

# **Employee Reference Check Job Interview Questions And Answers**



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# Employee Reference Check Interview Questions And Answers Guide.

## Question - 1:

What is a criminal background check?

### Ans:

Criminal history files are searched for possible criminal records for an applicant. These criminal record searches are the core of any employment background check. Criminal record checks are the most common of all searches requested from A Matter of Fact.

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## Question - 2:

What are the most common criminal background checks?

### Ans:

The basis of any SterlingBackcheck screening is county criminal records. We highly recommend combining this service with a SSN trace to get the most comprehensive and complete results via our Complete Criminal Record Locator.

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## Question - 3:

What background checks give the best results?

### Ans:

This depends on a variety of factors, not the least of which includes the goals and budget of the employer (e.g., search speed vs. breadth/depth, budget, etc.). Criminal record searches generally are at the foundation of an employment background check - due in substantial part to protect its workforce and prevent against negligent hire claims. Searching the county courthouses in the areas where the person has lived is an industry best practice. In addition, various database searches can be conducted to identify additional jurisdictions in which it may be advisable to search the applicable courthouse, and Federal level criminal record searches also can be performed. Beyond criminal records searches, additional screening options may include Motor Vehicle Records, Employment and Education Verification and drug testing.

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## Question - 4:

What is an employment background check?

### Ans:

A Background Check verifies a job candidate's resume and job application. Independent sources such as criminal and civil court records, prior employers, educational institutions, and departments of motor vehicles are researched.

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## Question - 5:

Employee Reference Check interview questions part 3:

### Ans:

- \* How would you describe the quality of (candidate's) work?
- \* Can you tell me about (candidate's) flexibility with regard to job tasks and working conditions?
- \* What do you consider (candidate's) key strengths?
- \* What would you consider to be (candidate's) areas for improvement?
- \* What would you say was (candidate's) biggest accomplishment while working at your company?
- \* How would you rate (candidate's) overall job performance?
- \* Was (candidate) ever promoted while working at your company?
- \* (Candidate) is being considered for the following position, do you think he/she is a good fit?
- \* Theoretically, would you re-employ him/her?
- \* Is there anything else you would like to add about (candidate)?

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### Question - 6:

Employee Reference Check interview questions part 2:

#### Ans:

- \* How did (candidate) get along with co-workers and management?
- \* If (candidate) supervised/managed any employees, how would you describe her/his supervisory/management skills?
- \* Describe (candidate's) ability to handle pressure? Can you give me an example?
- \* Ability to organize, prioritize and manage time?
- \* Ability to handle conflict?
- \* Ability to work as a team member?
- \* How would you rate (candidate's) communication skills?
- \* How has (candidate) displayed initiative?
- \* Please describe (candidate's) work ethic.
- \* Please rate (candidate's) problem-solving skills?

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### Question - 7:

Employee Reference Check interview questions part 1:

#### Ans:

- \* What was (candidate's) period of employment?
- \* Please outline (candidate's) position and responsibilities?
- \* Reviewing (candidate's) resume, does this job title and job description match the position that the candidate held?
- \* What was (candidate's) reporting structure?
- \* If (candidate) did not report to you, what was your working relationship?
- \* How long have you worked with /known (candidate)?
- \* What was (candidate's) reason for leaving your company?
- \* Can you tell me (candidate's) salary at the time of leaving?
- \* Please rate (candidate's) reliability?
- \* How would you describe (candidate's) honesty and integrity?

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### Question - 8:

How much time and importance should be placed on gaps in the resume or application?

#### Ans:

Gaps can be good or bad, depending upon what occurred during them. However, identifying that there are gaps is a starting point for further discussion.

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### Question - 9:

How can I verify a candidate's degrees or schools attended?

#### Ans:

The registrar at the school or institution in question can be contacted directly and will give instructions as to the steps required. Most schools require that you fax the signed consent form from your applicant. Schools vary in their response time, and may take anywhere from hours to weeks to respond. Some background screening providers [such as HireRight] offer services to do this work for you.

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### Question - 10:

How can I verify a candidate's past salary, when reference checks usually won't reveal pay levels?

#### Ans:

A growing number of employers speak directly to their applicant and require that past W-2s and/or 1099 Forms be shown before an offer or after a contingent offer is made. Aside from providing the employer with information helpful to making a competitive offer, this enables the employer to validate the accuracy of any salary information previously provided by the applicant.

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### Question - 11:

What is the average cost to conduct background checks?

