

TOWN OF OTISFIELD
SEX OFFENDER COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION POLICY

ADOPTED: 08/16/2006

EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/16/2006

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CHAIRMAN-MARK CYR, THOMAS NURMI, AND HAL FERGUSON

I. POLICY:

This agency recognizes the necessity of maintaining the delicate balance between governmental interests and individual rights of the offender and the public's right to or interest in accessing this type of public information in a free society. To simultaneously address and properly balance these interests and rights requires all members of this agency to adhere to the following guidelines. It is the policy of this agency to comply with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, 34-A M.R.S.A. Chapter 15, including its provisions related to public notification of registered sex offenders in the community.

Minimum Standard: 1 and 6

II. PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the purpose of public notification of registered sex offenders in the community and the appropriate level of that notification based on the nature of the sex offender's conviction and the facts that were proved or admitted in relation to that conviction.

III. DEFINITIONS:

A. Another State: Means each of the several states except Maine, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands.
34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(1-C).

Minimum Standard: 2

B. Bureau: The State Bureau of Identification of the Maine State Police.

C. Domicile: The place where a person has that person's established, fixed, permanent or ordinary dwelling place or legal residence to which, whenever the person is absent, the person has the intention of returning. A person may have more than one residence but only one domicile. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(2).

Minimum Standard: 2

D. Law Enforcement Agency Having Jurisdiction: The chief of police in the municipality where a registrant expects to be or is domiciled. If the municipality does not have a chief of police, it means the sheriff of the county where the municipality is located. "Law enforcement agency having jurisdiction" also means the sheriff of the county in an unorganized territory. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(4).

E. Lifetime Registrant: A person who is an adult convicted and sentenced or a juvenile convicted and sentenced as an adult of: (1) a Sexually Violent Offense; or (2) a sex offense when the person has a prior conviction for or an attempt to commit an offense that includes the essential elements of a sex offense or sexually violent offense. Prior conviction means a conviction that occurred at any time. More than one conviction may occur on the same day. Multiple convictions that result from or are connected with the same act or that result from offenses committed at the same time are considered one conviction unless the offenses were committed against more than one victim. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(8).

F. Residence: Means that place or those places, other than a domicile, in which a person may spend time living, residing or dwelling. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(4-D).

Minimum Standard: 2

G. Safe Children Zone: On or within 1000 feet of the real property comprising a public or private elementary or secondary school or on or within 1,000 feet of the real property comprising a day care center licensed pursuant to 22 M.R.S.A. § 8301-A. 17-A M.R.S.A. § 251 (1)(F).

H. Sentence: Means in addition to any punishment alternatives, includes an involuntary commitment under Title 15, section 103, or similar statute from another jurisdiction, following a verdict of not criminally responsible by reason of mental disease or defect or similar verdict in another jurisdiction. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(4-B).

Minimum Standard: 2

I. Sexual Act: Means:

1. Any act between two persons involving direct physical contact between the genitals of one and the mouth or anus of the other, or direct physical contact between the genitals of one and the genitals of the other;

2. Any act between a person and an animal being used by another person that involves direct physical contact between the genitals of one and the mouth, or anus of the other, or direct physical contact between the genitals of one and the genitals of the other, or;
3. Any act involving direct physical contact between the genitals or anus of one and an instrument or device manipulated by another person when that act is done for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire or for the purpose of causing bodily injury or offensive physical contact. A sexual act may be proved without allegation or proof of penetration. 17-A M.R.S.A. § 251(1)(C).

J. Sexual Contact: Any touching of the genitals or anus, directly or through clothing, other than as would constitute a sexual act, for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire or for the purpose of causing bodily injury or offensive physical contact. 17-A M.R.S.A. § 251(1)(D).

