**APSIN ID: Facts and Frequently Asked Questions**

**The defendant’s APSIN ID must be provided on all criminal charging documents and judgments. The police department or other prosecuting agency is responsible for ensuring that the APSIN ID is provided, and is complete and accurate. The Alaska Court System runs an audit report to identify missing or incorrect APSIN ID numbers. When these are found, court staff will first check to make sure the error was not clerical. If not, court staff will send the report to the prosecuting agency to make the corrections in a timely manner.**

**Facts**

* **The APSIN ID is critical to effective, electronic exchange of data about criminal defendants** because it allows information about a person in one system to be matched with information about that same person in another system.
* **The APSIN ID must be included on all criminal charging documents, judgments and orders of dismissals.** See Criminal Rules 3, 7, 32 and 43
* **The APSIN ID uniquely identifies each person with a record in the Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN).** Some events that result in a person having an APSIN record include (but are not limited to):
* Arrest/citation
* Criminal charge (referral for prosecution, court filing)
* Criminal fingerprinting
* Admission to a correctional facility
* Criminal charge disposition
* Issuance of a driver’s license or state identification card
* Background check for employment/licensing
* **The APSIN ID cannot be longer or shorter than** **seven digits** and cannot contain any letters, only numerals. For example:

0000123 valid APSIN ID

123 not a valid APSIN ID

12345678 not a valid APSIN ID

A123456 not a valid APSIN ID

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. Is there any exception to the requirement to provide the defendant’s APSIN ID on every criminal charging document?**

No. The defendant’s APSIN ID must be included on every criminal charging document, whether it is a citation, complaint, indictment or information. (See Criminal Rules 3 and 7.)

**Q. Who has an APSIN ID?**

Every person with a record in APSIN must have an APSIN ID. That means every person with a criminal record in Alaska is assigned an APSIN ID**,** as well as every person who has an Alaska driver’s license or state identification card. If a person does not have an APSIN record by the time a criminal charging document is ready to be filed, then the law enforcement agency or prosecutor must obtain one.

**Q. Must businesses and organizations charged with a crime also have an APSIN?**

Yes.When a business or other organization is charged, the charging officer or prosecutor must obtain an APSIN for the business or organization. Any agency with APSIN access can request an APSIN ID for business or organization just like they do for a person. If the agency does not have APSIN access the agency must contact the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for assistance in obtaining an APSIN ID number for the business.

1. **Where do I find the defendant’s APSIN ID?**

Law enforcement and prosecuting agency employees find it in APSIN.

**Q. What if I need to file a charging document but don’t have access to APSIN?**

You must contact someone with APSIN access, such as a dispatcher, and ask that person to obtain the defendant’s APSIN ID for you.

1. **What if I can’t get the APSIN ID because APSIN is “down” when I need to fill out the charging document?**

You will need to wait until APSIN is available to complete and file a charging document.

**Q. What if I can’t find the defendant in APSIN?**

If you cannot match the defendant to an existing APSIN record, then you must create a record in APSIN for the defendant.Contact DPS if you need assistance.

**Q. Why is the APSIN ID so important?**

It is the only reliable identifier common to all criminal defendants in Alaska. Names, dates of birth and even social security numbers are subject to change, may be shared by more than one person, and are often “self-reported” and therefore difficult to verify.

APSIN is structured to help users search for and identify persons based on a comparison of names, dates of birth, physical characteristics, biometric identifiers (e.g., fingerprints) and other data. Although it is not perfect, the APSIN search/match process is the most effective way to establish a defendant’s identity. When misidentification is discovered (for example, through fingerprint comparison), DPS has procedures in place to consolidate or otherwise correct the affected APSIN IDs.

**Q. Why is the need for the APSIN ID being addressed now?**

The presence and accuracy of the APSIN ID on court records is critical to automating the exchange of data between courts and other criminal justice agencies.As agencies automate exchanges of information between computer systems it is important to have a concise, uniform, and consistent identifier so that information is matched to the correct person’s record.

**Q. Why can’t we just use the Alaska Driver’s License number instead?**

Not all defendants have an Alaska driver’slicense or Alaska state identification card.

**Q. Isn’t the APSIN ID the same as the Alaska Driver’s License (ADL) number?**

No. These numbers are not the same unless they were issued prior to October 4, 1997. Until that date, the numbers were the same because they were assigned by a single computer system shared by DPS and DMV. After that date, APSIN and Driver’s License identifiers began to be issued by different agency computer systems and are therefore separate and distinct identification numbers.

**Q. If I see a 7-digit number labeled, “APSIN ID/ADL” or “OL/ID” can I assume that it means the person’s APSIN ID is the same as his or her driver’s license number?**

No. You cannot assume that a 7-digit number is the APSIN ID unless it is clearly labeled as such.It may be the driver’s license number or the APSIN ID; or these two IDs may be the same number if issued before the 1997 change. If the identification number is not explicitly labeled, then the only way to determine whether it is the APSIN ID is to query APSIN.

**Q. If a document shows an APSIN ID with fewer than 7 digits, how do I enter it into a computer system that requires a 7-character value for the APSIN ID?**

The correct way to enter the APSIN ID on a document is to write all 7 digits on the form. If you know the number represented is the correct APSIN ID and the person completing the form omitted zeroes from the APSIN ID, add leading zeroes (to the left, at the beginning of the number). Never add trailing zeroes to the right, at the end of the number. For example:

123 would be: 0000123 (never change it to 1230000)

1230 would be: 0001230 (never change it to 1230000)

**Q. What if there is no field on a form still in circulation at my agency to record the APSIN ID or the form has only one field for APSIN ID/Driver’s License?**

* All forms should now provide specific fields for the APSIN ID and the Driver’s License Number and issuing state. Notify the person responsible for your agency’s forms that forms that do not provide specific fields for this information must be updated.
* In the interim, add “APSIN ID” followed by the APSIN number at the top of the form.
* Add “Driver’s License” followed by the driver’s license number separately on the form and include the state that issued the driver’s license. Do not assume that whoever looks at the form will know what state issued the driver’s license..
* Forms identifying defendants should distinctly and separately display the APSIN ID, Driver’s License Number and Driver’s License State as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| APSIN ID: 0123456  Driver’s License Number: 0234567 DL State: AK |

**Q: Is it truly a problem not to include the APSIN ID?**

Yes. It very time-consuming for agencies to research and correct APSIN IDs and criminal records are unreliable without the APSIN ID.

* + Failure to provide the APSIN ID when a charge is initiated means that someone else “downstream” has to backtrack, research, and provide (or correct) the APSIN ID.
  + Processes that could have been completed automatically based on a match involving the APSIN ID instead require “exception processing”.
  + Information may be incorrectly associated with the wrong person.
  + In the worst-case scenario, a record subject escapes consequences or is unjustifiably deprived of rights or privileges because information is applied to the wrong person’s record.

**Q: How is compliance monitored?**

* The court will send a Deficiency Notice to any agency that files a charging document without the defendant’s APSIN ID.
* Court staff regularly run a report showing the number/percentage of case filings entered into its case management system (CourtView) without the APSIN ID. Prosecuting agencies will be contacted to provide missing or incorrect APSIN ID numbers.