#### Ans:

Aside from the internal time a company may spend, background checks ordered from providers range from a few dollars to find addresses to hundreds of dollars for more extensive investigation. Our experience is that on average, the typical packages ordered range from about \$30 for basic criminal searches to \$100 for packages that include more extensive criminal searches (e.g., Federal Criminal and Terrorist Watch List) as well as employment verifications and motor vehicle records searches.

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### Question - 12:

Are there any standards for deciding which checks are appropriate for certain positions, especially credit checks?

#### Ans:

Because state laws and industry regulations vary, this is a question best left to your legal counsel. That said, motor vehicle record checks may be appropriate and advisable for applicants whose job description will include operating machinery or motor vehicles. Employment check credit reports (which do not provide credit scores) may be appropriate for certain positions, such as those with senior financial responsibility. Some employers will conduct drug tests, or international criminal



searches if they are operating internationally. Each of these specialty searches raises various legal and regulatory issues, so we advise that you consult experienced employment counsel when building a screening program and related screening packages.

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### **Question - 13:**

What are the most common criminal background checks ordered by the Fortune 500?

#### **Ans:**

The types of criminal records searches performed within a background check can vary significantly from employer to employer, even for Fortune 500 companies. In our experience, we generally have found that Fortune 500 companies choose at minimum a screening package that searches county criminal courthouses, in the jurisdictions where a person has lived for the past 7 years, to find Felony and Misdemeanor records dating back up to 7 years.

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### **Question - 14:**

What does a typical background check reveal?

#### **Ans:**

Ideally, the background check can help reveal whether or not a person told the truth (i) to questions on an employment application, including whether they have a criminal record, and (ii) in what they stated on their resume. Depending on the employer's preferences and objectives, the background check can be as basic as checking county criminal records, or as comprehensive as also checking Federal criminal records and motor vehicle records, verifying past employment and education, conducting reference checks, and drug testing. In our experience, and on average, approximately 10% of the time a Felony or Misdemeanor criminal record will be reported on an applicant's background check report. (In some cases the employer may determine the record(s) warrant denying the applicant employment, while in other cases the employer may, e.g., determine the record(s) not to be sufficiently relevant to the position and thus not in themselves a basis for denying the applicant employment.) With respect to non-criminal searches, the background check may, e.g., reveal discrepancies between actual and reported dates of employment, job titles, and educational degrees.

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### **Question - 15:**

What is adverse selection?

#### **Ans:**

As more companies utilize more thorough background checks to evaluate job applicants, the companies that do not conduct background checks are becoming more likely to attract higher percentages of people with adverse records. "Adverse selection" in the hiring context refers to this phenomenon of companies (which do not background screen) attracting an applicant pool that generally has a higher percentage of criminal records or other potentially problematic issues in their background.

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### **Question - 16:**

How common is background checking for employment purposes?

#### **Ans:**

Surveys suggest that over 80% of companies conduct some type of background search, often including one or more of the following: criminal records checking, reference checking and past employment verification.

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### **Question - 17:**

What if my background is being checked? What are my rights?

#### **Ans:**

The Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions (FACT) Act was enacted in 2003 and amends the Fair Credit Reporting Act. The FACT Act entitles consumers to obtain one free copy of their consumer files from certain consumer reporting agencies during each 12-month period.

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### **Question - 18:**

Why is a Social Security Number (SSN) trace so important?

#### **Ans:**

While a Social Security Number isn't required to do most criminal record checks, Complete Criminal Record Locator uses a SSN verification and a SSN trace to automatically find and search up to 20% more criminal records than any other background screening company. The SSN is also used to verify the applicant's identity or to spot inaccuracies that may indicate fraud or identity theft.

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### **Question - 19:**

How can I really verify an applicant's work and education history?

#### **Ans:**

Including previous job titles and job descriptions, as well as start and end dates. Our highly trained team of verification experts contacts former employers to manually verify information and the accuracy of a candidate's application. In-depth education history verification and professional licensure and certification checks to ensure all details on a candidate's resume are true and complete.

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### **Question - 20:**

How should we determine which background check is right for our company?



**Ans:**

That's a question best left up to your legal counsel. There is much variation between various state and industry laws. However, your industry and job requirements will likely give you a good starting point.

For instance, requiring a motor vehicle records check and/or drug testing is likely appropriate for any employee in charge of operating machinery or driving a company vehicle. If an employee is handling cash or managing cash assets, a credit history check may be appropriate. Volunteer organizations should consider sex offender registry searches. And so on.

