

Sex Offender Registry Requirements Across the United States

What is the Sex Offender Registry?

Every state and U.S. territory requires those convicted of sex offenses to be added to a registry to be monitored and tracked after their release back into the community. Information about the offender is collected and shared with local and federal authorities, as well as the general public. Requirements and restrictions are often placed on registered sex offenders. That registration process is unique in each state and U.S. territory.

What is SORNA?

The Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) was passed in 2006 as part of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act to provide federal standards for jurisdictions to follow. SORNA calls for states and U.S. territories to meet minimum requirements for sex offender registration and notification.

Why Are the Requirements for Sex Offender Registration Different Everywhere?

While SORNA's guidelines streamlined registration and notification requirements across the country, these requirements are far from uniform. Each jurisdiction determines the details of their own registration process. This leaves a patchwork of rules for sex offenders that vary widely depending on where a registrant lives or works.

Where PIN Comes In

Probation Information Network developed a list of questions regarding the sex offender registration requirements across the country. These are questions that might concern the public, victims and their advocates, or those who are facing registration or are currently registered and their loved ones. We then searched the statutes or code of each jurisdiction for the laws surrounding sex offender registration and notification. Where necessary, we consulted with the law enforcement agency in charge of the jurisdiction's registry to provide clear and concise answers to the following questions:

- **What is the duration of registration?**

How long must a sex offender remain on the registry? The length of time a sex offender must comply with registration requirements varies widely depending on the jurisdiction where the registrant lives, and the level of the offense committed. All but 2 jurisdictions offer a path for eventual removal from the registry for at least some of their registrants.

- **Must the immediate community be notified directly, either by the offender or law enforcement?**

Every jurisdiction has passive community notification in the form of a public sex offender registry website. Concerned citizens are free to search the website and can sign up for email notifications if a sex offender moves into their neighborhood. Some jurisdictions go even further and require active notification, where either law enforcement or the offender themselves is required to directly

notify the immediate community that a sex offender is in the area. This can take many forms, including electronic, mail, or in-person notification, publication in local newspapers, and community meetings.

- **What are the residence distance restrictions?**

Are there any restrictions on where a registered sex offender can live? Some jurisdictions restrict registrants from living within a measured distance of certain places. This restriction could be for all registrants, or only for higher-level offenders or those under supervision. Some jurisdictions do not have a state-wide restriction but do allow local jurisdictions to enact their own.

- **What are the employment distance restrictions?**

Registered sex offenders are usually restricted from certain types of employment, and from working at establishments that specifically cater to minors. Some jurisdictions go even further and restrict registrants from working within a measured distance of certain places.

- **Is an employer's information included on the public registry?**

Returning citizens of every type need to find employment upon reentry, and sex offenders are no exception. Some jurisdictions include registrants' employment information on the public registry website. This could be the employer's address or in some cases the name of the employer.

- **Are online identifiers included on the public registry?**

Some jurisdictions require registered sex offenders to report any identifiers they use online, such as email addresses and social media user names. In some jurisdictions that information is included on the public registry website, separate from the registrant's profile, in a feature that allows the public to search by specific identifiers.

- **Is a state-issued ID required to be labeled?**

Some jurisdictions require a state-issued ID, such as a driver's license, to be labeled to identify the holder as a registered sex offender. This label could be the words "Sex Offender" printed on the ID in a prominent place or a more subtle designation known to law enforcement.

- **What is the cost of registration?**

Is there a fee to register as a sex offender? Some jurisdictions pass on some of their administrative costs to the registrants. This could be a one-time fee paid only upon initial registration, or an ongoing fee paid annually or quarterly. Some jurisdictions charge a fee every time a registrant updates their information.

- **How long can a registrant be in the state for work or education before registration is required?**

Does a sex offender have to register if they work or go to school in a different state? It depends on the state, and how long the registrant will be there. Some jurisdictions require registrants to notify authorities immediately, while others allow limited stays without requiring registration. Registrants currently under supervision usually need permission from their Parole or Probation Officer before traveling and should always consult their supervising officer.

- **How long can a registrant visit the state before registration is required?**

Can a registered sex offender go on vacation? Does a sex offender have to register if they visit a different state? It depends on the state, and how long the registrant will be there. Some jurisdictions require registrants to notify authorities immediately, while others allow limited stays without requiring registration. Registrants currently under supervision usually need permission from their Parole or Probation Officer before traveling and should always consult their supervising officer.

The answers provided are taken directly from the laws found on the state or territory's legislative website or, where necessary, from the website of the law enforcement agency in charge of the jurisdiction's registry. In some cases, we contacted state or territory officials for clarification and have directly quoted those conversations.

Disclaimer

While we stand by our research, it is for informational purposes only. It should not be considered legal advice and, while we strive to provide accurate and up to date information, it is not guaranteed to be complete or correct. We provide links to each jurisdiction's legislative and law enforcement websites and maintain a directory of lawyers who specialize in sex offender registration laws. For those currently under supervision, consult with your Parole or Probation Officer for guidance.

Iowa Sex Offender Registry Requirements

What is the duration of registration?

