

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS

A Victim Impact Statement (VIS) helps the SORB to understand the consequences of the offender's behavior. As a victim survivor, you know better than anyone the adverse effects of the offender's behavior. The VSU can provide support in submitting a VIS as it can be an emotionally draining process.

It is important to identify what is different in your life and/or your family's life as a result of the crimes. You can convey the persistent effects of any physical and emotional trauma you and/or your child victim experience such as stress, changes in sleeping or eating habits, poor work or school performance, fear for safety, low self-esteem, depression, and trust issues.

We encourage children and teens to express how they feel about what has happened to them. Your child or teen can draw pictures or faces that convey their feelings, or they can write about what may be different at home, at school, or with friends and family.

STRUCTURE OF THE VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

The VIS can be neatly written or typed. Please include the date, the offender's name and the tracking number provided to you by SORB. Please refrain from including any identifying information such as your name and address in the statement.

Please note that the SORB cannot accept requests for specific levels. By law, the level is determined only by the applicability of the risk factors associated with reoffending and dangerousness.

TRUE SAMPLES OF VISS

"What he did to me that day left an everlasting scar in not only my mind but in my heart.. It haunts me daily." Written by a teen who was assaulted by an adult neighbor and family friend.

"I cannot articulate how alone and scared I felt. Depression tormented me in its blanket and didn't let go." Written by a male who was raped as a boy by an older teen.

"Who I am now is a scared person who cannot forget what happened." Written by a woman who was raped in her home by a stranger.

"He was in a position of power. The psychological damage caused by his predation will haunt my daughter forever." Written by a father whose daughter was raped by her teacher."

"His smile disappeared and he withdrew from everyone. I felt helpless." Written by a mother whose son was molested by a relative.

"My family was torn apart. I held my emotions in for years while being molested, and still years later I can't cry." Written by a female abused by her older sister's husband.

SAFETY PLANNING

Using SORB's website to know the whereabouts of posted sex offenders can be helpful to keeping you safe. SORB encourages you to periodically check the website for any address changes the sex offender may have registered with the police. Viewing the offender's picture is also helpful to be aware of changes in the sex offender's appearance from year to year.

Each police department across the state has an officer designated to manage registrations for sex offenders present in their communities. These officers are available to provide information on Level 2 and Level 3 sex offenders, including Level 2 offenders that do not qualify for posting on SORB's website. These officers can be critical resources to you for safety planning.

The SORB's VSU can assist you with safety planning and can be reached at (978) 740-6440. For more detailed information for victims, please visit our website at www.mass.gov/SORB.

STATE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
www.mass.gov/dph/sexualassaultservices
(617) 624-5457

Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance
www.mass.gov/mova • (617) 727-5200

Dept. of Criminal Justice Information Services
www.mass.gov/ecopss/agencies/dcjis • (617) 660-4600

Mass. Attorney General's Office
www.mass.gov/ago • (617) 727-2200

Mass. Department of Correction
www.mass.gov/doc • (978) 369-3618

Mass. Department of Youth Services
www.mass.gov/dys • (617) 960-3290

Mass. District Attorney's Association
www.mass.gov/mdaa • (617) 723-0642

Mass. Parole Board
www.mass.gov/mpb • (508) 650-4543



SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY BOARD
Box 4547, Salem, MA 01970
www.mass.gov/sorb (978) 740-6400

MASSACHUSETTS SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY BOARD



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

VICTIM SERVICES UNIT

SEX OFFENDER
REGISTRY BOARD
Box 4547, SALEM, MA 01970
WWW.MASS.GOV/SORB
(978) 740-6440

The Sex Offender Registry Board's (SORB) Victim Services Unit (VSU) provides victims with assistance, information and notification throughout the sex offender registration and classification processes. The VSU assists victims with writing impact statements and also provides support, safety planning, crisis intervention, and referrals for resources, as needed.

The VSU is committed to providing compassion and sensitivity to victim survivors in response to the devastating long term effects they experience as a result of sexual violence.

To participate in the SORB process, there must be a conviction or adjudication of a sex offense committed against the victim or child victim; and the victim or parent/guardian must enroll with the SORB's VSU. To enroll, please contact SORB's VSU at (978) 740-6440 or (800) 936-3426

THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY LAW

The Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry Law (SOR Law), G.L. c.6, s.178G-Q assists law enforcement officials in tracking sex offenders and creates a public awareness tool to be used to reduce the opportunity for victimization within communities.