No matter what, your first call should be to your legal advisor for input on which types of background checks are appropriate for your organization.

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**Question - 21:**

What kinds of background checks deliver the best results?

**Ans:**

Again, this depends on the breadth and depth of the background check as well as the goals of your organization. For most employers SterlingBackcheck works with, courthouse criminal records search in the counties where an applicant has resided in the past seven to 10 years. This is a standard best practice. Many employers choose to supplement this standard background check with searches of various databases, including the sex offender registry, government sanctions lists, motor vehicle records and others. The more comprehensive a background check is, the more accurate and reliable the results will be.

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**Question - 22:**

Does a job applicant have to consent to a background check?

**Ans:**

Yes. Certain state laws and the Fair Credit Reporting Act, a federal law that regulates who is permitted to access your consumer report information and how it can be used, generally require that you must obtain written or electronic consent from the job applicant prior to a third-party screening company like SterlingBackcheck to conduct any criminal record search, credit history check or reference check.

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**Question - 23:**

Explain if you know a typical background check consist of?

**Ans:**

It varies depending on your industry and the specific requirements of the job (will the candidate be handling cash transactions or managing cash assets?). The typical background check is meant to verify whether or not the applicant is being truthful about not/having a criminal record, their education and employment history. Criminal record searches and reference checks are the most common background checks, though SterlingBackcheck highly recommends these common checks with Social Security Number verifications and traces as well as credit history checks.

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**Question - 24:**

How much does background screening cost?

**Ans:**

It all depends on how much breadth and depth is desired in a background check. SterlingBackcheck delivers the most robust, accurate criminal record background checks available. Depending on the complexity of the screening, the cost for such a check can range from under \$50 to several hundreds of dollars. If you perform a large number of background checks regularly, integrating a SterlingBackcheck screening solution into your applicant tracking system or talent management system is likely the best, most cost-effective option.

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**Question - 25:**

How common are pre-employment background checks?

**Ans:**

The convergence of the post-9/11 security concerns and the online data revolution expanded access to reliable background checks beyond large corporations. Today, nearly 80% of all employers, big and small, perform some form of pre-employment background check on job applicants.

Pre-employment background checks must be conducted carefully and in compliance with privacy laws and regulations. This information, such as bankruptcies, workers' compensation claims and some criminal records data, are a matter of public record, while things like a credit history check require an applicant's written consent, per the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

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**Question - 26:**

Would you rehire this candidate?

**Ans:**

This final question is a defining one. Based upon the response and your evaluation of the other information provided by the reference, this will help you answer your most critical question.

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**Question - 27:**

What was the candidate's reason for leaving the position?

**Ans:**

This question should verify the reasons that the candidate provided for leaving his or her past job during the interview. The reason a candidate leaves a position can also help you in determining whether your position will give the candidate what he or she is looking for in a new position.



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**Question - 28:**

What are the candidate's three strongest qualities?

**Ans:**

You may have received various direct and indirect responses to this question but by asking it at the end of the conversation, you provide the reference with an opportunity to highlight the characteristics that stand out in terms of the candidate's past performance.

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**Question - 29:**

What areas of development were communicated to the candidate and how did he or she respond?

**Ans:**

This question is a good way to get information regarding performance weaknesses that may not have otherwise been volunteered by the reference. Listen carefully as the reference describes how the candidate responded to performance improvement needs and direction.

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**Question - 30:**

Was the candidate on-time and dependable?

**Ans:**

What you are attempting to determine by asking this question is whether this candidate assumed responsibility to show up for work and on time.

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**Question - 31:**

What was the candidate's attendance record?

**Ans:**

What is appropriate attendance at one company may be cause for dismissal at another. Be sensitive to extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to poor work attendance, such as illness or family problems.

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**Question - 32:**

Is this person a team player or does he or she excel by working alone?

**Ans:**

Although teamwork is highly regarded by most companies, a person who is more independently directed may be what your position calls for. Determine, based on your assessment of the job, whether an interactive or independent work style is important for success -- and regardless of the answer, probe to determine whether the candidate demonstrated respect for other employees' contributions and a willingness to consider others' opinions.

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**Question - 33:**

How did the candidate perform with regard to \_\_\_\_\_?

**Ans:**

Whatever dimensions of job performance you feel are important should be inserted here. Questions relating to the quality of work, the ability to handle pressure or willingness to take the initiative or skill-related questions such as organizational or communication skills should be asked at this time.

