

Blue Cards – No Card, No Start

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR CHILD SAFETY STAFF

New Legislation changes will come into effect from the 31st August 2020 for Blue Cards No Card, No Start laws.

These changes have been made as a result of the 2017 Queensland Family and Child Commission's report – *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: Review of the blue card system*. Although the report showed that the Queensland Working with Children Check system is one of the strongest in Australia, there is opportunity to provide a more streamlined and stronger system.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHANGES?

No Card, No Start law identifies that people cannot work with children or young people until their Blue Card application has been approved. These new rules ensure that employees will be bound by the same rules as those for volunteers and business applicants.

Expiring Cards Rule has changed, this means that people can continue to work with children and young people if they lodge their renewal application before their current blue card expires. If their blue card expires before they lodge their renewal application, they will be subject to the No Card, No Start law.

Expiry date for exemption cards – Queensland police and teachers will need to renew their blue cards prior to their expiry if they still require their blue card for work purposes.

Changes to police information – No Card, No Start law incorporates a more streamlined process for applicants to advise Blue Card Services of any changes to their police information.

Stricter rules for restricted persons ensure people who are considered to be a restricted person cannot access an exception to screening by virtue of being a volunteer.

CHANGES FOR CHILD SAFETY STAFF

Do I need to verify an applicant's ID for their blue card application?

No, Child Safety are no longer responsible for verifying identification for a blue card application. The applicant will be required to verify their identity through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). This will need to occur either through Blue Cards online portal or in person at the TMR.

Do I need to inform applicants about the disqualified person rule?

No, Child Safety is no longer required to advise blue card applicants of the disqualified person rule, this will be the responsibility of the applicant when they complete their application.

A carer applicant lives in a remote area and has no access to the internet, how do they complete their application for a blue card?

Blue Card Services will continue to accept paper-based applications for those people who live in rural and remote locations or for those people who do not wish to apply online. If an applicant prefers to apply for their blue card via the paper-based system, they will still be required to follow the new No Card, No Start law and processes.

Applicants will be required to submit a certified copy of either their ID or CRN letter with their application.

Processing and approval times may take longer for paper applications.

Do carer's need to apply for their blue card before we can start a provisional approval (PAC)?

There are no changes to the processes of provisional approvals. Central Screening Unit (CSU) will continue to conduct all required checks for provisional approval applicants and associated adult household members, including personal, child protection and criminal histories.

A carer's blue card is due to expire in a week, is there still time to lodge their renewal application?

Yes, a renewal application can be submitted by a carer 16 weeks *prior* to their current blue card expiring. Their blue card will remain valid even if they have not received their new blue card approval.

Please note the contact details for applicants held by TMR will need to match the information they provide in their initial or renewal application. This will ensure they receive their online account number and all communications thereafter from Blue Card Services. If the applicant's details are not current through TMR they will need to contact TMR to update their personal information before submitting their blue card or exemption card application.

An agency has advised that one of their carer's blue cards has expired and they haven't yet lodged their renewal application online, what happens now?

The carer will be subject to the No Card, No Start law and will not be able to care for children or young people until they have received their new blue card approval. A renewal application cannot be lodged after the current blue card has expired; therefore, a new blue card application will be required, starting with the verification of ID process.

Should the carer/s have children in their care, a new care arrangement will be required for the children until the new blue card approval has been obtained by the carer.

A carer/Adult Household Member (AHM) needs to renew their blue card, do they need to complete the verification and linking process again?

No, a carer or AHM will not need to complete either of these tasks, they simply need to log into their account on the blue card portal and complete the renewal application before their current blue card expires. There is no set timeframe for when they must complete the renewal application as long as it is before their current blue card expires.

How do carer applicants who live interstate apply for a blue card or exemption card?

If a carer is applying for a blue card from outside Queensland, they will need to obtain a CRN from TMR by requesting a Remote Pack. The carer will need to call Blue Card Services directly so they can provide their details for a remote pack to be emailed or posted to them.

Obtaining a CRN from TMR is free.

How will carer applicants be supported to obtain a Blue Card?

A person can complete the verification of ID process at any time, even at the EOI phase. Once they have verified their identity through TMR, they will receive an online account number. The online account number is to be included in the Application for Approval (APA) form. Once CSU receive the signed APA Form and it has been 'properly made' CSU will link the applicant to Child Safety and the carer applicant will receive notification from Blue Card Services to complete their Blue Card application.

Where the APA form is used to support a carer's provisional approval, the CSSC/PSU responsible for the provisional approval application is to provide the online account number to CSU when obtained.

A young person will be turning 18 in a few months and would like to remain living with their carer. When can they apply for their Blue Card?

A young person is able to apply for a blue card from 17 years and 9 months of age. The young person will need to follow the No Card No Start blue card process, beginning with the verification of ID through TMR to obtain their online account number. This number will need to be provided to CSU via the *New Adult Household Member* form so the young person can be linked to Child Safety. Once CSU have linked the young person to Child Safety, they will receive a text or email from Blue Card Services advising that they have been linked and can begin their blue card application process as per the usual process.

The AHM form will remain 'pending' in the CSU IT database until the young person's 18th birthday, at which time CSU are able to officially process the young person as an AHM.

Blue Card Services can begin processing the young person's blue card application once received and if approved, Blue Card Services will issue the young person's blue card on their 18th birthday.

As per the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 148D as long as a young person has submitted a blue card application, they are able to remain in the carer household while they await an outcome from Blue Card Services.

A carer advises that a new AHM is now living or plans to live in the home. Does the AHM need to have a blue card before they can move in?

Yes, unless the proposed AHM already holds a valid blue card or exemption card any adult wanting to join a carer household must hold an approval from Blue Card Services prior to joining that carer household. This is a requirement due to changes in the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 148D as a result of the No Card, No Start law.

The proposed AHM will need to begin the No Card No Start process by verifying their ID through TMR in order to receive their online account number from Blue Card Services. Once the proposed AHM has received this online account number it must be provided to CSU in order for the proposed AHM to be linked to Child Safety, this can be done via the *New Adult Household Member* form. Once advised by Blue Card Services that a link has been completed, the proposed AHM can proceed with their online Blue Card application through the Blue Card Services Portal.

The carer must also complete the '*Change in Carer Circumstances*' form to advise Child Safety of the changes to their carer household.

Once the proposed AHM has received their Blue Card approval from Blue Card Services they will be able to join the carer household as a new AHM.

Where an AHM is being included as part of a Provisional Approval Carer application, the AHM is not required to hold a blue card or exemption card but will need to begin the No Card No Start process and receive a Blue Card Services approval prior to the provisional approval expiring. In this circumstance the CSU Manager is delegated to determine if an AHM is suitable or not suitable based on their personal, child protection and criminal history. An AHM can remain in the carer household if the CSU Manager determines the AHM is suitable.

For further information regarding Blue Cards No Card No Start associated processes please refer to the [Blue Card Services Website](#).

- *Link to the [online applicant portal](#)*
- *Link to the No Card No Start [forms](#)*
- *Blue Card [Resources](#)*