K. Sex Offense: A conviction for one of the following offenses or for an attempt or solicitation of one of the following offenses if the victim was less than 18 years of age at the time of the criminal conduct: A violation under former Title 17, section 2922; former Title 17, section 2923; former Title 17, section 2924; Title 17-A, section 253, subsection 2, paragraph E, F, G, H, I or J; Title 17-A, section 254; former Title 17-A, section 255, subsection 1, paragraph A, E, F, G, I or J; former Title 17-A, section 255, subsection 1, paragraph B or D if the crime was not elevated a class under former Title 17-A, section 255, subsection 3; Title 17-A, section 255-A, subsection 1, paragraph A, B, C, G, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, R, S or T; Title 17-A, section 256; Title 17-A, section 258; Title 17-A, section 259; Title 17-A, section 282; Title 17-A, section 283; Title 17-A, section 284; Title 17-A, section 301, unless the actor is a parent of the victim; Title 17-A, section 302, unless the actor is a parent of the victim; Title 17-A, section 511, subsection 1, paragraph D; Title 17-A, section 556; Title 17-A, section 852, subsection 1, paragraph B; or Title 17-A, section 855; or a violation in another jurisdiction that includes the essential elements of an offense listed above. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(6).

Minimum Standard: 2

L. Sexual Assault Response Team (SART): Response team organized through Maine sexual assault support centers to promote a multidisciplinary collaboration and to create and maintain an effective victim-centered response to sexual violence. This team includes, but is not limited to, representatives from law enforcement agencies, District Attorneys' Offices, medical personnel, and Maine sexual assault support centers.

M. Sexually Violent Offense: A conviction for one of the offenses or for an attempt to commit one of the offenses under former Title 17-A, section 252; under Title 17-A, section 253, subsection 1; Title 17-A, section 253, subsection 2, paragraph A, B, C or D; former Title 17-A, section 255, subsection 1, paragraph C or H; former Title 17-A, section 255, subsection 1, paragraph B or D, if the crime was elevated a class under former Title 17-A, section 255, subsection 3; Title 17-A, section 255-A, subsection 1, paragraph D, E, E-1, F, F-1, H, O or P; or A conviction for an offense or for an attempt to commit an offense of the law in another jurisdiction that includes the essential elements of an offense listed above. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(7).

N. Ten-year Registrant: A person who is an adult convicted and sentenced or a juvenile convicted and sentenced as an adult of a sex offense. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11203(5).

Minimum Standard: 2

O. Verification Form: A 90-day or annual form created by the Bureau on which information concerning the domicile, mailing address, employer and/or school addresses of a registrant is recorded, as well as law enforcement information, including ORI, agency name and officer name. This is sometimes referred to the SORA-#3 form. (See Appendix 3).

IV. PROCEDURE - REGISTRATION AND NOTIFICATION:

Appendix 1 of this policy (1) summarizes the Bureau's procedures with respect to registrants and law enforcement agencies, (2) summarizes registrant obligations under the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, and (3) summarizes law enforcement involvement in the registration and verification process. (See Appendix 1).

V. PROCEDURE - INSTITUTIONS RELEASING SEX OFFENDERS:

This section of the policy, found in Appendix 2, provides officers an opportunity to understand that the State Department of Corrections, county jails, and state mental health institutions that have custody of persons required to register under the law have several requirements. This section summarizes the release procedures.

VI. PROCEDURE - THE CHIEF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER (CLEO):

A. Extent of Notification:

1. The CLEO shall notify community members of registrants in the community, including those in Safe Children Zones, as well as notification to the appropriate Sexual Assault and Crisis Support Centers. The extent of notification is based on the nature of the registrant's conviction and whether the person is required to register as a Lifetime Registrant or Ten-Year Registrant. It is also based on the agency's investigative findings related to the nature of the conviction, which includes the elements of the offense(s) for which the registrant was convicted, and any facts alleged in the charging instrument(s) (including, but not limited to, the age of the victim) that were proved beyond a reasonable doubt or admitted by the registrant.
2. For example, community notification of a **Lifetime Registrant** should be made to the community to the greatest extent reasonably possible, using the means of notification described below in paragraph B. The extent of community notification of a **Ten-year Registrant** should be determined on a case-by-case basis considering factors such as the elements of the offense for which the registrant was convicted, and any facts alleged in the charging instrument, including, but not limited to the age of the victim, that were proved beyond a reasonable doubt or admitted by the registrant.
3. The CLEO should coordinate the community notification with the CLEO of each surrounding jurisdiction in which the registrant resides, works, or attends school or college. The CLEO shall seek guidance from the local District Attorney's Office for any violation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act or the rules adopted pursuant to the Act.

