**Drug Screen and Background Investigation Toolkit**

**for Southern Company Contractors**

This toolkit describes the background and drug screening process for contractors/suppliers serving Southern Company and its affiliates (Company). Screening occurs during the following scenarios:

* Initial (pre-site) drug screen/background investigation
* Reasonable cause, post-accident, random, and renewal for backgrounds, drug screens or alcohol screening.

This screening process is in accordance with the Company Standards as outlined in the Southern Company-Contractor contract agreement.

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| *Note: If Contractor’s services are on a Company generating plant site, see Toolkit for*  *Southern Company Generation Contractors. (excluding Supplemental / Leased / Contingent Workers)* |

Contractor/supplier procedure for initial (pre-site) drug screening and background investigation:

1. Contact your Southern Company project manager (contractor’s primary contact at Southern Company) and ask them to complete ***Section one*** of the Screening Provider’s Service Request Form (page 5) in this toolkit.
2. Contractor/supplier should fill out ***Section two*** of the Screening Provider’s Service Request Form (page 5) in this toolkit.
3. Your employee must complete the Consent to Release Information for Drug/Alcohol Screening and/or Background Investigationform (pages 6-7) in this toolkit.
   * **Project Managers/Suppliers: *Do not fill out the consent on behalf of your employee.***
4. Select a screening provider from the screening provider list (page 3) in this toolkit.
5. Call the provider and identify yourself as a Southern Company contractor and open an account. You are responsible for all costs incurred for the drug screen and background investigation.
6. Givethe screening provider the completed Screening Provider’s Service Request form and the completed Consent to Release Information form.
7. The providerwill conduct the required drug and/or background screens based on the pre-set Southern Company screening criteria (page 4) and will make an eligibility decision based on Southern Company disqualification standards (page 4). The provider will identify your employee as “Compliant” or “Non-Compliant” and will communicate that decision via email to you and the Southern Company project manager. **DO NOT give Southern Company personnel your employee’s detailed drug screen results   
   or background report.**

**Contractor’s procedure for background renewals and post-accident, reasonable cause or random drug/alcohol screening:**

You must use a screening provider from the screening provider list (page 3) and should follow the same procedure described above for initial / pre-site screening. Providers have been furnished with requirements for random testing.

**Questions?** Contact Jakia Hardy (404) 506-0427, Sarah Lampkin (404) 506-0925

List of Screening Provider for Drug/Alcohol Screenings & Background Investigations

Contractor/supplier must use the screening provider listed below.

**\*\*Provider can perform drug/alcohol screening and background investigations anywhere in the United States\*\*\***

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| **Screening Provider for Drug/Alcohol Screenings & Background Investigations** |
| **Global HR Research (formerly Employment Screening Services) \*\***  2700 Corporate Drive, Suite 100  Birmingham, AL 35242  Phone: 1-866-859-0143 / Fax: 1-888-454-7679  [**www.ghrr.com**](http://www.ghrr.com) |
|  |
| ***Company reserves the right to add or delete screening providers from this list at any time.***  *Company provides this list of designated providers to assist contractor in selecting a service provider to perform drug /alcohol screening and background investigations for contractor. While we believe that these firms provide services that are consistent with company’s standards, company and its agents do not warrant or guarantee the work, methods, or results of any provider on this list. It is the responsibility of contractor to conduct its own evaluation of these providers to determine the competence and professionalism of the provider that it ultimately chooses.* |

**Drug/Alcohol Screening & Background Investigation Criteria**

Drug Screen Criteria\*:

* Standard DOT look-alike panel urine drug test to be conducted for initial (pre-site) screening and may be appropriate for random, for cause and post-accident situations
* \*Alcohol Screen Criteria\*:
* Alcohol screening should not be conducted for initial (pre-site) screening, but may be appropriate for random, for cause and post-accident situations

*\* Post-accident alcohol and drug screening: Follow OSHA regulations to determine drug and alcohol test necessity in post-accident situations.*

**Background Investigation Screening Criteria:**

Screening providers have been furnished with Company’s specific screening requirements for background investigations, including the following general components:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Criminal history (State and National) | Social Security number verification | | Driver’s License report | Global Watch (terrorist and blocked parties) | | Sex Offender Registry | Federal District criminal history | | Discretionary background search criteria (as requested by Company or contractor):  Education or employment verification, special certification or license vérification (example: CDL, TWIC, PHMSA, FAA, PE, JD, CPA, etc.) | | |

