

## **About the Department of Corrections**

The Department of Corrections was established in 1981 for the purpose of supervising adults who were convicted of felony and gross misdemeanor offenses and were ordered to complete supervision by the Court. During that supervision, the Community Corrections Officer will monitor compliance of the offender's conditions or rules of supervision. Throughout the history of the Department, there have been many changes in the sentences and supervision of offenders. In many cases, these changes were implemented by the Legislature as a result of feedback from the community. These progressive changes have given the Department more authority to target high-risk areas on the offenders we supervise. However, the Department of Corrections must supervise the offenders under the rules of supervision that were set forth at the time of their sentence.

The Department of Corrections supervises only a small percent of the registered sex offenders in the state. Most of these offenders are supervised in collaboration with Department of Corrections staff, local law enforcement officials, treatment providers, and other members of the community. The Department refers to this group of individuals as the Risk Management Team. One of the most important aspects of this team approach to supervision is obtaining information from the community. With your assistance, we can enhance community safety.

For your convenience, we have included some general information that may answer many questions about the supervision of sex offenders under the Department of Corrections.

### **What is minor contact?**

Many sex offenders have conditions prohibiting contact with minors. What these conditions generally mean is that the offenders cannot initiate or prolong contact with anyone under the age of 18. If the offender initiates physical or verbal contact with a minor or prolongs those contacts with minors, he or she may be in violation and the contact will be investigated. There is also incidental contact with minors. This is when a minor initiates either physical or verbal contact with an offender. The offender's responsibility is to disengage that contact immediately and leave the situation. Finally, some offenders have conditions prohibiting contact with just victim age and gender specific minors, and some have special conditions allowing contact with specific minors such as their own children. The court usually sets these types of conditions at the time of sentencing.

Offenders who are prohibited from having contact with minors are generally required (unless specified in their J&S) to have a chaperone/guardian with them when attending church or recreational activities where the concentration of minors is generally increased. This person has met with and been approved by the therapist, CCO or both. This person is knowledgeable of the offender's crime, potential high-risk situations, and conditions. An approved chaperone/guardian has also signed paperwork and has been notified there is a potential for civil liability if they were supposed to be acting as a chaperone and a violation or new crime were to occur. If an offender is in the presence of an approved chaperone, he or she may be in the presence of minors. This does not mean any of the offender's conditions change. It allows the offender to participate in activities which are considered safer in the presence of an approved person.

### **How are offender residences screened by the Department of Corrections?**

There is no "perfect" place for any sex offender to live. Sex offenders are in this and every community. They have a much better chance for success when they have a stable living environment. The Community Corrections Officer (CCO) investigates proposed addresses on a case by case basis. Each investigation is uniquely based upon the individual offender's risk factors, conditions of the Judgment and Sentence, conditions of supervision, and the offender's specialized needs. As part of the investigation process, the CCO may contact some or all of the following stakeholders: local law enforcement, landlords, community groups relevant to the offender's placement, neighbors, treatment providers, and the CCO's supervisor.

### **Why is the sex offender living near kids/schools/and parks?**

Kids are everywhere! Again, there is no "perfect" place for a sex offender to live. It is almost impossible to find a location free of children. Each offender is unique and has their own individual risk factors and may or may not have a condition, which prohibits them from having contact with minors. The CCO makes every effort to minimize the offender's opportunity to contact minors or other groups at risk. Finding housing for sex offenders is a difficult task and the Department of Corrections welcomes your assistance in helping to locate housing for them.

### **What does sexual deviancy treatment do and can offenders be cured/rehabilitated?**

Sexual deviancy treatment is designed to allow the offenders to evaluate their own offense cycle and specific high-risk behaviors that are associated with it. In many ways, sexual deviancy behaves much like alcoholism or drug additions. Sex offenders will usually follow a fairly specific chain of events or emotional issues that eventually lead

to a new offense. The goal of treatment is for the offenders to identify their cycle and to develop some tools to stop the cycle and avoid high-risk situations. For example, while someone who is a recovering alcoholic should not enter a bar, a pedophile should not go into a place where children congregate. In the end, the offender will have the tools to prevent future offenses but it is ultimately up to the individual. What can be said is that sexual deviancy treatment has been shown to reduce the re-offense rate. Some studies have shown that offenders, who have completed sexual deviancy treatment, have less than a 4% chance of committing a new sexual offense, compared to a 15% chance of untreated offenders.