B. Means of Notification: The following methods of notification, which are not intended to be all inclusive, should be considered as a means of notifying the community:

1. News media, e.g., newspaper, television, radio.
2. Informational leaflets that provide general information about registered sex offenders in the community, e.g., "Guide for Community Notification of Sex Offenders". (See Appendix 5).
3. Personal notification, such as door-to-door notification in Safe Children Zones.
4. Notification in the form of public postings at the police station or other designated community locations.
5. Community forum, which should include Sexual Assault and Crisis Support Centers, law enforcement, probation officers, the District Attorney's Office, and sex offender treatment providers.
6. Any other means of notification deemed appropriate by the CLEO for the particular circumstances in order to ensure public safety.
7. Only the Bureau may maintain a sex offender registry on the Internet for purposes of public access. Law enforcement agencies may maintain their own sex offender registries for internal use only by those agencies and may provide a link to the Bureau's Internet sex offender registry. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11221(11). The bureau's sex offender registry on the Internet is at www.informe.org/sor. The agency may also wish to provide a link on its website to the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) at www.mecasa.org.
8. Officers who encounter citizens desiring further information regarding a registrant should direct them to call or visit this agency during regular business hours.

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Minimum Standard: 5

C. Content of Notification: The CLEO may notify the community of public information regarding a registrant living, attending school, or working in the community. Upon receiving a written request that includes the name and date of birth of a registrant, this agency will provide the same public information concerning a registrant to the person requesting it. For purposes of community notification, as well as responding to a written request, this information includes information listed in 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11221(9):

1. The registrant's name, aliases, date of birth, sex, race, height, weight, eye color, mailing address and physical location of domicile and resident;

TOWN OF OTISFIELD

403 State Route 121, Otisfield, ME 04270-6274

Voice: 207.539.2664 Fax: 207.539.2246



TOWN OF OTISFIELD

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B. CLEO- MEANS OF NOTIFICATION

6. Any other means of notification:

a. Town Administrator- Marianne Izzo-Morin- (207) 539-9101 will notify all Selectmen after being notified by CLEO of all sexual offenders living or working in the community, and the form of notification the Sheriff will use to notify the public. This is to include **ALL** offenders even if no public notification will be made.

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2. The registrant's place of employment and college or school being attended, if applicable, and the corresponding address and location;
3. A description of the offense for which the registrant was convicted, the date of conviction and the sentence imposed; and
4. The registrant's photograph.

Minimum Standard: 5 and 6

- D. Violations of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act: Whenever an officer of this agency becomes aware of a violation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, the officer shall investigate the complaint and notify the local Office of the District Attorney for possible prosecution.

Minimum Standard: 9

- E. Policy: This agency shall forward a copy of this policy to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, per 25 M.R.S.A., 2803-B, as well as to the Bureau.

Minimum Standard: 10

VII. PROCEDURE - THE ASSIGNED INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

- A. The officer assigned by the CLEO shall be the designated contact person and shall verify the information on the Verification Form. The officer shall also process the Verification Form and mail it back to the Bureau once it is completed. The officer may use a checklist such as the one reflected in Appendix 4. The CLEO should notify the Bureau of name of the designated contact person.
- B. The officer shall confer with the charging agency for pertinent case history, including any facts alleged in the charging instrument that were proved or admitted.
- C. The officer shall conduct a background investigation on registrant to determine other pertinent facts including, but not limited to, results of NCIC, Triple III, and SBI checks, and shall also attempt to obtain a current photograph. (See Appendix 4).
- D. The officer shall contact the registrant's probation officer regarding any conditions of release and/or other important investigative information regarding the registrant.
- E. The officer should interview the registrant.

