



# IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL POLICE CLEARANCE SYSTEM BY THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE

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## ABSTRACT

*This study presents an analysis of the shift from local police clearance to a centralized national police clearance system in the Philippines, implemented by the Philippine National Police (PNP). The study examines the rationale behind the transition, the process of implementation, and the potential impact on law enforcement and public service delivery.*

*Through the use of a qualitative methodology and in-depth interviews with PNP Officials, the study explores subjective experiences. The findings provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of a national police clearance system. Ongoing initiatives including continuous NPCCS training, active client's feedback, and assessments, are encouraged in order to maintain efficacy.*

*To sum up, the shift to centralized national police clearance represents a critical advancement in modernizing application process of police clearance and fostering efficient public service delivery in organizations such as the PNP.*

**KEYWORDS:** *National Police Clearance, Philippine National Police, Law Enforcement, Public Service, Implementation*

## INTRODUCTION

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has embarked on a significant initiative aimed at modernizing and standardizing the process of obtaining police clearances through the implementation of a National Police Clearance System. This strategic transition represents a fundamental shift from the traditional localized approach to a centralized and uniform system for background checks and criminal record verification. The introduction of the National Police Clearance System marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of law enforcement procedures and public service delivery in the Philippines, with far-reaching implications for both the PNP and the general populace. The transition to a National Police Clearance System is motivated by the need to address challenges associated with the existing decentralized clearance process, including variations in procedures, data integrity, and accessibility. Through this initiative, the PNP aims to streamline the application and issuance of police clearances, enhance the accuracy and reliability of background checks, and improve the overall efficiency of law enforcement procedures. Furthermore, the implementation of a centralized clearance system is expected to have broader implications for public service delivery, as individuals and organizations seeking background information on individuals will benefit from a more standardized and accessible process.

By exploring the multifaceted dimensions of this transformative initiative, this study endeavors to contribute to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated

with the adoption of a National Police Clearance System in the Philippines. The insights gleaned from this analysis are intended to inform policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders, facilitating informed decision-making and best practices as the PNP continues to modernize and enhance its services to meet the evolving needs of the Filipino society.

In the subsequent sections of this study, we will delve into the methodology employed in investigating the transition, present the findings of the study, and offer recommendations for optimizing the National Police Clearance System within the Philippine National Police. Through this comprehensive analysis, we aim to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding law enforcement procedures, public service, and the advancement of a modernized, efficient, and accessible clearance system in the Philippines.

A comprehensive review of various theories highlights key matters and insights in the study. According to Shea, Jacobs, Esserman, Bruce & Weiner (2014), Organizational readiness for change is an important factor in the successful implementation of new policies, programs, and practices. This are essential in the transition of local police clearance to centralized national police clearance. Weiner (2009), defined organizational readiness for change as a mutli-level, multi-faceted construct. As an organization-level construct, readiness for change refers to organizational members' shared resolve to implement a change and shared belief in their collective capability to do so.



Organizational readiness to change may be a key determinant of implementation success and a mediator of the effectiveness of implementation interventions. If organizational readiness can be reliably and validly assessed at the outset of a change initiative, it could be used to assess the effectiveness of implementation-support activities by measuring changes in readiness factors over time (Helfrich, et al., 2018)

In the PNP Organization, organizational readiness can be translated as a catalyst to deliver better service to its clientele. This connects to transformation as a radical change process, undertaken to respond to a crisis or to take advantage of a great opportunity. It has a much more profound effect than any mere improvement program on both workers and clients. Transformation begins at the top with a vision and results in lasting change in the way things get done around here, but only when transformation becomes everybody's job.

