



FACT SHEET

Date: April 17, 2008

Report: 2007-115

The California State Auditor released the following report today:

Sex Offender Placement

*State Laws Are Not Always Clear, and No One Formally Assesses the Impact
Sex Offender Placement Has on Local Communities*

BACKGROUND

Fifty nine thousand registered sex offenders live in California communities, yet only 8,000 are supervised and monitored by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (Corrections). Laws dictate where and with whom paroled sex offenders can reside and when they must register with local law enforcement agencies. Some registered sex offenders reside in residential facilities, licensed by the Department of Social Services (Social Services) and the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, but most reside in facilities that do not require a license. The Department of Justice (Justice) maintains a registry that contains addresses of sex offenders; however, it is not required to, nor does it, indicate whether or not the address is a licensed facility.

KEY FINDINGS

Our review of the placement of registered sex offenders in communities found that:

- Departments responsible for licensing residential facilities are not required to, nor do they, consider the criminal background of potential clients they serve, including sex offenders, nor do they track whether individuals residing at these facilities are registered sex offenders.
- Our comparison of the databases from the two licensing departments with Justice's database of registered sex offenders showed that at least 352 licensed residential facilities housed sex offenders.
- We also found 49 instances in which the registered addresses in Justice's database for sex offenders were the same as the official addresses of facilities licensed by Social Services that serve children such as family day care homes.
- State law prohibits a paroled sex offender from residing with other sex offenders unless they reside in a "residential facility." However, we found more than 500 instances in which two or more sex offenders on parole were listed as residing at the same address. At least 332 of these addresses appear to belong to hotels or apartment complexes, and 2,038 sex offenders were listed as residing at those addresses. Further, it is unclear whether "residential facilities" includes those that do not require licenses, such as sober living facilities.
- Local law enforcement agencies told us they have not performed formal assessments of the impact sex offenders have on their resources or communities. Further, Corrections does not always notify local law enforcement about paroled sex offenders.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the Legislature consider clarifying the laws related to where registered sex offenders may reside. Further, we recommend that Corrections monitor the addresses of paroled sex offenders and that departments collaborate to ensure proper residence. In addition, Justice and Social Services should share information to ensure that registered adult sex offenders are not residing in licensed facilities that serve children.