Minimum Standard: 3, 4, and 7

- F. The officer should obtain and verify new work locations, supervisor's name(s), names of friends with current addresses and telephone numbers, names of family members with current addresses and telephone numbers, and any other relevant information.
- G. The officer shall verify the addresses and telephone numbers of family friends with the initial information and correct any discrepancies.
- H. The officer shall create a file on each registrant.
- I. The officer shall prepare a report to the CLEO summarizing the investigative findings.

Minimum Standard: 3, 4, and 7

VIII. PROCEDURE - ALL OFFICERS OF THIS AGENCY:

- A. Generally, the officer assigned by the CLEO to handle the investigation will be the person who verifies the information on the Verification Form. (See Appendix 3.) If the assigned officer is not available, it is the responsibility of any officer of this agency to complete a Verification Form on Ten-Year Registrants annually and Lifetime Registrants every 90 days. The registrant will have obtained the verification form from the Bureau and should have brought it to the agency having jurisdiction.
- B. This agency shall be required to verify the information and complete the Verification Form, including verifying a current photograph and obtaining forefinger prints of the registrant. The completed verification form, photograph, and a \$25 fee for annual registrants must be sent back to the Bureau by this agency. The officer should obtain a full set of fingerprints and a current photograph for agency records.

Minimum Standard: 7

- C. The law requires registrants from other states to notify the Bureau in this State if the registrant becomes domiciled, employed, or attends school or college in this State. The Bureau shall notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the same manner as a registrant convicted and sentenced in this State. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11223-11224.

D. Officers of this agency who become aware of a person who has been convicted of a sex offense or sexually violent offense in another state and who is now domiciled, employed, residing, or attending school or college in this State shall notify the Bureau to determine if the person is required to register. The Bureau has different forms for initial registration for persons convicted out of state. Once registered, verification forms for persons convicted in and out of state are the same. All officers are required to treat out-of-state sex offenders who are required to register in the same manner as sex offenders originating from the State of Maine.

Minimum Standard: 8

E. Officers are encouraged to contact the Bureau if they have any questions regarding any registrant, any provision about the requirements of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act or want to obtain a copy of any of the forms regarding this Act.

IX. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY:

The Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act includes the following immunity provision: Neither the failure to perform the requirements of this chapter nor compliance with this chapter subjects any state, municipal or county official or employee to liability in a civil action. The immunity provided under this section applies to the release of relevant information to other officials or employees or to the general public. 34-A M.R.S.A. § 11252.

Appendix 1

SUMMARY OF REGISTRATION AND VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

- A. Initial registration is with the State Bureau of Identification and required by law.
- B. The Bureau then notifies the jurisdictional law enforcement agencies (local municipal police, Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, State Police CID and the area State Police Troop) within the jurisdiction of the registrant's domicile, residence, mailing address, work and school/college and includes the risk assessment (if available).
- C. Registration forms are provided to the registrant by the following sources:
 - 1. Department of Corrections, if the registrant is incarcerated at the State level.
 - 2. County Sheriff's Office, if incarcerated at county level.
 - 3. The presiding court upon conviction and sentence, if the person is not incarcerated.
 - 4. By the Bureau, if it was not already done when the person was released from incarceration or if convicted prior to September 17, 1999.
- D. Registration requirement includes a fee of \$25.00 per year, payable to "Treasurer State of Maine" and a current (must be less than 6 months old) colored passport quality photograph (2¼ X 2½ inches).
- E. Follow-up Verification Form (SORA-03) is then mailed to the offender by the Bureau:
 - 1. 90-day verification required if a Lifetime Registrant.
 - 2. Annual verification required if a report if a 10-Year Registrant.
- F. Current photo (with each verification form) and fee is required annually (with annual verification form). This is then taken to local police for verification. If there is no municipal police, then it is taken to the county sheriffs' office with the jurisdiction of the sex offenders' domicile. Once the law enforcement officer verifies this, that officer shall mail the completed form back to the Bureau.
- G. Identification proof is flexible based on reliability.
- H. "24 Hour" notification rule applies to registrant when changing any of the following conditions: domicile, residence, work, or school. **Note:** There is no specific notification form defined for this mandate.

