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SHERIFF OF ERIE COUNTY

REMINDER TO ALL FIRE CHIEFS IN ERIE COUNTY

New York State Executive Law §837 requires that applicants for membership to volunteer fire departments undergo a non-fingerprint criminal history check against the State's criminal history files maintained by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to determine if they stand convicted of the crime of arson or have convictions which require registration as a sex offender in New York State.

The Erie County Sheriff's Office provides this service to fire departments as required by law. The ECSO must conduct the checks; local law enforcement agencies are not authorized.

This law applies to new applicants (prospective volunteer firefighters), current volunteers seeking membership in another fire company (transfers), and reinstatements to membership.

Fire Chiefs should obtain parental permission before submitting background checks for minors.

Fire company officials must complete sections A and B, as well as fields 1 through 10 of the attached *DCJS -VFF Volunteer Firefighter Inquiry Form*. They should use the applicant/transferee driver's license and another form of identification (such as a birth certificate, passport, or social security card) when completing the forms. New York State Executive Law §837 requires your department to submit the forms to the ECSO within ten business days of receipt from the applicant.

It is imperative that forms be typed or completed legibly by hand, or they will be rejected, resulting in delay. The Fire Chief must sign the form and then fax, mail, hand-deliver, or email it to the Erie County Sheriff's Office Fire Investigation Unit.

Erie County Sheriff's Office Fire Investigation Unit
13 Centre Drive
Orchard Park NY 14127

Email: fireinvestigation@erie.gov

Erie County email servers will not accept form-fillable pdf versions of the form as they contain macros. If your agency uses email for submission, you will need to scan the fillable form first and then email the scanned document(s).

The normal turnaround time for completed arson background checks is 5-7 business days.