

TIPS FOR IMPROVING FINGERPRINT QUALITY

Why Does Fingerprint Quality Matter?

If the FBI rejects your fingerprints, you will have to be fingerprinted again, which can double or even treble the time it takes to complete your CBC. Approximately two percent (about 400 per year) of all fingerprints received in the CBCP office are rejected. About 75% of those that have been rejected submit acceptable prints the second time. This means that if they had followed these guidelines the first time, they would have saved both time and money by only being fingerprinted one time.

Common Causes of Low-Quality Fingerprints

The following are some circumstances that can increase the chance of fingerprints being rejected:

- Frequently washing/disinfecting hands
- Activities that require use of the fingertips such as weight-lifting, rock climbing, gardening, or playing guitar
- Frequent or regular handling of paper or typing
- Exposures to chemicals, such as bleach, chlorine, acetone, antibacterial products
- Age: Skin becomes smoother and ridges become harder to capture with age
- Ethnicity: Some ethnic groups have naturally fine/smooth skin (e.g. Asian, Scandinavian, German)

Tips for Improving Fingerprint Quality

1. Use Lotion

The best thing you can do to avoid having your fingerprints rejected is to moisturize. Start using lotion on your hands at least 2-3 times per day for several days leading up to your fingerprinting appointment. We recommend that you do not use lotion on the day of your appointment.

2. Live Scan

If possible, try to find a fingerprinting location that uses LiveScan (digital) technology rather than ink. Ink prints are acceptable, however digital equipment produces better images. **Please Note:** The CBCP will digitally transmit your prints. If taken digitally at any other location, the fingerprints must be printed onto a hard copy FD-258 card and mailed to the CBCP.

3. Take a Break

To maximize fingerprint quality, avoid activities that are hard on your finger tips for several days leading up to your fingerprinting appointment.

4. Make a Plan

For most people, using lotion and taking a break from detrimental activities for a few days will probably be enough. However, if you fit into several of the “common causes” categories and believe you have low-quality fingerprints as a result, plan ahead. For example, if you are a 45-year old nurse who uses sanitizer and soap on your hands 20 times per day and in your spare time, you swim in a chlorinated pool three times per week, you should plan ahead. If you have the weekend off from work, plan to be fingerprinted on Monday morning. Stop using the pool on the previous Wednesday. Start moisturizing at least four times per day at least four days ahead of your appointment. Spend the weekend babying your hands: No cleaning, no gardening, no lifting weights.

If I Don't Want to Follow the Tips and My Fingerprints are Rejected, What Would Happen?

From the date the CBCP transmits your prints, it can take up to three weeks for us to receive the report—including a report that indicates that the fingerprints were rejected by the FBI. When we receive the rejection notification, the CBCP sends you an email instructing you to be fingerprinted again. If you submit a second set of fingerprints, they go through the same process, doubling the time it takes to complete your CBC. If your second set of fingerprints is also rejected, then the CBCP will request a background check using an alternative method, searching by name and date of birth. The Name and Date of Birth search can take up 6 weeks, which can quadruple the time required to complete your CBC.

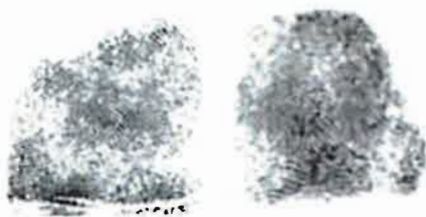
How Much of a Difference Can Following These Tips Make?

The images below show the difference that regular use of lotion and reducing activity can have on fingerprints over time.

Fingerprint ridgeline improvement over time with regular lotion & reduction of activity



Fingerprints of a person who lifts weights two-three times per week



LiveScan fingerprint of someone who moisturized and avoided hard activity for five days



Please Note: Most people following these tips will have significantly improved fingerprint quality. There is a very small percentage (about .1%) of people for whom even the best care and planning will not produce acceptable prints.

Individual's Responsibility

Validate Identification

Prior to rolling fingerprint impressions, it is imperative that the identity of the applicant be established. It is the responsibility of the certified fingerprint roller to check the identification of individuals being fingerprinted. A valid photo identification must be presented by the applicant and checked closely by the certified fingerprint roller taking the fingerprint impressions. This ensures that the applicant's identity is validated against proper identification, which results in accurate information submitted to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Please note that recently, the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Council, a 15-member body of local, state, and federal governmental officials, issued a guide for use in determining what constitutes a valid ID, outlined in primary and secondary forms of identification. The DOJ requires certified fingerprint rollers accept only current, valid, and unexpired picture identification documents as a primary valid identification. As such, a certified fingerprint roller must examine the photo identification presented to ensure all of the following:

- The personal descriptor information (name, gender, date of birth, etc.) matches the information provided on the Request for Live Scan Service form (BCIA 8016FP).
- The expiration date has not elapsed.
- The photograph reasonably resembles the applicant's physical appearance.

Acceptable **primary** forms of photo identification include any of the following:

- California Driver's License
- Department of Motor Vehicles Identification Card
- Out-of-state driver's license

However, in the absence of a primary form of identification, a certified fingerprint roller may accept one or more of the following as **secondary** forms of identification, **but only with two of the supplemental documents noted below:**

- State government issued Certificate of Birth
- U.S. Active Duty/Retiree/Reservist Military Identification Card (000 10-2)
- U.S. Passport
- Federal government Personal Identity Verification Card (PIV)
- Department of Defense Common Access Card

- U.S. Tribal or Bureau of Indian Affairs Identification Card
- Social Security Card
- Court Order for Name Change/Gender Change/Adoption/Divorce
- Marriage Certificate (Government issued certificate)
- U.S. Government issued Consular Report of Birth Abroad 3
- Foreign Passport with appropriate immigration document(s)
- Certificate of Citizenship (N560)
- Certificate of Naturalization (N550)
- INS I-551 Resident Alien Card issued since 1997
- INS 1-688 Temporary Resident Identification Card
- INS I-688B, I-766 Employment Authorization Card

*Please note: When validating the authenticity of secondary identification documents and forms, the data and information need to be supported by at least **two** of the following **supplemental documents**:*

- Utility bill (address)
- Jurisdictional voter registration card
- Vehicle registration card/title
- Paycheck stub with name/address
- Spouse/parent affidavit
- Cancelled check or bank statement
- Mortgage documents

When supplemental documentation does not support the validation of the original identification documents, the certified fingerprint roller should not accept the form of identification as valid and not fingerprint the applicant.