- I. "5 Day" notification is required to the Bureau when changing any of the following conditions: domicile, residence, work and school/college. This notification is required in writing and if the registrant is being released from incarceration, a written notification is also required.
- J. Offenders who were sentenced after January 1, 1982, are required to meet the registration requirements.
- K. The Bureau provides the jurisdictional law enforcement agencies with a risk assessment summary, **if one exists** and if made available to the Bureau by the originating agency. Other states have a variety of information available that may not be consistent with that available in Maine.
- L. Notification will be made to the individual Law Enforcement Agency Having Jurisdiction by the Bureau, with information on Sex Offender Registrants pursuant to 34-A M.R.S.A, Chapter 15. This information shall include:
 - 1. Registrant's name and any alias.
 - 2. Registrant's current mailing and home address.
 - 3. Registrant's expected domicile.
 - 4. Registrant's place of employment, college or school and their respective addresses.
 - 5. Registrant's date of birth.
 - 6. Registrant's gender, race, height, weight and eye color.
 - 7. Registrant's charge(s) and sentencing information.
 - 8. Age of the victim, if known.
 - 9. Charging agency and/or the investigator.
 - 10. Court of adjudication.
 - 11. Court docket number.
 - 12. Status of the registrant when released as determined by the sex offender risk assessment guideline.
 - 13. Copy of the sex offender risk assessment guideline, if available.
- M. Until the Bureau receives at a minimum, a signed initial registration form, individuals can not be made active or displayed on the Sex Offender Registry website.
- N. It is the Bureau's responsibility to send information concerning a registered sex offender to the national registry, however, information will not be accepted when fingerprints are not provided. When this information is not contain in the national registry, the sex offender's offenses and conviction will not be available when a III (Triple I) request is made. When information is accepted by the national registry, the individual is flagged as a registered sex offender in the hot files. This alert is returned whenever law enforcement run a check on a driver's license and/or motor vehicle check."

Appendix 2

**SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES FOR INSTITUTIONS
RELEASING SEX OFFENDERS**

- A. The State Department of Corrections, the county jail or the state mental health institute that has custody of a registrant required to register shall inform the registrant, prior to discharge or conditional release, of the duty to register. If a registrant does not serve a period of institutional confinement, the court shall inform the registrant at the time of sentencing of the duty to register.
- B. The department, county jail, state mental health institute or court shall:
1. Inform the registrant of the duty to register and obtain the information required for the initial registration.
 2. Inform the registrant of the requirement to notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction pursuant to 34-A M.R.S.A § 11203 (1)(B)).
 3. Inform the registrant that if the registrant changes domicile or changes residence, place of employment or college or school being attended, the registrant shall give the new address to the bureau in writing within five days and shall notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction within 24 hours.
 4. Inform the registrant that if the registrant changes domicile to another state, the registrant shall register the new address with the bureau and if the new state has a registration requirement, the registrant shall register with a designated law enforcement agency in the new state not later than five days after establishing domicile in the new state.
 5. Inform the registrant that if that registrant has part-time or full-time employment in another state, with or without compensation, for more than 14 consecutive days or for an aggregate period exceeding 30 days in a calendar year or if that registrant enrolls in any type of school in another state on a part-time or full-time basis, the registrant shall give the bureau the registrant's place of employment or school to be attended in writing within 5 days after beginning work or attending school and if the other state has a registration requirement, shall register with the designated law enforcement agency in the other state.

