

# 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.

# **Virginia Sex Offender Registry Requirements**

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

VA Code § 9.1-910

A. Any person required to register, other than a person who has been convicted of any (i) Tier III offense, (ii) two or more offenses for which registration is required, (iii) a violation of former § 18.2-67.2:1, or (iv) murder, may petition the circuit court in which he was convicted or the circuit court in the jurisdiction where he then resides for removal of his name and all identifying information from the Registry. A person who is required to register for a single Tier I offense may petition the court no earlier than 15 years from the later of the date of initial registration or the date of his last conviction for (a) a violation of § 18.2-472.1 or (b) any felony. A person who is required to register for a single Tier II offense may petition the court no earlier than 25 years from the later of the date of initial registration or the date of his last conviction for (1) a violation of § 18.2-472.1 or (2) any felony.

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

No.

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

VA Code § 18.2-370.3

A. Every adult who is convicted of an offense occurring on or after July 1, 2006, where the offender is more than three years older than the victim, of one of the following qualifying offenses: (i) clause (iii) of subsection A of § 18.2-61, (ii) subdivision A 1 of § 18.2-67.1, (iii) subdivision A 1 of § 18.2-67.2, or (iv) any similar offense under the laws of any foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, or the United States or any political subdivision thereof, shall be forever prohibited from residing within 500 feet of the premises of any place he knows or has reason to know is a child day center as defined in § 22.1-289.02, or a primary, secondary, or high school. A violation of this section is a Class 6 felony. The provisions of this section shall only apply if the qualifying offense was done in the commission of, or as a part of the same course of conduct as, or as part of a common scheme or plan as a violation of (a) subsection A of § 18.2-47 or § 18.2-48; (b) § 18.2-89, 18.2-90, or 18.2-91; (c) § 18.2-51.2; or (d) any similar offense under the laws of any foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, or the United States or any political subdivision thereof.

B. An adult who is convicted of an offense as specified in subsection A and has established a lawful residence shall not be in violation of this section if a child day center or a primary, secondary, or high school is established within 500 feet of his residence subsequent to his conviction.

C. Every adult who is convicted of an offense occurring on or after July 1, 2008, where the offender is more than three years older than the victim, of one of the following qualifying offenses: (i) clause (iii) of subsection A of § 18.2-61, (ii) subdivision A 1 of § 18.2-67.1, (iii) subdivision A 1 of § 18.2-67.2, or (iv) any similar offense under the laws of any foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, or the

United States or any political subdivision thereof, shall be forever prohibited from residing within 500 feet of the boundary line of any place he knows is a public park when such park (a) is owned and operated by a county, city, or town, (b) shares a boundary line with a primary, secondary, or high school, and (c) is regularly used for school activities. A violation of this section is a Class 6 felony. The provisions of this section shall only apply if the qualifying offense was done in the commission of, or as a part of the same course of conduct as, or as part of a common scheme or plan as a violation of (1) subsection A of § 18.2-47 or § 18.2-48; (2) § 18.2-89, 18.2-90, or 18.2-91; (3) § 18.2-51.2; or (4) any similar offense under the laws of any foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, or the United States or any political subdivision thereof.

D. An adult who is convicted of an offense as specified in subsection C and has established a lawful residence shall not be in violation of this section if a public park that (i) is owned and operated by a county, city, or town, (ii) shares a boundary line with a primary, secondary, or high school, and (iii) is regularly used for school activities, is established within 500 feet of his residence subsequent to his conviction.

E. The prohibitions in this section predicated upon an offense similar to any offense set forth in this section under the laws of any foreign country or any political subdivision thereof, or the United States or any political subdivision thereof, shall apply only to residences established on and after July 1, 2017.

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

None.

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

Yes.

VA Code § 9.1-913

The State Police shall develop and maintain a system for making certain Registry information on persons convicted of an offense for which registration is required publicly available by means of the Internet. The information to be made available shall include the offender's name; all aliases that he has used or under which he may have been known; the date and locality of the conviction and a brief description of the offense; his age, current address, and photograph; his current work address; the name of any institution of higher education at which he is currently enrolled; and such other information as the State Police may from time to time determine is necessary to preserve public safety, including but not limited to the fact that an individual is wanted for failing to register, reregister, or verify his registration information. The system shall be secure and not capable of being altered except by the State Police. The system shall be updated each business day with newly received registrations, reregistrations and verifications of registration information. The State Police shall remove all information that it knows to be inaccurate from the Internet system.

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

While offenders must register online identifiers [VA Code § 9.1-903. B], 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?**

There is no state-mandated fee, though fees may be assessed by local law enforcement.

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

VA Code § 9.1-905

B. Nonresident offenders entering the Commonwealth for an extended visit, for employment, to carry on a vocation, or as a student attending school who are required to register in their state of residence or who would be required to register if a resident of the Commonwealth shall, within three days of entering

the Commonwealth for an extended visit, accepting employment or enrolling in school in the Commonwealth, be required to register and reregister in person with the local law-enforcement agency.

D. For purposes of this section:

"Employment" and "carry on a vocation" include employment that is full-time or part-time for a period of time exceeding 14 days or for an aggregate period of time exceeding 30 days during any calendar year, whether financially compensated, volunteered, or for the purpose of government or educational benefit.

"Student" means a person who is enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis, in any public or private educational institution, 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?**

VA Code § 9.1-905

B. Nonresident offenders entering the Commonwealth for an extended visit, for employment, to carry on a vocation, or as a student attending school who are required to register in their state of residence or who would be required to register if a resident of the Commonwealth shall, within three days of entering the Commonwealth for an extended visit, accepting employment or enrolling in school in the Commonwealth, be required to register and reregister in person with the local law-enforcement agency.

D. For purposes of this section:

"Extended visit" means a period of visitation for any purpose in the Commonwealth of 30 days or more.