Disqualification Standards:

Company’s screening providers will judge screening results based on the following disqualification standards:

* Positive (Non-Compliant) drug or alcohol screen
* Felony conviction
* Conviction for certain misdemeanors
* DUI/DWI conviction(s) based on position
* Pending charges that, if resulting in a conviction, would disqualify for one of the preceding reasons
* Currently on probation for charges related to one of the preceding reasons
* Incident of workplace violence
* Misrepresentation or falsification of personal data provided for background investigation purposes   
  (e.g., falsification of degree)
* Not authorized to work in the United States
* Currently prohibited from performing work for, or for any contractor on behalf of, Company or any affiliate
* Suspended or revoked driver’s license (for any position that requires driving)
* SSN not found or SSN belongs to someone else
* Inclusion on blocked persons (terrorist) list

***Note: A status of non-compliant is only a denial of access to Southern Company property and is not a recommendation for you to take adverse action against your employee. As the worker’s employer, if you independently take adverse action against your employee based on the employee’s non-compliant status, it is recommended you seek legal counsel regarding compliance under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.***

Screening Provider’s Service Request Form

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section one - Southern Company project manager completes** | | | | | |
| Contract/supplier company name: | | | | | Date: |
| Southern Company affiliate: | | | | Does this worker require NERC/CIP access?    No  Yes  Will this worker drive on public roads on behalf of Southern Company?  No  Yes  **Is this worker assigned to work at Vogtle 3&4?**   Yes  No | |
| Project manager (contractor’s primary contact at Southern Company):  Email:       @southernco.com  Phone: | | | | | |
| Screen(s) required:  *Note: Alcohol screen should only be conducted for random screening, post-accident or for cause situations*.  Reason for screen(s): | | | | Worker classification:  Discretionary screens, certification, verification, special directions or instructions:  “other” explanation | |
| PAC Administrator: *(check one)* | | | | | |
|  | Alabama Power – Joelle Limbaugh  Fax 205-257-2306 [jmlimbau@southernco.com](mailto:jmlimbau@southernco.com) |  | Mississippi Power – Andy Hatcher  Fax 228-865-5226 [lahatche@southernco.com](mailto:lahatche@southernco.com) | | |
|  | Southern Company Generation & Southern Power – Roberta Morgan  Fax 205-257-7605 [rhargrov@southernco.com](mailto:rhargrov@southernco.com) |  | Southern Company Services, Southern Linc, Power Secure & Southern Company Gas – Jakia Hardy  Fax 404-506-5314 [jmhardy@southernco.com](mailto:jmhardy@southernco.com) | | |
|  | Georgia Power – Keith Metcalf  Fax 404-506-6948 [g2scsbarweb@southernco.com](mailto:g2scsbarweb@southernco.com) |  | Southern Nuclear – Larry Sweeney  Fax 205-980-5427 [LLSweene@southernco.com](mailto:bdingram@southernco.com) | | |

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| **Section two – Contractor/supplier completes** | | |
| **Contact information for your company** | | |
| Contact name: (the person at your company who should receive your employee’s screening compliance status) | Title: | Email: |
| Phone: | Your company Tax/Federal ID# (required) | Fax: |
| Provider:  (*see screening provider list on page 3)* | | |

*Contractor provides completed service request form to screening provider*

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| --- |
| **Contract Worker Consent to Release Information for Drug/Alcohol Screening and/or Background Investigation** |

Type or print **legibly and carefully**:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your name (typed or printed) | | | Other last names used |
| Home mailing (Address, City, State, Zip) | | | |
| Email address: | Phone no: | Date of birth: | Driver’s license number / State: |
| If applicable: Degree obtained, date, name of college, City/State: | | | Full Social Security number: |
| All counties, states & countries you have lived in past 7 years: | | | |
| Your current employer:       City and State | | | |
| Previous employers for past 5 years. Company name, dates and ph. no:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1. | 2. | | 3. | 4. | | | | |

**DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT FORM**

I hereby acknowledge and understand that my employer has contracted to perform services for one or more Southern Company subsidiaries, affiliates, business units and/or successors (collectively “the Company”), and that in connection with those services the Company may procure or cause to be procured one or more consumer reports which contain information about me. These consumer reports may contain information about me such as: credit history, Social Security verification, education verification, employment verification, drug and alcohol screenings, criminal records and motor vehicle records, SEC orders and releases and financial sanctions. The Company may obtain these consumer reports directly,   
or it may obtain them through a consumer reporting agency.

