

Blue Cards – No Card, No Start Law

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS

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 FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARERS

Do I need to child safety to sign my blue card application or renewal application?

No. Child Safety are no longer responsible for verifying identification (ID) for a blue card application.

When applying for a blue card, applicants will be required to verify their ID through the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). The verification process can occur either through the Blue Card online application portal or in person at TMR.

Child Safety is also 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.

I cannot access the online portal; can I still submit a paper-based application?

Yes. Blue Card Services will continue to accept paper-based applications. If you need to apply for your blue card via the paper-based system, you are still required to follow the new No Card, No Start law and processes. If you do not have a form of photo ID with TMR, for example a driver's licence, you will need to attend TMR to prove your identity and obtain a photo and Customer Reference Number (CRN).

Either your ID or CRN letter will need to be certified and submitted with your application. Processing and approval times may take longer for paper applications.

I am being considered for provisional approval (PAC) do I need a blue card?

No. Child Safety Central Screening Unit (CSU) will continue to conduct all required checks for provisional approval applicants and any adult household members, including personal, child protection and criminal histories.

However, once provisionally approved, you and all adult household members will need to have obtained a blue card before your provisional approval expires.

What role does Child Safety play in my Blue Card application?

To apply for a Blue Card as a volunteer (free of charge), you will require an online account number which will be supplied to you once you verify your identity through TMR. You must supply this account number to Child Safety as a part of your carer Application for Approval (APA) form to ensure you are linked to Child Safety.

Once linked, Blue Card services will notify you and you will be able to begin your Blue Card application free of charge.

My blue card is due to expire, is there a time limit to lodge a renewal application?

You must complete your renewal application before your current blue card expires. A renewal application can only be submitted by a carer 16 weeks before their current blue card expires. Your current blue card will remain valid once you have submitted your renewal application, meaning you can continue your caring role while your renewal application is being processed.

If you are renewing an existing blue card for the first time under the new No Card No Start laws and you do not have a form of photo ID with TMR, for example a driver's licence, you will need to attend TMR or you will need to contact Blue Card Services directly.

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

My blue card has expired, and I haven't yet lodged a renewal application, what happens now?

If your blue card expires before you lodge a renewal application, you will be subject to the No Card No Start laws.

Any children or young people placed in your care will require a new care arrangement until you receive your new blue card approval.

A renewal application cannot be lodged after your current blue card has expired. A new blue card application will need to be completed starting with the verification of ID process.

I live interstate, how do I apply for or renew my blue card or exemption card?

If you are applying for a blue card from outside Queensland, you need to obtain a CRN from TMR by requesting a Remote Pack from Blue Card Services. Once you provide your details, Blue Card Services can send you a remote pack via email or post.

Obtaining a CRN from TMR is free.

I have a new adult household member (AHM) planning to live in our home. Does the person need to have a blue card before they can move in?

Yes, unless the new AHM already holds a valid blue card or exemption card any adult wanting to join your household will require a Blue Card Services approval before they move in. This is a requirement of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, section 148D, as a result of the No Card No Start law.

Just like carers, an adult household member will need to complete the verification of ID process with TMR in order to receive their online account number which will need to be provided to CSU in order to be linked to Child Safety as a volunteer, this can be via the *New Adult Household Member* form. Once CSU have completed the link to Child Safety the AHM will be advised by Blue Card Services and they can proceed with their Blue Card application through the Blue Card Services portal.

As a carer you will also be required to complete the 'Change in Carer Circumstances' form to advise Child Safety of the changes to your 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.

A young person in my household will be turning 18 in a few months and will remain living in my household. 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 Householder* form so the young person can be linked to Child Safety as a volunteer, so no costs are incurred for their blue card application.

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.

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](#)
- [Link to Blue Card applications information](#)