

A primary question post-Virginia Tech has been how to improve safety on campus. This article encourages colleges and universities to conduct criminal background checks on applicants for admission, as one part of a comprehensive, environmental risk-management plan. The article begins by examining recent incidents of student-on-student violence on or near campus. It then discusses current college and university practices regarding student background checks. Next, the article explores the myriad of legal and policy issues related to background checks, and it provides specific steps that colleges and universities should follow if campus leadership decides to implement background checks. In sum, the article concludes that background checks can help colleges and universities create a reasonably safe educational environment.