The SOR Law requires registration for any person who was convicted or adjudicated of a sex offense on or after August 1, 1981, and: (1) lives, works, attends school or has a secondary address in Massachusetts; and (2) was released from probation, parole, custody or a civil commitment for a sex offense. Adjudications include juvenile delinquents, youthful offenders and Sexually Dangerous Persons.

Certain adult sex offenses require lifetime registration while others require registration for no more than twenty years. Juveniles can be relieved of their duty to register for any sex offense, at any time.

THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY BOARD

The SORB is the state agency that administers the SOR Law. By law, the SORB is comprised of experts in the areas of victim services, criminal justice and the assessment and treatment of juvenile and adult sex offenders.

The SORB's role is twofold: (1) to determine if the sex offender has a duty to register; and (2) to classify the sex offender's current level of dangerousness and risk to reoffend.

The SORB must determine whether the sex offender poses a low risk (Level 1), moderate risk (Level 2) or high risk (Level 3) to the public. The SORB does not have any legal authority to impose conditions, sanctions or restrictions on sex offenders.

Stage I Commencement of Classification Process
After sex offenders register with SORB the classification process begins. SORB initiates the process for incarcerated sex offenders.

Stage II Classification File Assembly
The SORB collects documentary evidence including Victim Impact Statements and information about the offender's criminal history, offending behaviors, sex offender treatment, compliance while in custody or under supervision, job status, lifestyle, and other information useful in weighing risk and dangerousness.

Stage III Board Member Review
A single Board member reviews the collected documentary evidence and must consider the applicability of various risk factors associated with reoffending when determining the offender's preliminary classification level. By law, this preliminary level is not available to the public, including victims.

Stage IV Offender Notification
The sex offender is notified of the preliminary level and has the right to request a hearing to challenge the level. If the offender accepts or fails to respond to this notification, the preliminary level becomes the final classification level. In these circumstances, the offender forgoes his/her right to a hearing and an appeal.

Stage V SORB Hearings
A hearing is held before a hearing examiner and by law is not open to the public, including victims. The offender is entitled to receive the documentary evidence collected by SORB, including victim impact statements.

Stage VI Final Classification
The hearing examiner issues a written decision determining the sex offender's (1) duty to register, and (2) current level of risk and degree of danger. The offender has the right to an appeal in Superior Court to seek a court order preventing the release of their information to the public while the appeal is pending.

Stage VII Reclassification
A sex offender can be reclassified to a different risk level should new information demonstrate that the offender's risk level has either increased or decreased. Offenders are entitled by law to a hearing for all reclassifications.

Level 1 sex offenders
Level 1 sex offenders pose a low degree of danger and a low risk to reoffend. They are required to register with SORB by mail and are NOT required to register with the police. However, the police are aware of all Level 1 offenders within their communities.

The law prohibits the release of Level 1 information to the public, including victims.

Level 2 sex offenders
Level 2 sex offenders pose a moderate degree of danger and a moderate risk to reoffend. Level 2 sex offenders register with the police where they reside. Level 2 sex offender information is available upon request from the local police.

Level 2 sex offenders classified after July 12, 2013 are posted on SORB's website at www.mass.gov/sorb.

Level 3 sex offenders
Level 3 sex offenders pose a high degree of danger and a high risk to reoffend. Level 3 sex offenders register with the police where they reside. Level 3 sex offender information is available upon request from the local police.

Level 3 sex offenders are posted on SORB's website at www.mass.gov/sorb. The police also provide active community notification on Level 3 sex offenders for enhanced public safety.

Level 2 and Level 3 Sex Offender Flyers
Level 2 (classified after July 12, 2013) and Level 3 offender flyers are accessible on SORB's website at www.mass.gov/sorb. All Level 2 and Level 3 offender flyers are available from local police. Flyers include the offender's residential, work, secondary and school addresses, photograph, physical description and conviction data.

All Sex Offenders
All sex offenders are required to register:

- (1) upon conviction/adjudication, if in the community;
 - (2) upon final classification, if in the community;
 - (3) prior to release from custody;
 - (4) every year upon the month of their birth;
 - (5) accurate address information, and
 - (6) changes to registration information.
- Failing to register as described above is a felony crime.