

## FAQ

<p><b>What is community notification?</b></p>	<p>Community notification began in Wisconsin on June 1, 1997. Wisconsin Statutes now give local law enforcement agencies the authority to provide information about certain sex offenders to the community if, in the opinion of law enforcement, releasing the information will enhance protection of the public. Community notification begins when an offender, who has been convicted of an offense requiring registration with the Wisconsin Sex Offender Registration Program, is approaching release into the community. A notice is sent to the County Sheriff and the Chief of Police in the areas where the offender will live, work and/or attends school. Law Enforcement then makes a decision, on a case-by-case basis, about type and what level of community notification, if any, is most appropriate.</p> <p>There are three levels of community notification: Level 1 – disseminates information about the offender to law enforcement only. Level 2 – provides information to specific individuals and groups, based on the particular facts in the case. Level 3 – provides community-wide notification and may make use of the media and community meetings.</p>
<p><b>Why is the offender moving into my neighborhood?</b></p>	<p>When an offender is released from prison, he/she usually returns to the same area where he/she lived when the crime was committed. Most offenders are released to the jurisdiction that originally gained the conviction. Sometimes offenders are released to another rea because they may have family support there, there is additional treatment to complete at a program located in the other jurisdiction, or they have found a job in the area that will lead to a productive lifestyle. For an offender on supervision, decisions about where the offender will live are made on a case-by-case basis, and reflect an attempt to balance many competing needs.</p>
<p><b>What do we do if we see the offender on the streets?</b></p>	<p>The offender may be given permission by his/her agent(s) to conduct activities outside of the home. He/she may be allowed to travel to and from work, school, stores and other appointments.</p> <p>If a citizen observes the offender engaging in suspicious or illegal behavior, the citizen should notify local law enforcement and the offender's agent.</p>
<p><b>Is it okay to take steps to try to get a sex offender to leave the community?</b></p>	<p>No. The community notification law is aimed at furthering public safety and is not considered punishment. The harassment of individuals subject to community notification by community members could lead to a court deciding that the law is punishment and unconstitutional in certain cases; if this happened, our ability to conduct community notification on sex offenders would be significantly reduced. Citizen abuse of this information to threaten, intimidate, or harass registered sex offenders will not be tolerated.</p>
<p><b>Are predatory offenders wanted by the police?</b></p>	<p>Generally, no. Community notification is not part of the offender's punishment for an offense. Most sex offenders residing in the community have served the prison or jail times imposed on them and have been properly released to live in the community. Although many of these offenders are still under some form of correctional supervision (i.e., probation or supervised release), some are not.</p>
<p><b>What is the difference between 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Sexual Assaults?</b></p>	<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Degree Sexual Assault:</b> Includes sexual contact or intercourse with another person without consent of that person and causes pregnancy or great bodily harm to that person. It also includes sexual contact or intercourse with another person without consent of that person by use or threat of use of a dangerous weapon or article. This is a Class B felony.</p>

	<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Sexual Assault:</b> Includes sexual contact or intercourse with another person without consent of that person by use or threat of force or violence OR causes injury, illness, disease or impairment of a sexual organ and/or mental anguish requiring psychiatric care. This is a Class C felony.</p> <p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Sexual Assault:</b> Includes sexual intercourse with a person without consent of that person. This is a Class G felony.</p> <p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Degree Sexual Assault:</b> Includes sexual contact with a person without the consent of that person. This is a Class A misdemeanor.</p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Degree Sexual Assault of a Child:</b> Includes sexual contact or intercourse with a person who has not attained the age of 13 years. This is a Class B felony.</p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Sexual Assault of a Child:</b> Includes sexual contact or intercourse with a person who has not attained the age of 16 years. This is a Class C felony.</p>
<p><b>Now that I know a sex offender lives in my neighborhood, what should I do differently to protect my family?</b></p>	<p>Open communication among family members, especially between parents and children, is a vital component of family safety. In general terms tell your children that this person has hurt someone before. Explain to them that they should stay away from this individual. Review safety tips and protective behaviors. Remember that the purpose behind community notification is to reduce the chances of future victimization of people by this offender. The information gained through this notification should assist you and your family in avoiding situations that allow for easy access to victims.</p> <p>Also remember not to harass the offender. Citizen abuse of this information to threaten, intimidate, or harass registered sex offenders will not be tolerated.</p>
<p><b>What can we do as a community to keep this offender from moving here?</b></p>	<p>Sex offenders have always lived in communities. Current law now permits law enforcement to inform the community about releases of sex offenders. As a community, we need to adopt a proactive approach to safety every day.</p>
<p><b>What is a sexual predator?</b></p>	<p>Sexual predator is a term that is frequently misused for the correct term "sexually violent person." A sexually violent person is a person who has been committed under Chapter 980. The basic requirements to pursue such a commitment are that the person has been previously convicted of certain sexually violent offenses and has been diagnosed with a mental disorder which predisposes the person to engage in further acts of sexual violence. The state may petition for a Civil Commitment under Chapter 980 when such an individual is within 90 days of release from custody.</p> <p>If the individual meets these technical criteria, either the Department of Corrections or the Department of Health and Family Services (whichever Department has jurisdiction over the person) requests that the Department of Justice file a petition for commitment under Chapter 980. The person must, in the opinion of the Department making the request, meet the commitment criteria.</p> <p>Only the court can commit an individual under Chapter 980. Neither the Department of Corrections nor the Department of Health and Family Services has control over whether an individual is committed under Chapter 980. If committed, the court then decides if the person should receive treatment in an inpatient setting such as the Wisconsin Resource Center or is appropriate for supervised release with the possibility of treatment in the community.</p>