IA Code § 692A.106

1. Except as otherwise provided in section 232.54, 692A.103, or 692A.128, or this section, the duration of registration required under this chapter shall be for a period of ten years. The registration period shall begin as provided in section 692A.103.
2. A sex offender who has been sentenced to a special sentence under section 903B.1 or 903B.2, shall be required to register for a period equal to the term of the special sentence, but in no case not less than the period specified in subsection 1.
3. If a sex offender is placed on probation, parole, or work release and the probation, parole, or work release is revoked, the period of registration shall commence anew upon release from custody.
4. A sex offender who is convicted of violating any of the requirements of this chapter shall register for an additional ten years, commencing from the date the offender's registration would have expired under subsection 1 or, in the case of an offender who has been sentenced to a special sentence under section 903B.1 or 903B.2, commencing from the date the offender's registration would have expired under subsection 2.
5. A sex offender shall, upon a second or subsequent conviction that requires a second registration, or upon conviction of an aggravated offense, or who has previously been convicted of one or more offenses that would have required registration under this chapter, register for life.
6. A sexually violent predator shall register for life.

Must the immediate community be notified directly, either by the offender or law enforcement?

No.

What are the residence distance restrictions?

The residency restriction applies ONLY to the three (3) Iowa statutes listed in the definition of "aggravated offense against a minor", or an offense from another jurisdiction (meaning any state, U.S. territory, or federally recognized Indian Tribal Nation) that is comparable to one of those three Iowa offenses. Offenders convicted for any other offense, regardless of whether the victim was a minor, are exempt from the residency restriction.

– Iowa Department of Public Safety

IA Code § 692A.101

2.a. "Aggravated offense against a minor" means a conviction for any of the following offenses, if such offense was committed against a minor, or otherwise involves a minor:

- (1) Sexual abuse in the first degree in violation of section 709.2.
- (2) Sexual abuse in the second degree in violation of section 709.3.
- (3) Sexual abuse in the third degree in violation of section 709.4, except for a violation of section 709.4, subsection 1, paragraph "b", subparagraph (2), subparagraph division (d).
- (4) Continuous sexual abuse of a child in violation of section 709.23.

IA Code § 692A.114

1. As used in this section:

- a. "Minor" means a person who is under eighteen years of age or who is enrolled in a secondary school.
- b. "School" means a public or nonpublic elementary or secondary school.
- c. "Sex offender" means a person required to be registered under this chapter who has been convicted of an aggravated offense against a minor.

2. A sex offender shall not reside within two thousand feet of the real property comprising a school or a child care facility.

3. A sex offender residing within two thousand feet of the real property comprising a school or a child care facility does not commit a violation of this section if any of the following apply:

- c. The sex offender has established a residence prior to July 1, 2002.
- d. The sex offender has established a residence prior to any newly located school or child care facility being established.

What are the employment distance restrictions?

None.

Is an employer's information included on the public registry?

No.

IA Code § 692A.121

2. b. (2) The following relevant information shall not be disclosed on the internet site:

- (b) The employer name, address, or location where a sex offender acts as an employee in any form of employment.

Are online identifiers included on the public registry?

Offenders must register internet identifiers pursuant to IA Code § 692A.101 23.a (9). While this information is not included on an offender's registry profile, there is a separate search feature that allows the public to search by specific email addresses or internet identifiers.

IA Code § 692A.121

9. A person may contact the department or a county sheriff's office to verify if a particular internet identifier or telephone number is one that has been included in a registration by a sex offender.

Is a state-issued ID required to be labeled?

No.

What is the cost of registration?

IA Code § 692A.110

1. A sex offender shall pay an annual fee in the amount of twenty-five dollars to the sheriff of the county of principal residence, beginning with the first required in-person appearance at the sheriff's office after July 1, 2009. If the sex offender has more than one principal residence in this state, the offender shall pay the annual fee in the county where the offender is first required to appear in person after July 1,

2009. The sheriff shall accept the registration. If, at the time of registration, the sex offender is unable to pay the fee, the sheriff may allow the offender time to pay the fee, permit the payment of the fee in installments, or may waive payment of the fee. Fees paid to the sheriff shall be used to defray the costs of duties related to the registration of sex offenders under this chapter.

How long can a registrant be in the state for work or education before registration is required?

IA Code § 692A.104

1. A sex offender shall appear in person to register with the sheriff of each county where the offender has a residence, maintains employment, or is in attendance as a student, within five business days of being required to register under section 692A.103 by providing all relevant information to the sheriff. A sheriff shall accept the registration of any person who is required to register in the county pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

How long can a registrant visit the state before registration is required?

Offenders who reside in Iowa, whether moving in or visiting, have (5) days to register with the Sheriff's Office at the county where they have established residence.

– Iowa Department of Public Safety

IA Code § 692A.104

1. A sex offender shall appear in person to register with the sheriff of each county where the offender has a residence, maintains employment, or is in attendance as a student, within five business days of being required to register under section 692A.103 by providing all relevant information to the sheriff. A sheriff shall accept the registration of any person who is required to register in the county pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.