This study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the transition to a National Police Clearance System by the Philippine National Police. It aims to examine the rationale behind the adoption of a centralized system, the methods and processes employed in its implementation, and the potential impact of the new system on law enforcement procedures, public service delivery, and the overall effectiveness of background checks and criminal record verification. Additionally, the study will offer recommendations to optimize the implementation of the National Police Clearance System, addressing critical considerations for its successful integration into the existing law enforcement framework. It uses the Organizational Culture and Change Theory to examine how the organizational culture affect the sudden shift of local police clearance to centralized national police clearance.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the rationale behind the transition from a localized system of police clearances to a centralized national police clearance system within the Philippine National Police;
2. To analyze the methods and processes utilized by the Philippine National Police in implementing the shift from local to national police clearance, including the development of standardized procedures and the integration of modern technologies;
3. To assess the potential impact of the transition to a national police clearance system on law enforcement procedures, public service delivery, and the overall efficiency of background checks and criminal record verification; and
4. To explore the challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of a national police clearance system, including logistical, technical, and public awareness considerations.

## METHODS

This study utilizes a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews as a research technique. This method aims to gather

comprehensive insights into the experiences, views, and opinions of respondents regarding the shift of local police clearance to national police clearance and its impact in the law enforcement and public service delivery. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents with personnel manning the NPCCS and client's who have first-hand experience in NPCCS services, including 12 PNP personnel, 12 NPCCS clients. Structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted in person, simultaneously recorded for correctness, and supported by field notes. Thematic analysis was employed to identify relationships between the data and other variables, recognize patterns, and provide insight into the data that may not be otherwise apparent. Ethical considerations and anonymity protection were also ensured through institutional review board approval and anonymization of participants. The study presents qualitative results in a narrative format aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of this subject.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the shift to a national police clearance system is driven by the need for standardization, improved data management, and enhanced accessibility for both individuals and organizations requiring police clearances. The PNP has implemented a phased approach to the transition, involving the development of centralized databases, the establishment of standardized clearance procedures, and the integration of modern technologies to facilitate the application and processing of national police clearances. The transition to a national police clearance system poses both challenges and opportunities for the Philippine National Police. While centralization may lead to more consistent and reliable background checks, it also requires comprehensive infrastructure and resource investments to ensure the security and accessibility of the centralized clearance database. Additionally, the implementation of the new system necessitates effective communication and public awareness campaigns to inform the populace about the changes in the clearance process.

**What is the rationale behind the transition from a localized system of police clearances to a centralized national police clearance system? What are the methods and processes utilized in implementing the shift?**

***The transition from localized system of police clearances to centralized national police clearance system***

Crime prevention and police services should always be responsive to the needs of the society. Old methods should be replaced and upgraded to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Before, local police databases are not integrated. A person's police clearance varies across different police stations covering their respective jurisdiction. He may have a police clearance without annotation from one locality but might appear to be one of the persons alleged to have committed a crime in another. Clearly, a police clearance which is usually required by employers can be easily manipulated. A suspect or a criminal has the liberty to obtain a police clearance from a locality within which he knows he has clean record. To address this issue,



information and communications technology was used to modernize the law enforcement tools of the Philippine National Police (PNP) to provide a more effective and efficient service to the public that's why the NPCS by the PNP was created.

#### ***Shift from local to national police clearance -the development of standardized procedures***

On May 8, 2018, PNP Memorandum Circular No. 2018-020 sets forth the guidelines and procedures in the implementation of the NPCS. The same paved the way for the nationwide implementation of the NPCS and the operationalization of the five NPCS pilot stations in Quezon City Police District on August 10, 2018. At present, it is being utilized nationwide to different City/Municipal Police Stations.

#### **What is the impact of national police clearance system on law enforcement procedures, public service delivery, and the overall efficiency of background checks and criminal record verification? From the standpoint of the respondents, are there noticeable changes on the centralized shifting?**

