

Violations

The Department has the power to enforce the provisions of Chapter 493, F. S. and initiate administrative action when violations occur. Private investigators, private investigator interns and private investigative agencies may be subject to disciplinary action for fraud or deceit, or of negligence, incompetency, or misconduct, in the practice of the regulated activities. The following are examples of violations that may result in a reprimand, fine, probation, or suspension or revocation of the license.

- Carrying a firearm without a Class "G" Statewide Firearm License
- Willfully betraying a professional secret or releasing unauthorized investigative information
- Impersonating or permitting an investigative employee to impersonate a law enforcement officer or employee of the state
- Using force or acts of violence except in the lawful protection of the licensee or another from physical harm
- The use of badges, credentials or identification cards which include any portion of the Great Seal of Florida or badges in the shape of a five-pointed star
- Operating without a license

Who Should I Contact To File A Complaint Or Report Unlicensed Activity?

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Licensing, investigates complaints regarding the private investigative industry. If you have a complaint, contact the regional office in your area as shown on the map in this pamphlet, or:

Write to:

Bureau of Regulation and Enforcement
Post Office Box 5647
Tallahassee, Florida, 32314-5647

Call: (850) 245-5499

www.mylensesite.com

**QUESTIONS
AND
ANSWERS
ABOUT
PRIVATE
INVESTIGATORS**

Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Licensing, licenses and regulates the private investigative industry in accordance with Chapter 493, Florida Statutes. Private investigators and private investigative agencies serve in positions of trust. Untrained and unlicensed persons or businesses, or persons not of good moral character are a threat to the public's safety and welfare. The private investigative industry is regulated to ensure the interests of the public are adequately served and protected. The purpose of this pamphlet is to inform Florida citizens about licensing requirements.

What Is A Private Investigator?

To perform private investigations in Florida, an individual must hold a Class "C" Private Investigator license or a Class "CC" Private Investigator Intern license. A Class "C" or "CC" licensee must own or work for a licensed Class "A" Private Investigative Agency. A Class "CC" licensee must work under the direction and control of a designated, sponsoring Class "C" licensee. "Private investigation" means the investigation by a person or persons for the purpose of obtaining information with reference to any of the following matters:

- Crime or wrongs done or threatened against the United States or any state or territory of the United States, when operating under express written authority of the governmental official responsible for authorizing such investigation.
- The identity, habits, conduct, movements, whereabouts, affiliations, associations, transactions, reputation, or character of any society, person, or group of persons.
- The credibility of witnesses or other persons.
- The whereabouts of missing persons, owners of unclaimed property or escheated property, or heirs to estates.
- The location or recovery of lost or stolen property.
- The causes and origin of, or responsibility for, fires, libels, slanders, losses, accidents, damage, or injuries to real or personal property.

- The business of securing evidence to be used before investigating committees or boards of award or arbitration or in the trial of civil or criminal cases and the preparation therefor.

Types of Licenses

For Individuals

"C"	Private Investigator
"CC"	Private Investigator Intern
"M" or "MA"	Private Investigative Agency Manager

For Agencies

"A"	Private Investigative Agency
"AA"	Private Investigative Agency Branch Office
"AB"	Combined Security and Private Investigative Agency Branch Office

Firearms

A private investigator or private investigator intern, age 21 years or older, who possesses a Class "G" Statewide Firearm License, may carry a concealed firearm when it is required by his or her duties and approved by the licensed agency. Firearms are not permitted to be carried openly at any time.

Who is Exempt From Licensure?

- Any insurance investigator or adjuster licensed by a state or federal licensing authority when such person is providing services or expert advice within the scope of her or his license.
- Any individual solely, exclusively, and regularly employed as an unarmed investigator in connection with the business of her or his employer, when there exists an employer-employee relationship.
- Any person or bureau whose business is exclusively the furnishing of information concerning the business and financial standing and credit responsibility of persons or the financial habits and financial responsibility of applicants for insurance, indemnity bonds, or commercial credit.

