



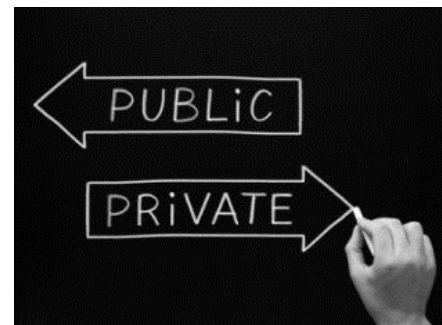
Public vs. Private Information: Criminal Records

What information in my criminal history is public?

Information on criminal convictions is available through both the Minnesota Court Records Online (MCRO), 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 many records of criminal convictions are permanently available through MCRO.

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 MCRO indefinitely.

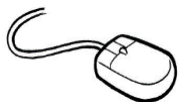
Some documents filed into the public court record are 'sealed' by law and not accessible to the public. These often include documents that show financial or private health records.

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 MCRO database.



- Access the MCRO database at <https://publicaccess.courts.state.mn.us/CaseSearch>
- Or read the information and follow the instructions at <https://publicaccess.courts.state.mn.us/>

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 subject of the record. This is the person that the private information is about. They can get their records with a [Mail-in Personal Request Form](#).
- 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 ask for a criminal history record background check on yourself or another person at the BCA office, by mail or online at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/criminal-justice-information-services/background-checks/public>.

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

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

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