##### ***Impact of national police clearance system***

The abolishment of localized system of police clearances and the institutionalization of National Police Clearance System (NPCS) in Philippine National Police (PNP) offers several effects, including standardization, improved access to information, streamlined processes, enhanced security, and cost savings. A centralized national police clearance system allows for the standardization of procedures and criteria for issuing clearances. This ensures that all individuals seeking police clearances are subject to the same set of checks and criteria, regardless of their location within the country. Standardization helps promote fairness and consistency in the clearance process. A national database provides law enforcement agencies, employers, and other authorized entities with access to comprehensive criminal records from across the country. This can be especially beneficial in cases where individuals have lived or worked in multiple jurisdictions, as it provides a more comprehensive view of their criminal history. Centralizing the issuance of police clearances can lead to more efficient and streamlined processes. It reduces duplication of efforts, minimizes administrative overhead, and simplifies the application and verification procedures for both applicants and law enforcement agencies. A centralized system can improve the security and accuracy of the information provided in police clearances. By consolidating data in a single, secure database, the risk of errors, omissions, or fraudulent activities can be minimized, leading to more reliable background checks. A national police clearance system facilitates cross-jurisdictional background checks, making it easier for employers and organizations operating across different regions to obtain comprehensive clearance reports for individuals with diverse geographic histories. While there may be initial costs associated with establishing a centralized system, in the long run, it can lead to cost savings for both applicants and law enforcement agencies. Standardizing processes and reducing redundancies can result in overall lower costs for obtaining and processing police clearances.

##### ***Centralized Database***

Respondents' (PNP personnel) assessed that using a centralized database of criminal records makes it easier for them to access and verify an individual's criminal history. This streamlines the background check process and reduces the need to contact multiple jurisdictions for information.

##### ***More reliable for employers***

Respondents' comments emphasizes that a national police clearance establishes a standardized process for conducting background checks and obtaining criminal records across the country which help to ensure consistency and accuracy in the information obtained, making it easier for employers to make informed decisions.

##### ***Time and Cost Savings***

According to clients securing national police clearance/s, by providing a single source for accessing criminal record, the system helps to save time and reduce the administrative burden associated with conducting background checks. The effect of which is cost savings for the PNP and expedited processing of applicants for various purposes.

##### ***Reduced redundancy***

According to the PNP personnel (respondents), with NPCS in place, there is less redundancy in the collection and verification of criminal records, as information is centrally maintained and updated. This can lead to a more streamlined and efficient process for individuals undergoing background checks.

#### **What are the challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of a national police clearance system? Does it strengthen or weaken public trust?**

##### ***Data Privacy and Security***

PNP personnel respondents' consistently noted that one of the primary challenges in NPCS is ensuring the security and privacy of the sensitive information contained in the national police clearance database. Safeguarding this data against unauthorized access, hacking, and misuse is a significant concern for them.

##### ***Data Accuracy and Integrity***

PNP personnel respondents' noted that maintaining accurate and up-to-date information in a national police clearance system is challenging as sometimes the records are incomplete, not updated and with few errors that's why it requires robust data management processes and ongoing maintenance.

##### ***Interagency Cooperation***

PNP personnel respondents' noticed that establishing a NPCS requires collaboration and cooperation among multiple law enforcement agencies such as NBI, CIDG, HPG and others, as well as other government entities. There is a need to overcome bureaucratic barriers and interagency coordination is somewhat considered as constraint.



## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of the National Police Clearance System (NPCS) by the Philippine National Police (PNP) represents a significant step towards modernizing and standardizing law enforcement processes in the country. The successful transition depends on the PNP's ability to address technical, logistical, and public awareness challenges, while leveraging the potential benefits of a centralized clearance system for improved service delivery and public safety

## RECOMMENDATION

To maintain and enhance the successful utilization of national police clearance, The PNP should develop and implement a comprehensive public awareness campaign to inform the public about the transition to a national police clearance system. This should include clear guidance on the new application procedures, available services, and the benefits of the centralized clearance system. Second, the organization should prioritize ongoing investment in technology and infrastructure to support the maintenance of the new system. This includes ensuring the security and reliability of the centralized database and leveraging modern technologies for efficient application processing and data management. Third, Standardized procedures for processing and verifying national police clearances should be established across all PNP offices. Additionally, training programs should be provided to PNP personnel to ensure consistent implementation of clearance protocols and the use of new technologies. Fourth, The PNP should explore opportunities for collaboration and data sharing with other relevant government agencies to enhance the effectiveness of the national police clearance system. This can include sharing information on individuals with criminal records and coordinating efforts to maintain accurate and up-to-date data. Lastly, the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be strengthened to assess the effectiveness and impact of the national police clearance system. Regular feedback from users, stakeholders, and the public should be solicited to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the system continues to meet its objectives.

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