Exemptions *continued*

- Any attorney in the regular practice of her or his profession.
- Any bank or bank holding company, credit union, or small loan company operating pursuant to Chapters 516 and 520; any consumer credit reporting agency regulated under 15 U.S.C. ss. 1681 et seq.; or any collection agency not engaged in repossessions or to any permanent employee thereof.
- Any person who holds a professional license under the laws of this state when such person is providing services or expert advice in the profession or occupation in which that person is so licensed.
- Any private investigative agency, and employees thereof, performing contractual investigative services solely and exclusively for any agency of the United States.
- Any person duly authorized by the laws of this state to operate a central burglar or fire alarm business. However, such persons are not exempt to the extent they perform services requiring licensure or registration under this chapter.
- Any person or company retained by a food service establishment to independently evaluate the food service establishment including quality of food, service, and facility. However, such persons are not exempt to the extent they investigate or are retained to investigate criminal or suspected criminal behavior on the part of the food service establishment employees.
- Any person or firm that solely and exclusively conducts genealogical research, or otherwise traces lineage or ancestry by primarily utilizing public records and historical information and databases.
- Any licensed Florida-certified public accountant who is acting within the scope of the practice of public accounting as defined in Chapter 473.

What Do I Need To Know To Apply For A License?

The Application Instructions contain helpful information about the application process and license requirements.

You may download forms or request to have them mailed to you at:
www.mylicensesite.com.

Division of Licensing Regional Offices

Fort Walton Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (CST)
111 Racetrack Road
Unit 111-C, Choctaw Plaza
Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32547
(850) 344-0300
(850) 344-0301 Fax

Jacksonville Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)
7825 Baymeadows Way
Suite 106-A
Jacksonville, Florida 32256
(904) 828-3100
(904) 828-3122 Fax

Miami-Dade Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)
7739 NW 48th Street
Suite 140
Doral, Florida 33166
(305) 639-3500
(305) 639-3503 Fax

Orlando Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)
1707 Orlando Central Parkway
Suite 150
Orlando, Florida 32809
(407) 888-8700
(407) 888-8704 Fax

Any person applying for a license must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a citizen of the United States or a permanent legal resident of the United States or have been granted authority to work by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service
- Have no disqualifying criminal history
- Be of good moral character
- Have no disqualifying history of mental illness or alcohol or controlled substance abuse



Punta Gorda Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)
230 Bal Harbor Boulevard
Suite 111
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950
(941) 676-6060
(941) 676-6052 Fax

Tallahassee Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST)
Capital Center Office Complex
4040 Esplanade Way, 1st Floor,
Suite 101
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
(850) 245-5498
(850) 245-5283 Fax

Tampa Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)
Interstate Business Park
4510 Oak Fair Blvd., Suite 100
Tampa, Florida 33610
(813) 377-5377
(813) 377-5378 Fax

West Palm Beach Regional Office

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)
400 N Congress Avenue
Suite 140
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
(561) 681-2530
(561) 681-2599 Fax

The applicant must provide the following:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number or Alien Registration Number
- Place of Birth
- Statement regarding any history of alcohol or controlled substance abuse
- Statement regarding whether he or she has been adjudicated incapacitated or committed to a mental institution
- Statement of all criminal convictions, findings of guilt, and pleas of guilty or nolo contendere, regardless of adjudication of guilt
- One passport type color photograph
- Full set of fingerprints - Fingerprints submitted with the application are sent by the Division of Licensing to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Federal Bureau of Investigation to perform a criminal history background check, the results of which are reviewed by the Division to determine if the applicant has a record that disqualifies him or her from licensure.
- Personal inquiry waiver
- Appropriate fees
- An applicant for a Class "C" license must submit an Affidavit/statement of qualifying experience or training and must pass an examination covering the provisions of Chapter 493, F. S.
- An applicant for a Class "CC" license must complete a 40-hour course in general investigative techniques and Chapter 493, F. S.
- An applicant for a Class "G" Statewide Firearm license must submit a Certificate of Firearms proficiency as proof of successful completion of 28 hours of range and classroom training administered by a licensed Class "K" Firearms Instructor
- Agency managers must have a minimum of two years of full-time, verifiable related experience