

The Importance of Former Last Name Criminal Searches

Employers should be vigilant to learn about any former last names that may or may not be revealed by a subject prior to a background check being conducted.

Individuals change their name over the course of their life and as a result, many people have one or more former last names. IntelliCorp's data shows that those who omit former last names in their search process can miss important records they would have found by searching all names possible. In our research, results indicated that 84% of former last name records were located when the primary name was clear.

Example:

1. A person gets married and changes their name.
2. The person has a criminal record that exists under their maiden name.
3. The criminal record will not show up under the person's married name when performing a background check (unless a former last name search is conducted).

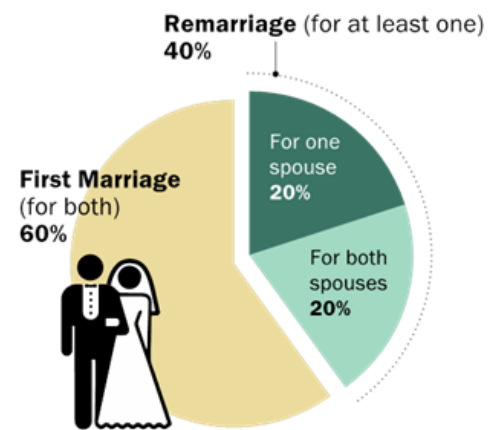
Since it's possible that criminal records could exist under any prior name or combination of names, this is the reasoning behind the importance of conducting a comprehensive criminal background check on a subject's current and former last names.

According to a 2013 Pew Research Center analysis (based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau):

- 4 in 10 new marriages include at least one previously married partner.
- 2 in 10 new marriages were between people who had both previously been married.
- 8% of newly married adults have been married three times or more.
- Nearly 42 million adult Americans had been married more than once in 2013, up from 22 million in 1980 and 14 million in 1960.

Four-in-Ten New Marriages Involve Remarriage

% of new marriages in 2013



Note: "New marriages" are marriages that began in the past 12 months. A first marriage is one in which neither spouse has been previously married. A remarriage includes at least one spouse who has been married before. Based on couples, not individuals, where at least one spouse is age 18 or older.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS)

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This information is not meant to provide legal advice of any kind. Legal advice should be sought from your attorney or corporate counsel.

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Events during a lifetime such as marriage and divorce can result in many subjects with criminal records associated with more than just one former last name. In addition, running a search on all former last names can help reveal a criminal record associated with a subject that made a concerted effort to hide that pertinent piece of information.

Remarriage in the United States is rising

A 2014 article in U.S. News & World Report states that there are two primary reasons for the increase in remarriages:

- Divorce rates in the U.S. have climbed since 1960, meaning there are more adults available to tie the knot again.
- The life expectancy in 2012 was 78.8 years, up from 73.7 in 1980 and 69.7 in 1960, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Employers have an obligation to learn about the candidates they are evaluating for hire. There is also a duty to ensure a potential hire does not have an adverse history that could raise a red flag for potential harm to a business or pose a safety risk to employees and clients.

While adding former last name searches to your screening program is more costly, using all information available to conduct a comprehensive criminal background check will provide you with a more valuable result. It's important to understand that a thorough criminal background check involves searching all former last names. Knowing the right information about an applicant affords organizations the benefit of making the most informed hiring decisions possible.

Statistics of Value:

- 47% of women are currently married
- 15% separated or divorced
Source: Yahoo News online article, July, 2013
- Of all U.S. residents age 15 and older:
 - 13% have been married twice
 - 4% have been married 3 or more timesSource: U.S. Census Bureau, Press Release, March, 2015

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