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**Question - 34:**

How would you describe your management style?

**Ans:**

Again, probe to discover what specific management behaviors the candidate responds well to -- and compare differences in your management style from the one being described that may make a difference in how you interact with this employee.

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**Question - 35:**

Do you think the candidate is qualified to assume these responsibilities? Why or why not?

**Ans:**

The reference will probably offer specific characteristics about the candidate that lead him/her to believe that the candidate could effectively assume the role. If the reference simply responds by affirming that, in his or her opinion, the candidate is qualified, probe by asking, "What specific qualities or personal characteristics cause you to feel this way?"

Prior to asking the next question, tell the reference that you will be responsible for managing and supporting this person in the position. You are, therefore, interested to know what management style the candidate responds best to. Then ask:

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**Question - 36:**

What were the responsibilities of the position the candidate had while working at your company?



**Ans:**

This question will help you to compare and verify the position that the reference is describing, with the description that was given to you by the candidate. Before asking the next question, offer the reference a brief but specific description of the position the candidate is being considered for. Focus on the three top-priority responsibilities to enable the reference to provide specific feedback on each.

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**Question - 37:**

What do employers look for in a background check?

**Ans:**

Most prospective employers are concerned about discrepancies between what the applicant claimed and what is reported by schools, prior employers, etc. Most also watch for negative reports such as a bad driving record or a criminal history. It is wise for employers to attempt to verify anything that is important to job performance, would impact the applicant's job qualifications, or could impact the safety of the public, fellow employees, and customers.

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**Question - 38:**

How to pass a background check?

**Ans:**

Give a frank and honest explanation during the job interview of any past problems. Check your records, check your references, and check your web footprints.

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**Question - 39:**

Who does background checks?

**Ans:**

Professional background screening firms like A Matter of Fact conduct the actual background checks for most private employers. Some large companies have internal corporate security departments. Most government entities use agencies.

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**Question - 40:**

Do errors occur in background checks?

**Ans:**

Yes! Errors do occur in background checks. The information in a background check is created, compiled, filed, stored, retrieved, and reported by individuals who can make mistakes and computer systems that can fail to operate properly.

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**Question - 41:**

What shows up on a background check?

**Ans:**

A Background Check shows the discrepancies between a candidate's claims and information reported by independent sources such as court records, prior employers, schools, and government agencies.

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**Question - 42:**

What is the best background check?

**Ans:**

The best background check is a comprehensive background check. A detailed comprehensive background check allows an employer to verify those areas that are important to job performance, would impact the applicant's job qualifications, or could identify safety issues.

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**Question - 43:**

What does a typical background check consist of?

**Ans:**

The typical Employment Background check consists of a Social Security Number Scan, County Criminal Record Checks, Employment Verifications, and Education Verifications.

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**Question - 44:**

Can I use social media when conducting a background check?

**Ans:**

A Matter of Fact does not conduct social media searches as part of our background checks and we recommend employers use extreme care before they use information from social media sites when making hiring decisions.

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**Question - 45:**





What can be included in a background check?

**Ans:**

The basic searches ordered as part of most background checks are County Criminal Record Checks, Employment Verification's, and Education Verification's. Social Security Number Scans are also essential because they allow researchers to identify jurisdictions the applicant purposefully or inadvertently neglected to disclose.

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**Question - 46:**

Why do background checks?

**Ans:**

Backgrounding employees has become a matter of necessity for many reasons. Many applicants make false claims on their job applications/resumes or have been involved in criminal activity which they do not disclose.

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**Question - 47:**

How do I verify a social security number?

**Ans:**

During a background check, the best research tool to check a Social Security Number is a SSN Scan.

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**Question - 48:**

How do I do a background check?

**Ans:**

Step-by-step process.

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**Question - 49:**

What are the Reasons to check references or background?

**Ans:**

Background checks are often requested by employers on job candidates for employment screening, especially on candidates seeking a position that requires high security or a position of trust, such as in a school, hospital, financial institution, airport, and government. These checks are traditionally administered by a government agency for a nominal fee, but can also be administered by private companies. Background checks can be expensive depending on the information requested. Results of a background check typically include past employment verification, credit history, and criminal history.

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**Question - 50:**

What is Employee Reference Check?

**Ans:**

A background check or background investigation is the process of looking up and compiling criminal records, commercial records and financial records of an individual or an organization.

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