

# Sexual Offender Registration Requirements and Housing Restrictions

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## Issue

What are Connecticut's registration requirements and housing restrictions for sexual offenders? Is law enforcement required to inform residents when a sexual offender returns to the community?

## Summary

“Sex offender” is the term commonly used for anyone convicted or found not guilty due to mental disease or defect of a sex crime. Connecticut law recognizes four categories of sex crimes for sex offender registration purposes:

1. criminal offenses against minor victims,
2. non-violent sexual offenses,
3. sexually violent offenses, and
4. felonies committed for sexual purposes ([CGS §§ 54-250\(2\), \(5\), \(11\), and \(12\)](#)).

Those convicted of crimes in the first three categories must register as sex offenders; courts may require registration of those in the fourth. Registration is with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), which maintains an on-line, searchable registry. The registry contains offenders’ names, photographs, and addresses and descriptions of the sex crimes for which they have been required to register. Registrants must keep DESPP apprised of their whereabouts, school enrollment, and workplaces, and notify the department within five days of any changes ([CGS § 54-250](#) et seq.).

The registry is a public record and, by law, DESPP must make the information accessible to the public during normal business hours and online. Additionally, each local police department and state police troop must keep a record of all registration information transmitted to it by DESPP, and must make the information accessible to the public during normal business hours ([CGS § 54-258\(a\)\(1\)](#)). DESPP must also provide registry information regarding specific registrants to school superintendents and municipal officials when those individuals move to their school district or town, respectively ([CGS §§ 54-258\(a\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)).

Connecticut does not impose a blanket residency restriction on sex offenders. But registered sex offenders must reside in locations pre-approved by probation and parole officers. Courts can also set conditions when sentencing an offender.

## **Registration Requirements**

### ***Registration Period***

By law, the required registration period is based on the offense as follows:

1. generally, 10 years for the first conviction, and lifetime for a subsequent conviction of a criminal offense against a victim who is a minor ([CGS § 54-251](#));
2. generally, 10 years for the first conviction, and lifetime for a subsequent conviction of a nonviolent sexual offense ([CGS § 54-251](#)); and
3. lifetime for sexually violent offenses ([CGS § 54-252](#)).

Under the law, the court may also impose registration for 10 years for a felony the court finds was committed for a sexual purpose ([CGS § 54-254](#)).

### ***Registration Information and Penalties***

Generally, sex offenders must register within three days of release or as directed by the Department of Correction (DOC) commissioner and are:

1. required to register their name, identifying factors (including a photograph and fingerprints), criminal history record, residential address, and email and instant message addresses and other similar Internet communication identifiers;
2. subject to address verification and the retaking of photographs; and
3. subject to the notification provisions that apply to victims and certain students and employees ([CGS §§ 54-251](#), et seq.).

Registrants are required to report changes to their information (such as name or address changes) and are subject to a class D felony for failure to comply with the registration requirements. (A class D felony is punishable by up to five years in prison, a fine up to \$5,000, or both.)

Additionally, if the court finds that dissemination of the registration information is not required for public safety and that publication of the registration information would be likely to reveal the identity of the victim within the community where the victim lives, the court may order DESPP to restrict the dissemination of the registration information to law enforcement purposes only ([CGS § 54-255](#)).

## **Notification**

By law, the Judicial Branch or any state agency, State Police troop, or local police department can notify any government agency, private organization, or individual of registration information when it believes notice is necessary to protect the public or an individual from a registrant ([CGS §§ 54-258\(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

### ***Notice to Law Enforcement***

When it receives registry information, DESPP must enter it in the sex offender registry and notify the local police department or state police troop with jurisdiction where the registrant resides or plans to reside. If the registrant informed DESPP of his or her employment at or status as a student at a trade, professional, or higher education institution, DESPP must also notify the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the institution ([CGS § 54-257](#)).

### ***Notice to School Superintendents***

When a registrant is released into the community or notifies DESPP of an address change, DESPP must email the superintendent of the school district where the registrant resides or plans to reside and provide the same information DESPP will post publicly on the Internet about the registrant ([CGS § 54-258\(a\)\(2\)\(B\)\(i\)](#)).

### ***Notice to Municipal Chief Executive Officers***

By law, DESPP must notify a municipality's chief executive officer (CEO) when someone required to register as a sex offender (1) is released into the community or notifies DESPP of an address change and (2) resides or plans to reside in the CEO's municipality. DESPP must email this notice and provide the CEO with the same registry information about the registrant that DESPP posts publicly on the Internet ([CGS § 54-258\(a\)\(2\)\(B\)\(ii\)](#)).

## Housing Restrictions

Connecticut does not impose a blanket residency restriction on sex offenders. However, while under community supervision (i.e. probation or parole), registered sex offenders must reside in locations pre-approved by probation and parole officers. Courts can also set conditions when sentencing an offender.

According to the Judicial Branch, probation officers must investigate and pre-approve sex offenders' residences and proposed relocations. Investigations must consider things such as:

1. the location's potential access to the offender's target population;
2. his or her prior sexual assault convictions;
3. other people living at the residence;
4. the location's accessibility to family members, friends, or other supportive services;
5. whether the residence or location is of a type the offender's treatment plan has assessed as being a potential trigger for reoffending; and
6. whether a permanent or stable residence is available that might reduce the likelihood of the offender becoming transient.

For more information on registered sex offender residency restrictions, see OLR Report [2017-R-0037](#) (Sex Offenders on Probation and Parole – Treatment and Housing Restrictions).

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