

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.

New York Sex Offender Registry Requirements

What is the duration of registration?

NY Corr L § 168-H

1. The duration of registration and verification for a sex offender who has not been designated a sexual predator, or a sexually violent offender, or a predicate sex offender, and who is classified as a level one risk, or who has not yet received a risk level classification, shall be annually for a period of twenty years from the initial date of registration.
2. The duration of registration and verification for a sex offender who, on or after March eleventh, two thousand two, is designated a sexual predator, or a sexually violent offender, or a predicate sex offender, or who is classified as a level two or level three risk, shall be annually for life. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a sex offender who is classified as a level two risk and who is not designated a sexual predator, a sexually violent offender or a predicate sex offender, may be relieved of the duty to register and verify as provided by subdivision one of section one hundred sixty-eight-o of this article.

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

The local law enforcement agency where the offender currently resides, can, if it chooses, release information on sex offenders residing in the community to "entities with vulnerable populations related to the nature of the offense." The law enforcement agency can only release information on level 1, level 2 and level 3 offenders through community notification. Therefore, there is no community notification for sex offenders whose status is Pending. Also, while the exact address of level 3 offenders can be provided, the law provides that only an approximate address based on zip code can be provided for level 1 offenders. Please note that a federal court injunction currently prohibits the release of information through this method concerning sex offenders who committed their crime prior to January 21, 1996 and were assigned a risk level prior to January 1, 2000.

– New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Refer to NY Corr L § 168-L. 6 for more details.

What are the residence distance restrictions?

The Sex Offender Registration Act does not restrict where a registered sex offender may live.

However, if the offender is under parole or probation supervision, other New York State laws may limit the offender from living within 1,000 feet of a school or other facility caring for children.

– New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

What are the employment distance restrictions?

None.

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

Yes, for level 2 and 3 offenders only.

NY Corr L § 168-Q

1. The division shall maintain a subdirectory of level two and three sex offenders. The subdirectory shall include the exact address, address of the offender's place of employment and photograph of the sex offender along with the following information, if available: name, physical description, age and distinctive markings. Background information including all of the sex offender's crimes of conviction that require him or her to register pursuant to this article, modus of operation, type of victim targeted, the name and address of any institution of higher education at which the sex offender is enrolled, attends, is employed or resides and a description of special conditions imposed on the sex offender shall also be included. The subdirectory shall have sex offender listings categorized by county and zip code. Such subdirectory shall be made available at all times on the internet via the division homepage. Any person may apply to the division to receive automated e-mail notifications whenever a new or updated subdirectory registration occurs in a geographic area specified by such person. The division shall furnish such service at no charge to such person, who shall request e-mail notification by county and/or zip code on forms developed and provided by the division. E-mail notification is limited to three geographic areas per e-mail account.

Are online identifiers included on the public registry?

While offenders must register internet identifiers [NY Corr L § 168-B. 1. (a)], this information is not included on the public registry.

Is a state-issued ID required to be labeled?

No.

What is the cost of registration?

NY Corr L § 168-B

8. The division shall charge a fee of ten dollars each time a sex offender registers any change of address or any change of his or her status of enrollment, attendance, employment or residence at any institution of higher education as required by subdivision four of section one hundred sixty-eight-f of this article. The fee shall be paid to the division by the sex offender. The state comptroller is hereby authorized to deposit such fees into the general fund.

NY Penal L § 60.35

1. (a) Except as provided in section eighteen hundred nine of the vehicle and traffic law and section 27.12 of the parks, recreation and historic preservation law, whenever proceedings in an administrative tribunal or a court of this state result in a conviction for a felony, a misdemeanor, or a violation, as these terms are defined in section 10.00 of this chapter, there shall be levied at sentencing a mandatory surcharge, sex offender registration fee, DNA databank fee and a crime victim assistance fee in addition to any sentence required or permitted by law, in accordance with the following schedule:

(i) a person convicted of a felony shall pay a mandatory surcharge of three hundred dollars and a crime victim assistance fee of twenty-five dollars;

(ii) a person convicted of a misdemeanor shall pay a mandatory surcharge of one hundred seventy-five dollars and a crime victim assistance fee of twenty-five dollars;

(iii) a person convicted of a violation shall pay a mandatory surcharge of ninety-five dollars and a crime victim assistance fee of twenty-five dollars;

(iv) a person convicted of a sex offense as defined by subdivision two of section one hundred sixty-eight-a of the correction law or a sexually violent offense as defined by subdivision three of section one hundred sixty-eight-a of the correction law shall, in addition to a mandatory surcharge and crime victim assistance fee, pay a sex offender registration fee of fifty dollars.

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

NY Corr L § 168-F

6. Any nonresident worker or nonresident student, as defined in subdivisions fourteen and fifteen of section one hundred sixty-eight-a of this article, shall register his or her current address and the address of his or her place of employment or educational institution attended with the division within ten calendar days after such nonresident worker or nonresident student commences employment or attendance at an educational institution in the state. Any nonresident worker or nonresident student shall notify the division of any change of residence, employment or educational institution address no later than ten days after such change. The division shall notify the law enforcement agency where the nonresident worker is employed or the educational institution is located that a nonresident worker or nonresident student is present in that agency's jurisdiction.

NY Corr L § 168-A

14. "Nonresident worker" means any person required to register as a sex offender in another jurisdiction who is employed or carries on a vocation in this state, on either a full-time or a part-time basis, with or without compensation, for more than fourteen consecutive days, or for an aggregate period exceeding thirty days in a calendar year.

15. "Nonresident student" means a person required to register as a sex offender in another jurisdiction who is enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis in any public or private educational institution in this state including any secondary school, trade or professional institution or institution of higher education.

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

NYS does not require registration for a short visit (less than 14 days) however, as a courtesy, it is suggested that the offender advises local law enforcement of their presence in the area.

Living in NY for 14 consecutive days or 30 days over the course of a 12-month period could be considered residency and would be a deciding factor in referring a case to the New York State Board of Examiners of Sex Offenders to determine if the offender is required to register in NYS.

– New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services