I hereby authorize the Company to procure consumer reports including but not limited to the foregoing categories of information from any consumer reporting agency.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Name printed:

**Para informacion en espanol, visite www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore o escribe a la Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G Street N.W., Washington, DC 20006.**

**A** **Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act**

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. There are many types of consumer reporting agencies, including credit bureaus and specialty agencies (such as agencies that sell information about check writing histories, medical records, and rental history records). Here is a summary of your major rights under the FCRA**. For more information, including information about additional rights, go to** **www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore** **or write to: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 1700 G Street N.W., Washington, DC 20552.**

• **You must be told if information in your file has been used against you.** Anyone who uses a credit report or another type of consumer report to deny your application for credit, insurance, or employment - or to take another adverse action against you - must tell you, and must give you the name, address, and phone number of the agency that provided the information.

• **You have the right to know what is in your file.** You may request and obtain all the information about you in the files of a consumer reporting agency (your "file disclosure"). You will be required to provide proper identification, which may include your Social Security number. In many cases, the disclosure will be free. You are entitled to a free file disclosure if:

• a person has taken adverse action against you because of information in your credit report;

• you are the victim of identity theft and place a fraud alert in your file;

• your file contains inaccurate information as a result of fraud;

• you are on public assistance;

• you are unemployed but expect to apply for employment within 60 days.

In addition, all consumers are entitled to one free disclosure every 12 months upon request from each nationwide credit bureau and from nationwide specialty consumer reporting agencies. See [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore) for additional information.

**• You have the right to ask for a credit score.** Credit scores are numerical summaries of your creditworthiness based on information from credit bureaus. You may request a credit score from consumer reporting agencies that create scores or distribute scores used in residential real property loans, but you will have to pay for it. In some mortgage transactions, you will receive credit score information for free from the mortgage lender.

**• You have the right to dispute incomplete or inaccurate information.** If you identify information in your file that is incomplete or inaccurate, and report it to the consumer reporting agency, the agency must investigate unless your dispute is frivolous. See [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore) for an explanation of dispute procedures.

**• Consumer reporting agencies must correct or delete inaccurate, incomplete, or unverifiable information.** Inaccurate, incomplete or unverifiable information must be removed or corrected, usually within 30 days. However, a consumer reporting agency may continue to report information it has verified as accurate.

**• Consumer reporting agencies may not report outdated negative information.** In most cases, a consumer reporting agency may not report negative information that is more than seven years old, or bankruptcies that are more than 10 years old.

**• Access to your file is limited.** A Consumer reporting agency may provide information about you only to people with a valid need – usually to consider an application with a creditor, insurer, employer, landlord, or other business. The FCRA specifies those with a valid need for access.

**• You must give your consent for reports to be provided to employers.** A consumer reporting agency may not give out information about you to an employer, or a potential employer, without your written consent given to the employer. Written consent generally is not required in the trucking industry. For more information, go to [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore).

**• You may limit “prescreened” offers of credit and insurance you get based on information in your credit report.** Unsolicited “prescreened” offers for credit and insurance must include a toll-free phone number you can call if you chose to remove your name and address from the lists these offers are based on. You may opt out with the nationwide credit bureaus at 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688).

CONSUMERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO OBTAIN A SECURITY FREEZE

**You have the right to obtain a security freeze on your credit report, which will prohibit a consumer reporting agency from releasing information in your credit report without your express authorization.** The security freeze is designed to prevent credit, loans and services from being approved in your name without your consent. However, you should be aware that using a security freeze to take control over who gets access to your personal and financial information in your credit report may delay, interfere with, or prohibit the timely approval of any subsequent request or application you make regarding a new loan, credit, mortgage or any account involving the extension of credit.

