



# REGISTERING AND TRACKING SEX OFFENDERS

## Model Policy

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<i>Subject</i> Registering and Tracking Sex Offenders			
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### I. PURPOSE

This policy provides guidance for the registration, public notification, and address verification of sex offenders, and guidance for personnel conducting community education practices.

### II. POLICY

It is the policy of this department to use all reasonable means to assist in the investigation of noncompliant sex offenders, to educate the public about personal safety precautions, and to train designated law enforcement personnel on registration, notification, verification, and community education procedures. This department recognizes that sex offenders can pose a significant risk to the community and that community fear may be fueled by confusing sex offender laws and lack of understanding of law enforcement efforts to hold sex offenders accountable. This department is guided by federal and state laws regarding the registration, public notification, and verification of convicted sex offenders to enforce compliance and to prevent future victimization. This department also recognizes that law enforcement agencies are responsible for notifying communities about the presence of certain registered sex offenders, maintaining registration files, verifying compliance with registration laws, investigating violations of such laws and new offenses, and locating noncompliant or absconded offenders.

### III. DEFINITIONS

*Registered Sex Offender (RSO) (federal definition):*

Any individual who is convicted of a registerable sex offense under any United States jurisdiction, including convictions for sex offenses under federal, military, state, territorial, tribal, or local law. Foreign convictions are also covered under certain circumstances.

*Registered Sex Offender (RSO) (state definition):*

Any individual who is convicted of a registerable sex offense under state statute.

*Noncompliance:* Failure to comply with state or federal registration laws. Noncompliance may include failure to report for initial registration; failure to report change of address, school, or employment information within specified timeframe; or failure to obtain appropriate identification if mandated by state or federal law.

*Grooming Behavior:* Actions deliberately undertaken by an offender with the aim of befriending a child in order to lower the child's sexual inhibitions or establish an intimate friendship in preparation for a sexual act with the child.

### IV. PROCEDURES

#### A. Sex Offender Registration

##### 1. Registration Requirements

Personnel assigned duties related to sex offender registration shall ensure that all data required by law and departmental directive are properly recorded and disseminated. In compliance with state and federal law, this department shall establish a process for accepting and compiling registration information for all sex offenders residing,

working, or attending school within jurisdictional boundaries who meet registration requirements. This information shall include but is not limited to the following:

- a. Name and aliases (and, if available, names of all immediate family members)
- b. Internet identifiers and addresses
- c. Telephone numbers (fixed location and cellular)
- d. Social security number
- e. Address of residence (or where a sex offender can be located during the day or at night), and name and address of work and school (if applicable)
- f. Immigration documents (passport or alien identification numbers)
- g. Date of birth
- h. Driver's license or identification card
- i. Professional licenses
- j. Current photograph
- k. Finger and palm prints
- l. Vehicle information
- m. Physical description
- n. Criminal history
- o. DNA sample
- p. A link to or citation of the text of registration offense or offenses

## 2. Registration Procedures

When a convicted sex offender is released from a correctional facility or has served his sentence in the community and is required to register, this department shall accept the offender and process the registration or direct the offender to the appropriate registration facility. The following duties should be assigned to registration personnel or a specialized unit and may include but are not limited to:

- a. Interviewing the offender to collect additional information for the file.
- b. Maintaining comprehensive files and a records retention schedule. Each file shall include the following:
  - (1) Initial registration information
  - (2) Any subsequent change of address, employment, or educational information
  - (3) Case reports and paperwork from other law enforcement and public safety agencies
  - (4) Documentation of any address verifications or other police contacts with the sex offender (see section C, Verification and Investigations)

(5) Proof of receipt of registration requirements signed by the offender

- c. Notifying appropriate internal and external contacts or agencies (such as the sheriff's department, the state police, the probation and parole office, and the state or national sex offender registry).
- d. Sharing information upon request with authorized outside agencies (e.g., by transmitting files to the appropriate state and federal sex offender registries and databases).
- e. As required by federal law, state law, or both, entering and transmitting data to state and national sex offender law enforcement databases and public sex offender registries.

## B. Notification

1. In compliance with federal and state laws, this department shall provide public notification of certain RSOs within the specified time-frame. Only information deemed necessary to enhance public safety shall be released to the public. The department shall use risk assessment tools, sex offender management boards, classification systems, or other means as available and deemed appropriate to determine an offender's risk level to the community and the nature and extent of information shared with the public.
2. Public notification can result in heightened concern and anxiety in the community. To mitigate unwarranted concerns, the department may partner with other organizations (such as corrections or victim advocacy organizations) to offer citizens the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns.
  - a. Authorized personnel should issue public notification to schools, day care centers, nonprofit organizations, businesses directly serving children and youth, and other such organizations or business deemed appropriate by the department.
  - b. Authorized personnel should notify the crime analysis unit, public information officers, surrounding law enforcement agencies, or other entities deemed appropriate for enhancement of public safety and crime prevention activities.
  - c. Public notification should be conducted through, but need not be limited to, the following methods:
    - (1) Posting notification in the police department lobby

- (2) Posting fliers on the police department's Web site
- (3) Providing a link to state and national sex offender registries on the department's Web site
- (4) Issuing press releases
- (5) Holding community meetings
- (6) Distributing notification fliers in person to community members when department personnel are available to respond to questions and concerns, with the authorization of the chief executive or designated authority.