6. Obtain fingerprints and a photograph of the registrant or the court may order the registrant to submit to the taking of fingerprints and a photograph at a specified law enforcement agency within three days if the fingerprints and photograph have not already been obtained in connection with the offense that necessitates registration.
7. Enforce the requirement that the registrant read and sign a form provided by the bureau that states that the duty of the registrant to register under this section has been explained.

WHAT IS "COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION"?

- Community notification refers to laws that require local law enforcement to disclose to the public relevant information about certain convicted sex offenders upon their release from prison, work release, or another secure facility. Such information may include the sex offender's address, past crimes, description of offense for which the offender was convicted, physical description and/or photograph, and conditions of release.
- Community notification laws are different from sex offender registration laws, which simply require convicted sex offenders who are living in the community to notify the police of where they are living.

HOW AND WHEN ARE COMMUNITIES NOTIFIED?

- In Maine, notification of community members, as well as the extent of that notification, is determined by the law enforcement agency serving the particular community. The agency must notify those members of a community determined appropriate to ensure public safety. While there are minimum standards for law enforcement policies regarding such notification, to some extent jurisdictions in Maine may establish their own notification practices. Therefore, there may be variations of community notification practices from one geographic area to the next.

WHY AREN'T COMMUNITIES INFORMED OF ALL SEX OFFENDERS WHO ARE RELEASED FROM PRISON?

- The intent of the community notification law is that the community receives information that is RELEVANT and NECESSARY to enhance its safety. Not all sex offenders pose a risk to all residents and knowing about every convicted sex offender does not necessarily enhance safety.

WHY ARE CONVICTED SEX OFFENDERS ALLOWED TO LIVE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

- When sex offenders (or any person who has been convicted of a crime) have served their time in prison, they are free to live and work where they choose. Though this may be frustrating, it is a protection of constitutional rights. At the same time, though, some sex offenders may have some restrictions imposed if they are still under supervision, such as probation.

RESOURCES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

To report a crime against a child, contact your local police department.

To report suspected child abuse within a family, contact the Department of Health and Human Services at **1-800-452-1999**.

To get help and assistance, contact your local sexual assault support center's statewide, 24-hour, confidential support line at **1-800-871-7741**.

To view the registered sex offenders living in Maine visit the State of Maine Sex Offender Registry:
<http://www.informe.org/sor/>

Information contained in this brochure is designed to enhance public safety and awareness. However, no law can guarantee the protection of our children. There is no substitute for common safety precautions.

A Guide for Communities, Organizations and Schools about Community Notification of Sex Offenders

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL
SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT CENTER
FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Statewide, 24-hour, confidential
sexual assault support line**

1-800-871-7741

TTY: 1-888-458-5599

For a link to one of Maine's
sexual assault support centers go to:

www.mecasa.org

A Guide for Communities, Organizations and Schools about Community Notification of Sex Offenders

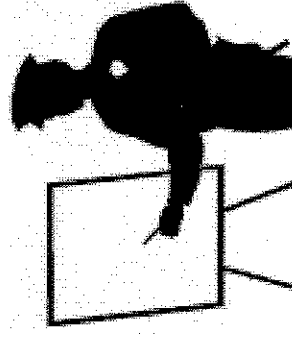
Information in this brochure is designed for:
*State and local leaders, Citizens
and Community Organizations.*

Knowledge that a convicted sex offender has moved into your neighborhood can be a frightening and overwhelming experience. It can also bring on an intense reaction from parents, neighbors, schools, and organizations in the community.

SOME OF THE MOST OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

- What does this mean?
- How can this happen?
- What do we tell our children?
- How do we support our community and calm people's fears?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of parents, communities, and schools?
- What are the limits of community notification laws?
- What resources are available to help me learn more about the notification process?

