



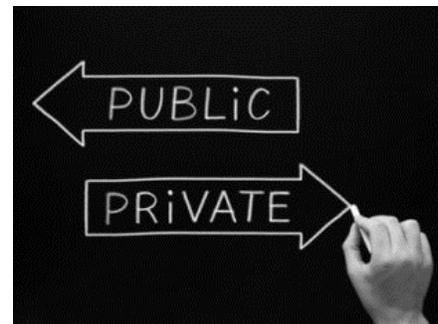
Public vs. Private Information: Criminal Records

What information in my criminal history is public?

Information on criminal convictions is available through both the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS), and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). Records of criminal convictions at the BCA are public for 15 years after the sentence is completed. But records of criminal convictions are permanently available through MNCIS.

Public information includes:

- Charged Offense
- Date of the charged offense
- County where case was charged
- Outcome (also called Disposition)
- Probation agency or place of confinement
- Anything filed to the court that isn't otherwise sealed



Are my arrests public information?

That's a little complicated. Arrest history is often publicly available at local police departments and county sheriffs. But not always. Some departments make the information easy to access and others don't. There aren't really any rules about it, so it depends on where you go.

It is true that arrest history is not public at the BCA, BUT the BCA can give your arrest information to employers or landlords who got your permission to do a background check.

What information is private?

Convictions for which more than 15 years have passed since the sentence was complete are private information at the BCA but are still public on MNCIS indefinitely.

Some documents filed into the public court record are 'sealed' by law and not accessible to the public. These often include documents that show financial or private health records.

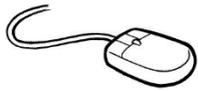
Most juvenile records are considered private information. There is an exception when a youth is 16 or older and is charged with a felony offense. In these cases, there is a public hearing and record, even if the youth was adjudicated delinquent for the felony offense. You can see these records at the courthouse. They are **not** available online.

Who can look at public records?

Anyone can get public information on anyone. You can look at records at the BCA office using the public computer terminal in the lobby.

Public court records are also available online through the MNCIS database.

Access the MNCIS database here: <http://pa.courts.state.mn.us>. Or go to www.mncourts.gov.



- Click on *Access Case Records*
- Click on *Minnesota District (Trial) Court Case Search*
- Read the information and follow the instructions

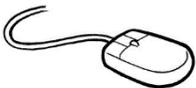
Who can look at private records?

Private information on someone can only be seen in certain situations, by certain people. The only people who can get private information are:

- The person the private information is about. Also called subject of the record.
- Criminal justice agencies for criminal justice purposes.
- Individuals and organizations mandated to conduct background checks.
- Anyone who has a notarized [Informed Consent Form](#) signed by the person the information is about can access private records of adult cases.
- The BCA won't release private juvenile records, even with the consent of the person the information is about.



You can call the BCA at 651-793-2400 and ask them to mail you a copy of the form. Or get it online at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca>.



- Click on *Public Services*
- Click on *Criminal History*
- Click on *Public and Private Data*
- Click on *Informed Consent Form*

See our fact sheet [Criminal Records](#) for more information.

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.

© 2023 Minnesota Legal Services Coalition. This document may be reproduced and used for non-commercial personal and educational purposes only. All other rights reserved. This notice must remain on all copies. Reproduction, distribution, and use for commercial purposes are strictly prohibited.