As an alternative to a security freeze, you have the right to place an initial or extended fraud alert on your credit file at no cost. An initial fraud alert is a 1-year alert that is place on a consumer’s credit file. Upon seeing a fraud alert display on a consumer’s credit file, a business is required to take steps to verify the consumer’s identity before extending new credit. If you are a victim of identity theft, you are entitled to an extended fraud alert, which is a fraud alert lasting 7 years.

A security freeze does not apply to a person or entity, with which you have an existing account that requests information in your credit report for the purposes of reviewing or collecting the account. Reviewing the account includes activities related to account maintenance, monitoring, credit line increases and account upgrades and enhancements.

**• You may seek damages from violators.** If a consumer reporting agency, or in some cases a user of consumer reports or a furnisher of information to a consumer reporting agency violates the FCRA, you may be able to sue in state or federal court.

**• Identity theft victims and active-duty military personnel have additional rights.** For more information, visit [www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore](http://www.consumerfinance.gov/learnmore).

**States may enforce the FCRA, and many states have their own consumer reporting laws. In some cases, you may have more rights under state law. For more information, contact your state or local consumer protection agency or your state Attorney General. For information about your federal rights contact:**

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| **TYPE OF BUSINESS** | **CONTACT** |
| 1.a. Banks, savings associations, and credit unions with  total assets of over $10 billion and their affiliates.  b. Such affiliates that are not banks, savings  associations, or credit unions also should list in  addition to the CFPB: | 1. Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau   1700 G Street NW  Washington, DC 20552   1. Federal Trade Commission: Consumer Response   Center  600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  Washington, DC 20580  (877) 382-4357 |
| 2. To the extent not included in item 1 above:  a. National banks, federal savings associations, and  federal branches and federal agencies of foreign  banks  b. State member banks, branches and agencies of  foreign banks (other than federal branches, federal  agencies, and insured state branches of foreign  banks), commercial lending companies owned or  controlled by foreign banks, and organizations  operating under section 25 or 25A of the Federal  Reserve Act.  c. Nonmember Insured Banks, Insured State Branches  of Foreign Banks, and insured state savings  association  d. Federal Credit Unions | a. Office of the Comptroller of the Currency  Assistance Group –  1301 McKinney Street, Suite 3450  Houston, TX 77010-9050  b. Federal Reserve Consumer Help Center  P.O. Box 1200  Minneapolis, MN 55480  c. FDIC Consumer Response Center  1100 Walnut Street, Box #11  Kansas City, MO 64106  d. National Credit Union Administration  Office of Consumer Protection (OCP)  Division of Consumer Compliance and Outreach  (DCCO)  1775 Duke Street  Alexandria, VA 22314 |
| 3. Air Carriers | Asst. General Counsel for Aviation Enforcement &  Proceedings  Aviation Consumer Protection Division  Department of Transportation  1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  Washington DC 20590 |
| 4. Creditors Subject to Surface Transportation Board | Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board  Department of Transportation  395 E Street, SW  Washington, DC 20423 |
| 5. Creditors Subject to Packer and Stockyards Act | Nearest Packers and Stockyards Administration area  supervisor |
| 6. Small Business Investment Companies | Associate Deputy Administrator for Capital Access  United States Small Business Administration  409 Third Street SW., Suite 8200  Washington, DC 204163 |
| 7. Brokers and Dealers | Securities and Exchange Commission  100 F. St. NE  Washington, DC 20549 |
| 8. Federal Land Banks, Federal Land Bank  Associations, Federal intermediate Credit Banks, and  Production Credit Associations | Farm Credit Administration  1501 Farm Credit Drive  McLean, VA 22102-5090 |
| 9. Retailers, Finance Companies, and All Other  Creditors Not Listed Above | Federal Trade Commission  Consumer Response Center  600 Pennsylvania Ave  Washington, DC 20580  (877) 382-4357 |

Frequently asked questions for contractors

**This document was developed to provide you with answers to the most frequently asked questions we receive during the contractor background and drug screen process. This is considered a living document and we welcome additional suggestions to improve it.**

**Do I have to use the provider listed in this toolkit or can I use another?**

Yes, you must use the provider listed in the toolkit. These providers have had long standing relationships with Southern Company and have been provided the specific directives and criteria required by Southern Company. The provider has been given access to our “contract worker dashboard” to enter your employee’s compliance status once the screens are complete. The employee dashboard is the exclusive tool used by Southern Company to determine your employee’s compliance status and to grant your employee the access they need to perform the contracted work.

