

From: Violeta Navarro

To: TAC's

Date: June 2, 2022

Subject: Washington State Patrol Centralized Firearms Background Check Program - HCA Update

Sending on behalf of the Firearms Background Division

Hello TACs -

Last week, Kateri had the opportunity to present an update on our firearms background check program to the members of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) at their spring conference in Spokane. One of the major points she shared with them was regarding how we are planning to handle requests for mental health records for firearm background checks from the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA).

As you know, the current process requires you to complete an Excel spreadsheet and fax/email it to HCA...then wait up to 72 hours for a response. This is because HCA's current process is to process all those spreadsheets through their system once a day. There is a manual process that takes place with each record for staff to verify the information, which is why it sometimes takes several days to get a response from them.

Our new Secure Automated Firearms E-Check (SAFE) system we are developing to conduct the background checks for firearm transfers will have a 'direct connection' to HCA, to allow us to obtain a much faster response on HCA records. Approximately 90% of HCA responses for firearm background checks are 'no record' so it's unreasonable to have to wait days for a response that is likely to not result in a 922(g)(4) denial. Our direct connection to HCA should allow us to obtain a 'no record' response in 20 minutes or less, and positive responses within the same day.

During our conversations with HCA, they expressed concern about not being able to handle the increased work load of having to provide records for all firearm checks through SAFE, while at the same time still using their legacy process to provide responses for Concealed Pistol Licenses (CPL), Alien Firearm Licenses (AFL), and for the Disposition of Firearms (DOF) from safekeeping or evidence from local law enforcement agencies.

We have proposed to our vendor the following solution, which they believe is very possible to implement: Allow local law enforcement agencies to be able to leverage our direct connection to HCA via the new WSP Web Portal (the new portal where you will get your criminal history responses, provide correction notices, send secure messages to ACCESS, and etc.). This would mean, that instead of filling out the Excel spreadsheet that you send directly to HCA, you would have a form to complete (only the name and date of birth) and submit in the WSP Web Portal, then receive your 'yes/no' response from HCA in a timely fashion. We feel like this will significantly reduce the workload for HCA, while at the same time provide you all with a MUCH better response time.

We are still in the early phases of building our new system, so this is not something that will be available until mid to late next year. But, we wanted to share, as I'm sure many of you will have questions when your agency leaders return from the conference with this news!

If you have any questions, please email us at firearms@wsp.wa.gov

Thank you,

Kevin

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