What are Disclosable Court Outcomes (DCOs)?

Understanding your Check · https://workerchecks.com/tl/mga-doc/what-are-disclosable-court-outcomes-dcos/

When you apply for a national police check, your result will show one of two outcomes:

DCO

Disclosable Court Outcomes — disclosable criminal history is present on your record.

NDCO

No Disclosable Court Outcomes — no disclosable criminal history. A clear result.

What appears in Disclosable Court Outcomes?

Your police check may include:

- **Convictions** — court findings where you were found guilty and convicted
- **Findings of guilt without conviction** — where the court found you guilty but did not record a conviction (e.g. Section 19B Commonwealth, Section 10 NSW)
- **Pending charges** — matters currently before the courts
- **Traffic convictions** — driving offences convicted in court (not infringement notices)
- **Sexual offences** — all sexual offence convictions
- **Serious assault offences** — violent offence convictions
- **Other serious matters** — offences not covered by spent conviction schemes

What is not included in your police check?

The following will not appear on your check:

- **Spent convictions** — convictions that meet spent conviction criteria (see below)
- **Infringement notices** — traffic fines and parking tickets paid without court
- **Overseas convictions** — offences outside Australia
- **Diversion programs** — successfully completed diversion agreements

- **Dismissed or withdrawn charges** — matters that did not proceed to conviction
- **Professional sanctions** — disciplinary actions by professional bodies or unions

Understanding spent convictions

Australia has spent conviction schemes that allow certain convictions to be removed from your record after a waiting period.

Automatic spent convictions

Convictions may become spent automatically if:

- **10 years** have passed since conviction (for adults)
- **5 years** have passed since conviction (for juvenile offenders — 3 years in NSW)
- No further offences were committed during the waiting period
- Waiting-period commencement varies by jurisdiction — in some states it starts from the date of conviction, in others after any imprisonment term is completed

Convictions that can never be spent

Some serious offences remain on your record permanently:

- Sexual offences (in most jurisdictions — Victoria allows court applications to spend serious convictions, including sexual offences)
- Convictions with prison sentences over 30 months (Commonwealth/VIC) or 6 months (NSW) — thresholds vary by state
- Convictions of corporate bodies
- Certain regulatory offences specified by legislation

Court application required

For serious convictions (violence, sexual offences, longer sentences), you may need to apply to a Magistrates' Court for a spent conviction order. This requires:

- meeting the waiting period
- demonstrating rehabilitation
- court approval

Note

Spent conviction laws vary by state and territory. Commonwealth matters have different rules from state matters.

Understanding “without conviction” findings

If your check shows “Without conviction discharged” (e.g. Section 19B Crimes Act 1914), this means:

- the court found you guilty of an offence
- no conviction was recorded
- you were likely placed on a good behaviour bond or recognisance
- **this finding still appears on your police check**, even though it’s not technically a “conviction”

These findings are different from spent convictions and may require legal advice to address.

No Disclosable Court Outcomes (NDCO)

A result showing “No Disclosable Court Outcomes” means:

- you have no convictions or pending charges, or
- any convictions you had are now spent and not disclosable

This is a clear police check result.

Where does this information come from?

A national police check searches:

- all Australian state and territory police databases
- Australian Federal Police records
- court records from Magistrates’, Children’s, County and Supreme Courts
- all jurisdictions where you have lived in Australia

This is a nationwide check — convictions from other states will appear.

What are police checks used for?

Police checks are commonly required for:

- **Employment screening** — financial roles, healthcare, childcare, aged care
- **NDIS worker screening** — disability support workers
- **Working with children** — teachers, coaches, childcare workers
- **Working with vulnerable people** — aged care, disability support
- **Licensing** — firearms, security, real estate, rideshare drivers
- **Visa and citizenship applications**
- **Volunteer positions** — community organisations, sports clubs

Do police checks expire?

A police check is a “point in time” check and shows your criminal history at the time it was issued.

Validity

- police checks don’t technically “expire”
- most organisations accept checks less than **3 months old**
- some industries (NDIS, childcare) may have specific timeframes
- your check remains available in your CheckHub portal for 3 months

When to get a new check

- when applying for a new job or role
- if your previous check is older than 3 months
- if you’ve been convicted of a new offence
- when required by your employer or industry

Who can apply?

Anyone aged 16 or over can apply for a police check. Getting your own check helps you:

- understand what’s on your record
- be prepared for employment applications
- identify any errors that need disputing
- apply for spent convictions if eligible

Processing time

Standard processing

- **80%** of Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Checks are completed within **1–3 minutes**
- delivered to your personal CheckHub portal, with instant email and SMS notification

Delayed checks (manual vetting)

- around **20%** of applications require manual vetting via state police services, coordinated by ACIC
- usually due to name matches or multiple records
- can take longer, sometimes several weeks

Can I choose not to share my result?

If your check contains a Disclosable Court Outcome, Worker Checks will **not** share your result without your explicit consent.

Our consent process:

1. we notify you by email and SMS when your result is ready
2. you can view your result privately in your CheckHub portal
3. you can then choose to:
    - **approve release** to the organisation that requested it
    - **not approve release** and keep the result private
    - **dispute the result** if you believe it contains errors

Important
If you applied through an employer and don’t respond within 7 days, your result will be automatically released to them, as originally agreed during your application.

Need help?
If you have questions about your police check results or need assistance, start a chat with our Australian-based support team, or email ask@workerchecks.com.