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The blue card system explained

The blue card system explained

Blue Card Services administers the blue card system—Queensland’s Working with Children Check.

All children in Queensland have a right to be safe and protected from harm. The blue card system regulates activities that are essential to children’s lives. These include childcare, education, sport, cultural activities and foster care. We check and monitor people who work in these industries and help organisations to create safe environments for children.

The blue card system is regulated by 2 pieces of legislation: the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*

(<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-060>) (the Act) and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/sl-2020-0131>).

The blue card system contributes to the creation of safe service environments for children in various ways. Just as each piece of a jigsaw comes together to make a complete picture, the same applies to the blue card system. The different parts all play an essential role in keeping children and young people safe and it works best when all parts work together.

The 4 components of the blue card system involve:

1. Who needs a blue card?
2. A National Reference System database and the blue card check.
3. Ongoing daily monitoring and compliance with blue card requirements.
4. Requirements to develop and implement a child and youth risk management strategy.

Please watch our overview of the blue card system video (<https://youtu.be/fNTLbZIUI10>) which helps to explain the blue card system.

Who needs a blue card?

The blue card system does not apply to every environment in which a child may be present.

Under the Act, there are 16 categories of regulated employment and 12 categories of regulated businesses. To require a blue card, a person’s paid work, volunteer or business activities must fall within the scope of one of the categories of regulated employment or business. Organisations

cannot adopt a policy requiring individuals to obtain a blue card if the work they are doing is not regulated by the blue card system.

If a person's activities don't fall within the categories of regulated employment or business, a blue card is not required. Whether a person requires a blue card will depend on several factors including the:

- environment where the work is performed
- type of work
- frequency of work.

Find out if you need a blue card (<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/required>) before you apply (<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/applications/apply>).

National Reference System

Before we start the blue card check, your application is subject to a National Reference System (NRS) database search to determine if another state or territory has made an adverse working with children decision about you. Learn more about the NRS (<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/blue-card-system-changes/resource/2c8ef711-bbab-4521-ba55-8422e419e70b>).

Blue card check

The next component of the blue card system is what we refer to as the blue card check.

The blue card check is more than a police check. It looks for:

- a charge or conviction for any offence in Australia, even if no conviction was recorded (this includes spent convictions, pending and non-conviction charges)
- child protection prohibition orders (both respondents and subjects to the application)
- disqualification orders
- reporting obligations under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004* (<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2004-052>) or *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* (<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2003-040>)
- disciplinary information from certain organisations (this includes information about teachers, childcare licensees and foster carers)
- domestic violence information
- other information about the person that is relevant to deciding whether it would be in the best interests of children to issue a blue card

- police investigative information relating to allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid.

If your application is approved, we will give you a blue card.

If your application is refused, we will not give you a blue card and you will not be able to work or volunteer with children. Before we make this decision, we may ask you to tell us why you consider you should be issued a blue card, by requesting you make a submission

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/applications/eligible/serious-offences#submission>).

Ongoing daily monitoring and compliance

All applicants and blue card holders (including exemption card holders) are monitored daily by the Queensland Police Service. This means we are notified if there is a change in an applicant or card holder's police information. Not all changes in a person's police information concerns us. However, if the information is of concern, we take appropriate action such as withdrawing a person's application, or suspending/cancelling a person's blue or exemption card.

Find out what happens if there is a change to your police information

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/system/rights-and-obligations/individuals#policeinfo>).

We also monitor organisations and business operators to make sure they are complying with their obligations under the blue card system.

Read more about blue card obligations for organisations <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/system/rights-and-obligations/organisations>).

Child and youth risk management strategies

The blue card check is only one tool in the broader system to promote child-safe environments. Safe environments don't just happen—they are created through intention and action, planning, ongoing management, and review. Child-related organisations and people who run child-related businesses need to have a child and youth risk management strategy

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/organisations/risk-management-strategies>).

These strategies represent an organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care. They outline the policies and procedures within an organisation that promote the welfare of children and protect children from harm.

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Blue Card Services

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Compliance and enforcement policy and priorities

View our [Compliance and enforcement policy and priorities](https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/blue-card-system-compliance-information-and-resources/resource/85e16c64-a0b8-4c33-977a-101f4af3a213) (<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/blue-card-system-compliance-information-and-resources/resource/85e16c64-a0b8-4c33-977a-101f4af3a213>), which outlines our key priorities and the processes involved in enforcing the blue card system.

Contact us

Call us on 1800 113 611 (<tel:1800113611>) or (07) 3211 6999 (<tel:0732116999>) or [send us an email](https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/contacting/contact) (<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card/contacting/contact>).

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