

Accredited Traffic Controller – Suitability checks

Accredited traffic controllers undertake a very important road safety function.

In giving directions to motorists to “STOP” or drive “SLOW”, they manage the efficient traffic flow around road worksites to keep road workers and motorists safe.

Road works can be dangerous places to work, and traffic controllers must be alert at all times, and be physically capable of carrying out their tasks in a safe and efficient manner.

When a traffic controller is standing in charge of a line of traffic, the controller must be able to respond quickly and appropriately when faced with unforeseen circumstances such as when a driver does not see them, or chooses to disobey their directions.

Traffic controllers regularly interact with police, motorists and other road workers. They must be polite and have an even temperament and exercise their authority in a responsible way.

To be suitable for the role, the person must be road safety conscious and be a responsible road user themselves.

Queensland motorists must have confidence in the department’s selection processes therefore a full traffic and criminal offence history check is performed on all people applying to become accredited traffic controllers.

Criminal Offence history

Criminal offences that would generally make an applicant unsuitable for accreditation as a traffic controller include:

- Offences of a violence nature [such as serious assault, rape, attempted homicide]; manslaughter; burglary; and major drug offences
 - where convictions were recorded in a Magistrate’s Court in the past 5 years, or
 - where convictions were recorded in a District Court or higher court in the past 10 years.
- Offences such as fraud, assault, drug possession, theft, break and enter
 - where convictions were recorded in a Magistrate’s Court or higher court within the past three years.

Any offences under *Queensland Criminal Code*; the *Vagrants Gaming and Other Offences Act 1931 (Qld)*; the *Drugs Misuse Act 1986 (Qld)*; the *Weapons Act 1990 (Qld)*; the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (Qld)*; the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995* and regulations, can be considered by the department in making a decision about the person’s suitability.

The department will also consider any similar offences (to the above) committed outside Queensland.

Traffic Offence history

A traffic controller applicant must have held a provisional or open driver licence (Australian or Foreign) for at least one year within the past 5 years.

An adverse traffic history can indicate that the person is not road safety conscious or has a disregard for the road rules. Accordingly, their suitability to control traffic around road works sites in potentially dangerous situations would be questioned.

Therefore, applicants may be rejected for accreditation on the basis of an adverse traffic history.

Persons with the following history would be considered unsuitable for accreditation:

- an established pattern of serious offences such as unlicensed driving, dangerous driving, or driving under the influence,
- multiple licence suspensions over the past few years on account of points accumulation.

Assessment of offence history by the department

In conducting an assessment of a person's offence history record, the following factors are considered:

- The nature of offences committed, the relationship between these offences and the requirements of the accredited role.
- When the offence occurred (more recent offences are generally more relevant than earlier offences).
- The type and severity of the penalty imposed (such as: prison term, community order, fine).

- If the penalty was imposed by a Magistrate's Court, or a higher court such as a District Court or the Supreme Court.
- Any pattern of re-offending / frequency of offences
- Community expectations about people accredited to perform the role, and public safety considerations.
- Whether the person made truthful declarations on the application form in declaring offences.

Timeframes for receiving offence history reports

All traffic controller applicants should be aware that the time period for the department to acquire a criminal history report through the Queensland Police Service can range from several days to six weeks. However, about 85% of criminal history reports take less than 2 weeks to obtain.

Applicants should make an allowance for this before they apply for accreditation as a traffic controller.

