TIP:** Applicants submitting electronic fingerprints through the New Mexico Applicant Processing Service (NMAPS) must register prior to being fingerprinted.

**Q: How do I submit payment for my electronic fingerprint submission?**

**A:** Applicants may pay online, or bring a money order or cashier's check made out to 3M Cogent. The fee for this digital fingerprint submission is **\$44.00** and is done separately from your licensure application submission. You may also submit your fingerprints digitally PRIOR to the completion of your application.

Please note that fees for both the digital fingerprint submissions and the licensure application may not be refunded.

**Q: I had my Criminal History Record check done. How do I submit proof?**

**A:** Keep a copy of the Tracking Control Number (TCN) and receipts given by 3M Cogent and the New Mexico Department of Public Safety for your records. Provide that information on the application or renewal form as proof that you satisfied the requirement.

**Q: What if my criminal history screening reveals an arrest?**

**A:** The EMS Licensing Commission will consider each instance where a background check reveals relevant information very carefully. The Commission will take into consideration all aspects of the situation, including the type of offense, when the offense occurred, and any evidence, or lack thereof. It is not the Commission's intention to uncover each and every past indiscretion however minor, which resulted in an arrest or charges with the goal to punish and invoke disciplinary action. The Commission is committed to its statutory mission, which is the protection of the public; and therefore will use every tool available to uncover and investigate the most egregious actions.

**Q: What if I suspect my criminal history screening may reveal an arrest and I can't remember if, or I forgot to report it to the EMS Licensing Commission?**

**A:** The EMS Licensing Commission only intends to consider the actual infraction and will consider all relevant aspects of the arrest. The EMS Bureau and the EMS Licensing Commission expect full and honest disclosure. The initial application for a NM license and every license renewal application thereafter, requires NM Emergency Medical Services personnel to disclose

any conviction they may have had. You are well advised to voluntarily report previously undisclosed violations to the Commission prior to the criminal background check.

**Q: Why can't you use the criminal history screening I completed from my employer, training institutions or other program requiring background checks?**

**A:** All criminal history record checks are considered to be separate to meet specific statutory requirements. There is a specific ORI # set up for the EMS Bureau which must be used for fingerprint submission. For security reasons, requesting agencies are prohibited by law from sharing this information with each other. Even if you had your fingerprints done for any other reason, you will need to have them re-done using the EMS Bureau ORI number.

**Q: Is there any exception if I have already completed a Cogent fingerprint background check for another entity?**

**A:** For individuals who have had an equivalent Department of Public Safety criminal history background check performed for other purposes (concealed carry license, other state licenses, etc.) within 9 months of submission of the licensure / renewal application to the EMS Bureau and can affirm that they have a clean background (no misdemeanors or felonies), the Bureau may waive the background check requirement. *There is no provision for waiving the fingerprint background check for local law enforcement backgrounds, military and other security clearances.*

**Q: How do I get a copy of the criminal history background screening report that the EMS Bureau gets from the Department of Public Safety (DPS)?**

**A:** There's actually no physical or paper report received by the EMS Bureau. Our staff has access to the DPS system to review an electronic version of the existing records. The EMS Bureau does not receive a paper report of criminal history records for licensees or applicants, nor can we provide printouts. This is done for data security and privacy reasons. For information on receiving a copy of federal records, please see this webpage: <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/identity-history-summary-checks> (requires an additional fee).

**Q: If criminal offense misdemeanor or felony convictions are found, when will I be notified?**

**A:** The CHBS results are reviewed by the EMS Bureau's Professional Standards Section within 30 days of fingerprint completion. Each licensee will be notified within 10 days of that review, if an inquiry is opened to gather additional information.

**Q: I had my fingerprints completed and I received a notice from 3M Cogent that they were rejected. What does that mean and will I be able to renew my license?**

**A:** When fingerprints are processed by 3M Cogent, they could be rejected by either DPS or FBI for various reasons. Please follow the 3M Cogent instructions to have the fingerprints re-done.

**Q: Who keeps the fingerprints? Will they be public information?**

**A:** The collection and submission of fingerprints will be handled by a third-party vendor (3M Cogent) under contract with the New Mexico Department of Public Safety, not by EMS Bureau. The EMS Bureau will not receive or keep any fingerprints in our records. Information regarding criminal records may be kept in agency records, as necessary or required.

**Q: What happens if the criminal history record check shows a criminal incident or violation? Will my application or my license renewal be denied?**

**A:** Under current EMS Bureau policy, applicants for licensure with criminal backgrounds are required to submit additional documentation and may be required to make a personal appearance before the EMS Licensing Commission prior to approval depending on the type of incident and the time elapsed since it occurred.

License renewals will be processed after the fingerprints are submitted. Criminal incidents found as part of the criminal history background screening will be considered in accordance with NMAC 7.27.2.16 and be handled by the EMS Bureau's Professional Standards Section and the EMS Licensing Commission, as necessary.

**Q: What if I refuse to submit to a criminal history screening when I renew my license?**

**A:** Because the law requires a criminal history screening, refusing to submit fingerprints with your initial or renewal application will result in an incomplete application and your license will not be issued or renewed. You may voluntarily choose not to renew your license and let your license lapse with no disciplinary action.

There are additional FAQ's regarding the fingerprint process on the Cogent website at:  
[https://www.cogentid.com/nm/index\\_NM.htm](https://www.cogentid.com/nm/index_NM.htm)