

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.

South Dakota Sex Offender Registry Requirements

What is the duration of registration?

SDCL § 22-24B-2.1

The sex offender registry consists of three tiers as provided for in §§ 22-24B-19 to 22-24B-19.2, inclusive. Placement in Tier III requires registrants to register throughout their lifetime. Placement in Tier II requires registrants to register for a minimum of twenty-five years. Placement in Tier I requires registrants to register for a minimum of five years.

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

No.

What are the residence distance restrictions?

22-24B-22

Terms used in §§ 22-24B-22 to 22-24B-28, inclusive, mean:

(1) "Community safety zone," the measurement of a straight line that creates an area that lies within five hundred feet from the facilities and grounds of any school, public park, public playground, domestic abuse shelter, sexual assault shelter, or public pool, including the facilities and grounds itself;

22-24B-23

No person who is required to register as a sex offender pursuant to this chapter may establish a residence or reside within a community safety zone unless:

(6) The person established and inhabited the residence as of July 1, 2024;

(7) The school, public park, public pool, domestic abuse shelter, sexual assault shelter, or public playground was built or established subsequent to the person's establishing residence at the location; or

(8) The circuit court has entered an order pursuant to § 22-24B-28 exempting the offender from the provisions of §§ 22-24B-22 to 22-24B-28, inclusive.

What are the employment distance restrictions?

None.

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

No.

Are online identifiers included on the public registry?

While offenders must register online identifiers [SDCL § 22-24B-8 (13)], 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?

SDCL § 22-24B-2

The sex offender shall register within three business days of coming into any county to reside, temporarily domicile, attend school, attend postsecondary education classes, or work. Registration shall be with the chief of police of the municipality or the sheriff of the county in which the sex offender resides, temporarily domiciles, attends school, attends postsecondary education classes, or works. The sex offender shall notify the chief of police or sheriff if there is a change where the sex offender resides, attends school, or works.

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

SDCL § 22-24B-2

The sex offender shall register within three business days of coming into any county to reside, temporarily domicile, attend school, attend postsecondary education classes, or work. Registration shall be with the chief of police of the municipality or the sheriff of the county in which the sex offender resides, temporarily domiciles, attends school, attends postsecondary education classes, or works. The sex offender shall notify the chief of police or sheriff if there is a change where the sex offender resides, attends school, or works.