

The Utah Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI)

Political Subdivisions Interim Committee - Utah Legislative Interim

Wed. June 14, 2005 - 9:00 a.m. Rm W025

Within the Utah Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) has a 24/7 stewardship over Utah's criminal history. As Utah's law keeps this information *protected*, BCI guards this information for a number of uses including, among other things, background checks for potential employees, assuring who can own and carry firearms according to Utah and federal law, verifying who is who through fingerprint validations, finding abducted children, and providing hundreds of "certificates of eligibility" monthly for expungements for the courts to consider.

- I. Front Support Section: Responsible for greeting and taking care of walk-in constituents, our front section is often overburdened. This front section acts as a liaison between the public and BCI. It directs all inquiries and requests for services to the appropriate section of the Bureau. These well informed staffers answer any number of questions from constituents needing criminal histories to expungements to simply correcting documents so they will be processed as intended. Also, it is common for one of our sworn law enforcement officers to make an arrest when an individual enters either forgetting or not knowing of an outstanding warrant.
- II. AFIS Section (Automatic Fingerprinting Information System): As arrests are made from hundreds of different Utah law enforcement agencies, fingerprints identify the individual and each offense. BCI's talented fingerprint technician's log in each fingerprint to assure they match the fingerprint on file on the actual criminal history file. They sort out the truth. Citations, for example, must match the criminal history file.

*One of the most exciting things happening in BCI at the beginning of the 21st Century is the technology of "Livescan."© For generations where we had fingerprints with ink and paper, we now will capture the fingerprint image electronically and zip it around the world via cable and even wireless transportation, cutting the waiting time down to a fraction of what it was. This will prevent victimization in schools, this will solve cases sooner and save lives. BCI is information and information will be the forefront of law enforcement and homeland security.

- III. Field Services: The huge databases that BCI accesses include the Utah Criminal Justice Information System (UCJIS), the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) which contains the nationwide crimes and criminals as well as missing and unidentified persons, Triple I which accesses all other states criminal histories, etc. Field services facilitates, trains, and assures that all authorized Utahns will use these powerful databases correctly, informatively, and monitors use to assure that critical access is not jeopardized.
- IV. TWX: This section never closes. It provides critical live technical support to law enforcement in the field which is accessing the wealth of information available. TWX similarly provides regular quality control through these transactions. Staffed to receive and send out emergency alerts, for example, Amber Alerts are initiated here once local law enforcement is consulted with key personnel in Field Services, and then broadcast widely.
- V. Firearms
 - a. Brady Section: Utah has its own version of the federal Brady law. As gun purchasers deal through licensed federal arms dealers, the seller must first check with BCI, through the Brady Section, to see the criminal history, if any, of the gun purchaser. Typically, the seller will phone BCI while the buyer actually waits in the store due to how quickly the automated system works. Once the buyer's history is checked and the law is satisfied, e.g., purchaser has no felonies, then the transaction may go forward.
 - b. Concealed Carry Weapons Permits (CCW): Utah law allows for permit holders to own and carry concealed handguns under certain circumstances. If the applicant satisfies the legal requirements such as no felony convictions, no domestic violence convictions, etc. as checked by BCI staff using these giant databases, a CCW permit may be issued for up to 5 years when it will need to re-newed.
- VI. Records Section: Records personnel perform the computer input of arrest information from fingerprint and disposition cards to records that already exit on the statewide Criminal History file (UCCH). If there is no existing record on file, they create the new record. Expungement eligibility and processing are included in their responsibilities.