



## Checking References Guidelines

Remember, if it is unlawful to ask in the interview, it is also unlawful to ask in the reference check.

- Obtain authorization from the applicant to verify information and check references.
- Contact 2-3 references including the current supervisor.
- Be consistent in your approach for each reference check.
- Identify yourself, your position in your organization and explain why you are calling.
- Assure the person that you will make every effort to keep the responses confidential.
- Ask if s/he is free to discuss the situation. If s/he is not available at that time, schedule a time to return the call.
- Describe the position, including the responsibilities and requirements.
- Start with a general question such as "How would this applicant fit our vacancy?"
- Be prepared. Develop questions to explore areas of uncertainty and to confirm positive aspects.
- Let the person answer freely for as long as s/he wishes without interrupting.
- Follow up and probe when you feel the contact is reluctant to discuss certain factors. If you do not get any negative information, you have not received the whole story. No one is that perfect! Explain that you are anxious to get a good fit -- for the sake of both the organization and the applicant.
- **BE ALERT FOR PAUSES AND VOICE INFLECTIONS**, especially after a sudden surprise question such as "Is this one of the best employees you have ever worked with?" or "I sense that you have some reservations that you are not sharing."
- Verify educational degrees and job-related licenses and certificates
- Take notes.
- Remember that the information you receive is limited by the perceptions of the person giving it. If negative information is received, weigh it with data received from other resources before using it to make a decision.
- For some positions designated "sensitive" because of the nature of responsibilities or interactions involved, it may be necessary to perform educational credential verification, a check on criminal convictions, or a credit inquiry. If you feel such a check is appropriate, contact the Human Resource Office in your organization for assistance.