



**CAL- FIRE**

## Department of Forestry and Fire Protection: Employment Criminal Background Checks

**Issue:** Firefighter Employment Background Check

**Action:** Support legislation which would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to conduct a state and federal level criminal offender record information search through the Department of Justice prior to hiring an applicant, as defined, for a position with the department or the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, with exceptions.

**Background:** Existing law requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to be responsible for the fire protection, fire prevention, maintenance, and enhancement of the state's forest, range, and brush land resources, contract fire protection, associated emergency services, and assistance in civil disasters and other non-fire emergencies. Current law only requires background checks to be administered to firefighters who have a dual purpose as EMT's or through other law enforcement programs.

Riverside County seeks to amend this issue as CAL-FIRE provides contract services within Riverside County and thus within numerous cities that already traditionally conduct such background checks as a procedural course of employment. In seeking legislation for this issue we do so not with the idea of stopping any employment within the fire protection services, but rather to ensure that those who are hired are qualified individuals who have the best intent when they are working within the fire protection services.