



# TEN TIPS FOR

## REPORTING ON THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

1. Avoid referring to individuals on the registry as "sex offenders." Refer to them as "people on the registry," "persons required to register," or registrants. After all, you wouldn't continue to call an adult who shoplifted as a teen a "thief."
2. Avoid using the term "predator" unless it is specifically called for and appropriate. The overwhelming majority of people on the registry are not rapists or child molesters. Actual sexual assault rates are down 44% since 1995.
3. Remember that 25% of those who have been put on the registry are minors. In fact, juveniles account for 36% of all sexual assaults against children. There are tens of thousands of kids on the registry, some as young as 8-years old.
4. Hying "stranger danger" actually makes our communities *less safe* by focusing the public's attention where it is least needed. 95% of sex crimes are committed by people who are not on any registry, and 97% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone who is known to and trusted by the victim.
5. Question the assertions made by politicians, prosecutors, and law enforcement. They often make claims about recidivism or dangers to the public that are factually unsupported.
6. The actual 5-year recidivism rate for people on the registry is 3.5%. Compared to all other categories of crime (which often range in the 40-80% range) that is *extraordinarily low*.
7. Neighborhoods with a registrant living on the block are statistically just as safe as neighborhoods without registrants.
8. Residency restrictions can make registrants homeless. Would we rather have a registrant living at home with his family, or sleeping in an alley somewhere?
9. In many U.S. states, people can be put on the registry for public urination, streaking, and even consensual sex or sexting between two minors.
10. The families of registrants often suffer more from restrictions, harassment, and vigilantism than the registrants themselves.

These statistics are easily verifiable from a host of respected and peer-reviewed studies and data sources, which includes the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Journalists, please do your homework.

[RegistryReport.org](http://RegistryReport.org)