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## Lab Quiz: Background Checks

We live in an era where an increasing number of employers want to safeguard against hiring someone with a shady or questionable—perhaps unemployable—past. Are you conducting the right (and legal) background checks for your laboratory employees? Jason Morris (*pictured*), president of Background Information Services, Inc., Cleveland ([www.employeescreen.com](http://www.employeescreen.com)), shared some insight with *ADVANCE* on proper procedure for employee background checks.



### True or False?

- T  F 1. Background checks are not cost effective.
- T  F 2. I can obtain a full credit report without telling the potential employee (his social security number is included on the application).
- T  F 3. We are tidying up our personnel files and we want to do full background checks for all of our lab staff. We are not required by law to inform them that we're doing this.

### Answers

1. **False.** Just read this quick example and you'll understand: A large multi-million dollar company hired 2,000 people per month. Because of certain laws, they were required to run FBI and state fingerprint

checks. Turnaround time was 6 to 8 weeks. More than 6 percent of the individuals were hired and dismissed after their criminal record was found. The company was spending, on average, \$5,000 to train each new hire. By prescreening these applicants, the company was able to save more than \$5 million dollars annually.

2. **False.** An applicant must sign a disclosure that a "consumer report" will be run. The notice must be clear and separate from the job application.

3. **False.** Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act a release must be signed. Once signed, most releases will allow for a follow-up background check to be conducted during their employment.

*The material appearing in this section is for educational and discussion purposes only. The information does not constitute legal advice or the rendering of professional services. For a feature story on background checks, visit [www.advanceweb.com/mlp](http://www.advanceweb.com/mlp) starting April 27.*

—Matthew T. Patton