

NYS Sex Offense Registration Act (SORA) **Community Notification Summary**

SORA Website (passive notification)

(Correction Law § 168-q, 168-l(6))

- Risk Level 1 - not on the SORA website
- Risk Level 2 - on the SORA website
- Risk Level 3 - on the SORA website

The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) maintains New York's SORA registry and the SORA website. The website is a subdirectory of the entire NYS SORA registry; it includes information only about those registrants who are deemed risk level 2 or 3 (those deemed risk level 1 are not included on the website).

The following information is included on the SORA website: photo with registrant's name, physical description, age, and distinctive markings; registrant's exact address; address of registrant's place of employment; any institution of higher education at which the registrant is enrolled, resides, or is employed; the crime of conviction, modus operandi, and type of victim targeted; and any special conditions imposed on the registrant.

As of May, 2012, there were 34,076 individuals on the registry as a whole; 20,432 of these individual are included on the SORA website.¹ Searches on the SORA website have increased each year; in 2008 there were 4.3 million searches conducted, while in 2009 there were 6.4 million searches conducted, a 50% increase.²

1-800-Telephone Number (passive notification)

(Correction Law § 168-p)

DCJS maintains a 1-800 telephone number that members of the public can call to ask whether a specific individual is required the register. The caller must provide identifying information, such as the individual's exact address, driver's license number, social security number, or physical description. DCJS shall determine if the named individual reasonably appears to be one of the individuals listed on the registry, and of so, shall provide the caller with the same information law enforcement may provide. (See below). In addition, non-profit youth-serving organizations can pre-register with DCJS so such organizations can call and inquire about multiple named individuals as a tool for screening "prospective coaches, leaders, or volunteers."

In 2009, there were 623,003 name searches conducted via the 1-800 number; matches were found in only 1,214 cases.³

¹ See Division of Criminal Justice Services website, county-by-county count of SORA registrants, available at: http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/stats_by_county.htm.

² See DCJS, 2009 Annual Performance Report for the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services," at 45.

³ Id. at 46.

Email Notification (active notification)

(Correction Law § 168-q(1))

Any person may register with DCJS to receive an automated email message whenever there is new or updated information about a risk level 2 or 3 registrant in the geographic area specified by the person.

Law Enforcement Notification (active notification)

(Correction Law § 168-l(6))

DCJS informs local law enforcement agencies of SORA registrants in their jurisdiction. These law enforcement agencies may disseminate information to “any entity with vulnerable populations related to the nature of the offense committed by such offender.” Law enforcement agencies are required to maintain and update a list of “vulnerable organizational entities within its jurisdiction.” Such list shall include, but not be limited to the following: schools, public and private libraries, public and private school bus transportation companies, day care centers, nursery schools, preschools, neighborhood watch groups, community centers, civic associations, nursing homes, victims’ advocacy groups, and places of worship.

There are some minor differences in the information that can be disseminated based on risk level. See “NYS SORA Law Enforcement Community Notification” Chart.

Miscellaneous Notification Provisions

Correction Law § 168-b(9) (information disseminated to children’s camps): DCJS “shall, upon the request of any children’s camp operator, release to such person any information in the registry relating to a prospective employee.”

Correction Law § 168-b(10) (registrant internet identifiers disseminated to authorized internet entities): DCJS “shall upon the request of any authorized internet entity, release to such entity internet identifiers that would enable such entity to prescreen or remove sex offenders from its services, or, in conformity with state and federal law, advise law enforcement and/or other governmental entities of potential violations of law and/or threats to public safety.”

Correction Law § 168-b(10) (information disseminated to public housing authorities): DCJS “shall make registry information regarding level two and three sex offenders available to municipal housing authorities... to enable such authorities to identify persons ineligible to reside in public housing.”

Correction Law § 168-b(10), 168-l(6) (information about registrants disseminated to institutions of higher education): Once DCJS notifies a local law enforcement agency of updated information about a registrant’s enrollment, residence, or employment at an institution of higher education, the law enforcement agency shall notify the school and other “vulnerable organizational entities” within its jurisdiction.