

WAC § 162-12-140 Preemployment Inquiry Guide

(1) The following examples of fair and unfair inquiries apply when made in reference to job application forms, preemployment interviews, or any other type of inquiry made of job applicants. The rules also apply to inquiries made to persons other than an applicant and to inquiries made by third parties such as a credit reporting service. The rules do not apply after a person is employed. See [WAC 162-12-180](#).

(2) Employers and employment agencies shall comply with these rules except where one or more of the following conditions exist:

(a) When there is a "bona fide occupational qualification."

(b) A voluntary affirmative action plan that is in compliance with the requirements of a government agency or other competent authority such as a court, and if made in a manner provided in [WAC 162-12-160](#) and [162-12-170](#).

(c) A requirement of federal law or regulation, as explained in [WAC 162-12-150](#).

If one or more of the above conditions apply, the inquiries of employers and employment agencies must be accompanied by a written explanation of their purpose. See [WAC 162-12-135](#), [162-12-160](#) and [162-12-170](#).

(3) The following examples of fair and unfair preemployment inquiries define what is an unfair practice under [RCW 49.60.180\(4\)](#) and [49.60.200](#). These examples, however, are not all inclusive. All preemployment inquiries that unnecessarily elicit the protected status of a job applicant are prohibited by these statutes irrespective of whether or not the particular inquiry is covered in this regulation.

SUBJECT	FAIR PREEMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES	UNFAIR PREEMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES
a. Age	Inquiries as to birth date and proof of true age are permitted by RCW 49.44.090.	Any inquiry not in compliance with RCW 49.44.090 that implies a preference for persons under 40 years of age.
<i>(For age discrimination, RCW 49.44.090 must be read in conjunction with RCW 49.60.180 and 49.60.200. RCW 49.44.090 limits age discrimination coverage to persons 40 years of age and older, and makes other limitations and exceptions to the age discrimination law.)</i>		
b. Arrests (see also Convictions)	Because statistical studies regarding arrests have shown a disparate impact on some racial and ethnic minorities, and an arrest by itself is not a reliable indication of criminal behavior, inquiries concerning arrests must include whether charges are still pending, have been dismissed, or led to conviction of a crime involving behavior that would adversely affect job performance, and the arrest occurred within the last ten years. Exempt from this rule are law enforcement agencies and state agencies, school districts, businesses and other organizations that have a direct responsibility for the supervision, care,	Any inquiry that does not meet the requirements for fair preemployment inquiries.

or treatment of children, mentally ill persons, developmentally disabled persons, or other vulnerable adults. See [RCW 43.20A.710](#); 43.43.830 through 43.43.842; and [RCW 72.23.035](#).

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| c. Citizenship | Whether applicant is prevented from lawfully becoming employed in this country because of visa or immigration status. Whether applicant can provide proof of a legal right to work in the United States after hire. | Whether applicant is citizen. Requirement before job offer that applicant present birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal divulge applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, or birth place. |
| d. Convictions (see also Arrests) | Statistical studies on convictions and imprisonment have shown a disparate impact on some racial and ethnic minority groups. Inquiries concerning convictions (or imprisonment) will be considered to be justified by business necessity if the crimes inquired about relate reasonably to the job duties, and if such convictions (or release from prison) occurred within the last ten years. Law enforcement agencies, state agencies, school districts, businesses and other organizations that have a direct responsibility for the supervision, care, or treatment of children, mentally ill persons, developmentally disabled persons, or other vulnerable adults are exempt from this rule. See RCW 43.20A.710 ; 43.43.830 through 43.43.842; and RCW 72.23.035 . | Inquiries concerning convictions and imprisonment which either do not relate reasonably to job duties or did not occur within the last ten years will not be considered justified by business necessity. |
| e. Family | Whether applicant can meet specified work schedules or has activities, commitments or responsibilities that may prevent him or her from meeting work attendance requirements. | Specific inquiries concerning spouse, spouse's employment or salary, children, child care arrangements, or dependents. |
| f. Disability | Whether applicant is able to perform the essential functions of the job for which the applicant is applying, with or without reasonable accommodation. Inquiries as to how the applicant could demonstrate or describe the performance of these specific job functions with or without reasonable accommodation. Note: Employers are encouraged to include a statement on the application form apprising applicants that if they require accommodation to complete the application, testing or interview process, to please contact the employment office, personnel or human resources department or other office as may be able to assist them. | Inquiries about the nature, severity or extent of a disability or whether the applicant requires reasonable accommodation prior to a conditional job offer. Whether applicant has applied for or received worker's compensation. Also any inquiry that is not job related or consistent with business necessity. |
| g. Height and Weight | Being of a certain height or weight will not be considered to be a job requirement unless the employer can show that all or substantially all employees who fail to meet the requirement would be unable to perform the job in question with reasonable safety and efficiency. | Any inquiry which is not based on actual job requirements and not consistent with business necessity. |

h. Marital Status (see also Name and Family)	None.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. Whether the applicant is married, single, divorced, separated, engaged, widowed, etc.
i. Military	Inquiries concerning education, training, or work experience in the armed forces of the United States.	Type or condition of military discharge. Applicant's experience in military other than U.S. armed forces. Request for discharge papers.
j. Name	Whether applicant has worked for this company or another employer under a different name and, if so, what name. Name under which applicant is known to references if different from present name.	Inquiry into original name where it has been changed by court order or marriage. Inquiries about a name that would divulge marital status, lineage, ancestry, national origin or descent.
k. National Origin	Inquiries into applicant's ability to read, write and speak foreign languages, when such inquiries are based on job requirements.	Inquiries into applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, birthplace, or mother tongue. National origin of applicant's parents or spouse.
l. Organizations	Inquiry into organization memberships, excluding any organization the name or character of which indicates the race, color, creed, sex, marital status, religion, or national origin or ancestry of its members.	Requirement that applicant list all organizations, clubs, societies, and lodges to which he or she belongs.
m. Photographs	May be requested <i>after</i> hiring for identification purposes.	Request that applicant submit a photograph, mandatorily or optionally, at any time before hiring.
n. Pregnancy (see also Disability)	Inquiries as to a duration of stay on job or anticipated absences which are made to males and females alike.	All questions as to pregnancy, and medical history concerning pregnancy and related matters.
o. Race or Color	None. See WAC 162-12-150 , 162-12-160, and 162-12-170.	Any inquiry concerning race or color of skin, hair, eyes, etc., not specifically permitted by WAC 162-12-150 , 162-12-160, and 162-12-170.
p. Relatives	Name of applicant's relatives already employed by this company or by any competitor.	Any other inquiry regarding marital status, identity of one's spouse, or spouse's occupation are considered unfair practices in accordance with WAC 162-12-150 .

(While the law does not prohibit company policies governing the employment of relatives, any policy that has the effect of disadvantaging minorities, women, married couples, or other protected classes, would be in violation of the law unless it is shown to serve a necessary business purpose.) See [WAC 162-12-150](#), 162-12-160, and 162-12-170.

q. Religion or Creed	None.	Inquiries concerning applicant's religious preference, denomination, religious affiliations, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed.
r. Residence	Inquiries about address to the extent needed to facilitate contacting the applicant.	Names or relationship of persons with whom applicant resides. Whether applicant owns or rents own home.
s. Sex	None.	Any inquiry concerning gender is prohibited.