



Sex Offender Laws

Office of Attorney General, 600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505
Tel: (701) 328-2210 On the web: www.ag.nd.gov; e-mail: ndag@nd.gov

Sex Offenders have always been a part of our community but until recently they have not been a part of our daily awareness. North Dakota's laws require offenders to register with local law enforcement and to keep law enforcement informed of any changes in address, employment or other registration information. These laws work; our state's compliance rate is over 97%.

Laws Relating to Offenders

There are no state laws prohibiting where a sex offender may live or work. An offender may live in an apartment building, near a school, park, or daycare *unless* a condition of that individual's probation prohibits it. The terms of an offender's probation are set by the court on a case-by-case basis.

There *are* laws restricting when and whether an offender may be on or in school property. Offenders are prohibited from being on or near school property except for purposes of voting, attending an open meeting, and as allowed by school board policy (for example, to attend parent-teacher conferences or school functions). Contact your child's school for more information.

Community Notification

Police and Sheriff's departments around the state do community notifications through the news media, public meetings, or personal notification when *high risk* offenders and *lifetime* registrants move into a neighborhood. A local law enforcement agency considers many factors before deciding when and how to notify the community. Ask your police department or sheriff's office what the specific policies and procedures are for public notification in your community.

Why Not Every Offender?

If the community was notified about every offender, it would dilute the usefulness of the information about the few offenders who pose a very serious risk to the public. Public notification about low-risk offenders may have the unintended effect of making them *more* risky. An employed sex offender living in a known location and who is participating in an offender treatment program is preferable to one who is unemployed, transient, and with no incentive to complete treatment.

Offenders Who Live Near You

The "*Offenders Near Me*" button on the sex offender website (www.sexoffender.nd.gov) is a search feature that brings up a list of high risk and lifetime offenders living within a certain radius from an address you enter (such as your home or child's school), that you can then map. The map, which can be zoomed in and out, shows the location of offenders as "push pins." When the mouse hovers over a push pin, the offender's name and address pop up. Clicking on the offender's name takes you to the offender's detail page, which contains a description of the individual, information about the offenses, and current photographs.

What About My Children?

If you are concerned about a high risk sex offender living in your neighborhood, you should be able to alert your children without scaring them with graphic details. You may wish to review the offender's page on the sex offender website. You can point out to your children where the offender lives, describe what he or she looks like and instruct your children to stay away and to tell you about anything suspicious. Work with your neighbors to watch out for each other's children. Report any suspicious activity to the police.



Protecting Our Children

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Text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms and social networking sites (such as MySpace, Facebook, and others) can make it difficult for parents to be sure who their children are talking to and how much personal information they are sharing. Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem offers the following information to help you protect your children.

Protecting Your Child

Monitor your child's online activity just as you do their regular activities. Keep the computer in an area where you can see it and see what's on the screen; never let your child use a computer in their room. Check the browser history to follow the sites your child has visited. Set your computer filters and security software to block adult content and any sites you do not want your child to access. Monitor your child's e-mail activity.

- For more information on Internet safety tips and how to talk to your child, go to www.netismartz.org or contact the Attorney General's office at (701) 328-2210.

If your child has a cell phone, monitor the text messages and phone calls to make sure you know who they are talking to and when. Check with your cell phone provider on how to monitor or restrict your child's usage.

Sex Offender Website

The state's Sex Offender website (www.sexoffender.nd.gov) provides instant access to information about registered offenders living within your community and across the state. This website has many features that parents can use to help keep their families safe, including the ability to "map" high risk and lifetime offenders within a specified city or town.

The website is updated as information is reported to us by local law enforcement agencies. Address information is verified at least every three months for lifetime registrants and high risk offenders and every six months for other offenders. Offender employment and other information also is regularly verified and the offender's photograph updated.

Are All Offenders on the Website?

All sex offenders are on the sex offender website but not all have the same detail. Offenders with a *lifetime* requirement for registration, those who have been deemed a *high* risk for re-offending, and *delinquent* offenders are shown with full details and photographs—click on the "Search Lifetime and High Risk Offenders" button or the "Delinquent Offenders" button to see these individuals.

A printable list of *all* offenders (including moderate and low risk offenders), can be downloaded for a specific city, county, or for the entire state, by clicking the "**Printable List of All Offenders**" button.

How Much Information is on the Website?

The printed list gives the offender's name, address, last date that address was verified, offense, sentence, conviction date, court, and the date the registration requirement expires.

For high risk and lifetime offenders the website includes photographs, detailed information about the offenses, a link to the e-mail notification system, a "**map it**" feature, and more. You can map one offender's address or map all offenders near you. Delinquent offenders are shown with photographs and information as of the date the offender last registered.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information on the sex offender website is as accurate as possible. However, it is possible that our information has not kept up with a recent move if an offender has failed to make the notifications required by law, or if the information has not yet reached this office. We ask the public to contact us if there are any discrepancies.