**My employee was recently screened under our company’s own background and drug screen program. Can we use those screens for Southern Company compliance?**

No, your employee must undergo the screens using our provider and our process.

**My employee was previously screened under Southern Company. However, they completed the assignment and were assigned elsewhere. Does the employee need to have their screens renewed to return to a SCS assignment?** If your employee is returning to Southern Company, has had a break in Southern Company service exceeding 30 days and their previously completed screens are older than 12 months, both a background and drug screen renewal is required.

**What do I need to focus on when working in the toolkit?**

* Verify you are using the most recent version of the toolkit. Since the toolkit is updated periodically, it’s a good idea to check with your Southern Company project manager to ensure you have the most current version. The providers will not accept outdated versions.
* Section one of the Service Request form must be completed by the Southern Company project manager and Section two should be completed by the person at your company who should receive the compliance results.
* All fields on the forms must be completed.
* No one other than your employee should complete the consent form. Do not complete the consent form on behalf of your employee.

**What should I expect when opening an account with the screening provider?**

Once you have selected a provider from the list in the toolkit, the provider will forward you a service agreement for signature. Payment is required by credit card each time a screening request is made or as required by provider. The provider may ask your employee to complete additional consent forms and will provide your employee with information regarding their right to file a dispute if any information on the background report is incorrect.

**What is the expectation for my employee completing the drug screen process?**

The drug screen must be scheduled through the provider. Do not independently send your employee to the local Lab Corp clinic. The provider will schedule your employee at a drug screen clinic near your employee’s home or work zip code (which may very well be the local Lab Corp clinic). The provider will forward you or your employee important facts about the drug screen, which includes the location of the clinic and hours of operation. **Your employee must complete the drug screen process within 48 hours of contact from the provider. If your employee misses this deadline, additional or alternate screening may be required.**

**What happens after I’ve submitted the required forms (service request form and consent form) to the background/drug screen provider?**

The provider will conduct the background investigation and coordinate the drug screen. Note: The provider does not issue interim updates. The provider will direct requests for additional information to your employee.

**What circumstances can delay completion of a background investigation?**

The goal is to complete the background process within 10 business days. However, there are times this   
is not possible. Several explanations include:

* Jurisdiction requires a clerk assisted search rather than an automated search.
* In some cases, physical documents must be obtained. In some states, this is by written request only.
* A criminal “hit” is identified in the search, however there is no information regarding the final disposition.
* The background investigative report may need to go through a quality review process to determine if additional searches   
  or requests for additional information is needed.

**What happens once the screens are complete?**

Once the screens are complete, the provider will review the results and assign a compliant or non-compliant status in accordance with Southern Company’s criteria. The compliance result will be loaded into the Southern Company contract worker dashboard and compliance notifications will be emailed to the Southern Company project manager and the company contact you listed on the Service Request form.

**The provider quoted me a price at the onset of the screens; however, once the screens were complete, there was an additional cost.** **Why?** The price quoted for the background is based on a criminal history search using the first and last name of your employee and their residential jurisdiction (state/county). During the background process, a scan is conducted using court records, credit reporting agencies and other entities to determine if your employee has used (or been wrongly assigned) alternate last names or nicknames, or if they have lived or worked in jurisdictions other than the address disclosed on your employee’s consent form. Using any additional information developed, the background investigation is conducted, searching criminal history under **all** distinctly different name variations and all additional state/county jurisdictions that were identified. Consequently, court costs increase with each variation searched and the provider must pass that cost on to you.

**Is a contract worker required to retake background and/or drug screens if there is a delay in their official start date?** For new contract workers, drug screens are valid for 90 days, even if there is a delay in the start date (as long as the delay does not exceed 90 days from the date of the initial screening). If the start date exceeds 90 days, a new drug screen is required.

*Please Note*: Background screens are valid for 12 months.

**Are contract workers required to complete a background and/or drug screen if there is a break in service?** Please contact Jakia Hardy (404) 506-0427 or Sarah Lampkin (404) 506-0925 regarding break   
in service questions.