This brochure will address many of these questions and concerns. It will also provide suggestions on enhancing the safety of the community as well as information on prevention of child sexual abuse.



WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

- Studies on who commits child sexual abuse vary in their findings, but the most common finding is that the majority of sexual offenders against children are not strangers but family members or someone the child knows.
- Research further shows that men are most often perpetrators, although there are cases in which women are also offenders.
- Despite a common myth, homosexual men are not more likely to sexually abuse children.

WHAT SHOULD WE TELL OUR CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THIS SEX OFFENDER WHO HAS MOVED INTO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

- Open communication between parents and children are vital components of personal safety. As a parent or other responsible adult who has become aware of the presence of a convicted sex offender, your first decision will be whether or not to tell the child of the sex offender and if so, what to tell the child.
- It is best not to share scary details about a specific case or offender. Rather, let your child know that the offender has hurt someone before and should be avoided. Tell your children to let you or another trusted adult know immediately if the offender approaches them or their friends. Keep information general, as this may protect them not only against the known offender but others who may try to harm them as well. In other words, it is most helpful if you talk about basic safety in general terms and about situations or actions rather than certain individuals.

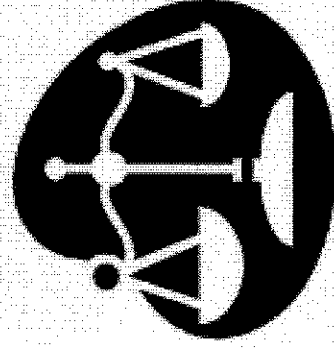
NOW THAT THE COMMUNITY KNOWS THAT A SEX OFFENDER LIVES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, WHAT SHOULD WE DO DIFFERENTLY TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN AND OURSELVES?

- Although it is alarming to be notified that a sex offender is living in your neighborhood, knowing of a specific offender generally does not assure safety. In fact, there are thousands of sex offenders living in Maine today and you may already be living near one of them. It is best to practice general safety strategies ALL THE TIME and learn to recognize potentially dangerous situations to protect yourself.

- While the new community notification law allows law enforcement to tell you about some sex offenders, this is not a guarantee of safety from sex offenses. It is important to know that sex offenders cannot be identified by looks, race, gender, or occupation. A sex offender can be anyone, so precautions need to be taken at all times. Open communication between parents and children are vital components of safety. Review safety tips, and be aware of common lures.
- Remember that community notification is not about chasing sex offenders out of our neighborhoods. Be attentive and report any violations or suspicious behavior the offender is engaged in, but DO NOT threaten, intimidate, or harass the offender. An offender who is put in a stressful state is more likely to relapse.

WHAT ARE WE AS CITIZENS PROHIBITED FROM DOING?

- Experts believe sex offenders are less likely to re-offend if they live and work in an environment free of harassment. Any actions taken against the individual named in the notification, including vandalism of property; verbal or written threats of harm; or physical violence against this person, his or her family, or employer, will result in arrest and prosecution of criminal acts.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO COMMUNITIES

Assistance and support are available to those communities in which a convicted sex offender has been or will soon be released. Among the forms of available assistance are:

FACILITATION OF COMMUNITY FORUMS
Multi-disciplinary panels are available to facilitate community meetings as a means to present sensitive information to the public. Typically, such meetings include an overview of the community notification laws and practices. Misinformation is countered and fears and concerns are addressed. Actions that citizens can take to enhance the safety of their community is emphasized. These panels generally consist of individuals from varied backgrounds which may include representatives from law enforcement, social services, clergy, and mental health, probation, sex offender treatment providers, and sexual assault advocates. For more information, call your local sexual assault support center.

CONSULTATION

Speakers and consultants from your local sexual assault support center in collaboration with law enforcement and other service providers are available to schools, churches, and other community organizations to help use notification as an opportunity to educate their communities.

*This brochure was based on a brochure created by the
Cumberland County Child Abuse and
Neglect Council/Youth Alternatives.*