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## NEW ELECTRONIC FINGERPRINTING

Recruitment criminal check procedures will change from new technology.

**The South African Police Service (SAPS) is phasing out its manual name clearance criminal check system and will shortly be moving to an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) based on electronic fingerprint scans which will be used to establish the existence of a criminal record. Accordingly this will change the way that HR departments handle criminal checks of individuals for employment purposes.**

Previously HR departments used the name clearance database in a process based on a manual system whereby SAPS officials checked names and ID numbers against the Criminal Records Centre database. If a question mark was raised in this process, candidates were asked to have their fingerprints taken on paper at a police station to confirm a criminal record.

This manual process required substantial SAPS resources beyond the core role of police officers. As a result, SAPS has been moving to a single system of digitally-scanned fingerprints linked to an automated criminal database, called AFISwitch, in a project that has been running for close to three years in conjunction with leading biometrics company, Ideco Group Limited.

The implications of AFISwitch for HR departments is that they will no longer be constrained by the restrictions of the name clearance database; and that criminal checks will be initiated via electronic fingerprint readers. The basic search principles remain the same; consent is required before a check can be initiated and is still based on ten fingerprints.

Previously a criminal record check could take many weeks to complete. With AFISwitch, HR departments wanting to run criminal checks will have scanners on site with the added advantage that through a system they can have a complete, accurate electronic report emailed to their desk within 48 hours. This single report includes criminal checks, academic record checks, credit checks, drivers licence checks and the like.

In a country where crime and fraud is prevalent, and with a SAPS criminal database of over 7-million records, we believe that RefCheck plays a vital role in helping organisations ensure that they make sound appointments, and that all the necessary checks are fast, accurate, discreet and easy to commission.

**Billy Last is the CEO of LexisNexis.**

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