#### C. Community Education

Education is vital in keeping the public informed about sex offenders in the community, maintaining the critical link between police and the community, mitigating unnecessary fear and anxiety regarding RSOs, and raising community awareness of warning signs or grooming behaviors. Personnel assigned to notification or verification tasks should conduct community education in various formats to include the following:

1. Holding community meetings
2. Presenting to neighborhood watch and crime watch meetings
3. Speaking to citizen police academies, civic organizations, parent-teacher associations, and homeowner associations
4. Providing answers to frequently asked questions about sex offenders and related laws through handouts or on the department Web site

#### D. Verification and Investigations

##### 1. Verifications

###### a. Residence Verification

Personnel assigned to monitor RSOs shall verify the RSOs' registered place of residence periodically and by means deemed appropriate by the supervising departmental authority, including but not limited to in-person verification. If the offender is not living at the registered address or otherwise in noncompliance with federal or state registration laws, assigned personnel shall initiate an investigation to determine registration violations. (See IV. D. 4)

###### b. In-Person Address Verifications

In-person address verification shall be conducted according to federal and state law. If this department is not mandated to conduct address verifications, it should conduct supplemental address checks

in close cooperation with the mandated agency to ensure offender accountability, track offender movements, and maintain accurate registration information.

Personnel assigned verification duties shall conduct physical checks of the address of the RSOs on a schedule determined by the department. All verification activities shall be documented and placed into the offender's file.

##### 2. Risk Assessments

Recognizing that sex offenders do not present a uniform risk to the community the department shall review available risk assessment information on RSOs by means of professionally accepted risk assessment tools.

##### 3. Monitoring and Tracking

Assigned personnel should monitor and track RSOs through various means, including the following:

- a. Completing a Field Information Report (FIR) card each time an RSO is party to any call for service
- b. Crosschecking missing and abducted children alerts against registered sex offender files
- c. Maintaining an internal database to verify address, employment, and school information and to manage verification checks
- d. Using existing department technology (such as maps and mapping programs and the computer-assisted dispatch system) to flag sex offender status and track noncompliant or absconded sex offenders
- e. Maintaining communication with outside agencies (such as corrections, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and victim service organizations)
- f. Comparing internal registration databases against state and national public sex offender registries

##### 4. Noncompliance and Prosecution

If an RSO fails to comply with state or federal registration laws, authorized personnel shall submit such information to the prosecutor's office to determine appropriate enforcement action.

#### E. Officer Education and Training

##### 1. Registration, Notification, and Verification

Personnel assigned to registration, notification, or address verification duties shall receive initial and other in-service training deemed necessary to maintain knowledge of sex offender laws and administrative requirements. These include but are not limited to such topics as:

- a. Federal, state, and local sex offender legislation,
- b. Offender rights,
- c. Common characteristics or behaviors of certain sex offenders,
- d. Information that may not be released to the public,
- e. Conditions of probation or parole supervision, courts, or other outside agencies,
- f. Departmental protocols for verification, records management, community notification and related departmental tracking and crime prevention protocols.

##### 2. All officers shall receive in-service training related to interactions with RSOs and the use of departmental and related information on RSOs compiled for investigative and crime prevention purposes. This includes:

- a. reporting relevant information to departmental authorities concerning interactions with sex offenders,
- b. understanding of conditions related to community supervised release,
- c. responding to community concerns about RSOs, and
- d. directing community members to appropriate resources within the department.

When possible, the department should invite representatives from other partnering public safety and community agencies to in-service trainings.

#### F. Multiagency Partnerships and Information Sharing

A major component of supervising sex offenders is the collaborative efforts and partnerships between law enforcement and other community and criminal justice agencies. This department shall ask to coordinate its efforts with other criminal justice agencies to monitor, investigate, apprehend, and prosecute repeat sex offenders. This includes the following agencies:

##### 1. Institutional and Community-Based Corrections

Corrections officials may assist in the following ways:

- a. Providing advance notification of RSOs' releases from correctional facilities into the community
  - b. Conducting joint home visits to verify RSO status
  - c. Sharing conditions of release (drug and alcohol prohibitions, restrictions on travel, restrictions on contact with children, and so on)
  - d. Tracking the movement of offenders inside and outside the jurisdiction
- ##### 2. Regional and Local Task Forces and Other Multiagency Collaborations
- Multidisciplinary task forces should be comprised of law enforcement officers, corrections officials, judicial personnel, victim advocates, treatment providers, educational professionals, and other community service providers. Such task forces and partnerships increase the department's pool of resources and assist with investigations of violations through the regular exchange of information about specific cases.

#### National and Federal Resources

- **American Probation and Parole Association**  
<http://www.appa-net.org/>
- **Center for Sex Offender Management**  
<http://www.csom.org/>
- **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**  
<http://www.ncmec.org/>
- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement**  
<http://www.ice.gov/>
- **U.S. Department of Justice**
  - **Interpol**  
<http://usdoj.gov/usncb>
  - **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Internet Crimes against Children Task Force**  
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>
  - **Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registration, and Tracking (SMART) Office**  
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/smart/>
  - **U.S. Marshals Service**  
<http://www.usmarshals.gov/>

Every effort has been made by the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center staff and advisory board to ensure that this document incorporates the most current information and contemporary professional judgment on this issue. However, law enforcement administrators should be cautioned that no “model” policy can meet all the needs of any given law enforcement agency. Each law enforcement agency operates in a unique environment of federal court rulings, state laws, local ordinances, regulations, judicial and administrative decisions and collective bargaining agreements that must be considered. In addition, the formulation of specific agency policies must take into account local political and community perspectives and customs, prerogatives and demands; often divergent law enforcement strategies and philosophies; and the impact of varied agency resource capabilities among other factors.

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