

School Transportation Registered Sex Offender Law

South Carolina has adopted registered sex offender legislation that is designed to limit the locations that registered sex offenders can live and require school districts to provide residence information of registered sex offenders that live within one thousand (1,000) feet of a school bus stop. The full text of this law is presented below; the law's direct reference to school transportation is underlined.

The following two Web links are of the type referenced in the law below. The first linked Web site is that of the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) <http://services.sled.sc.gov/sor/>

The second linked Web site includes a map listing of sex offenders www.familywatchdog.us Both Web sites, and there are many others available on the Web, allow searches by zip code and address allowing a parent to identify registered sex offenders that live near a school bus stop.

The following is the SC Code language.

SECTION 23-3-535. Limitation on places of residence of certain sex offenders; exceptions; violations; local government ordinances; school districts required to provide certain information.

(A) As contained in this section:

- (1) "Children's recreational facility" means a facility owned and operated by a city, county, or special purpose district used for the purpose of recreational activity for children under the age of eighteen.
- (2) "Daycare center" means an arrangement where, at any one time, there are three or more preschool-age children, or nine or more school-age children receiving child care.
- (3) "School" does not include a home school or an institution of higher education.
- (4) "Within one thousand feet" means a measurement made in a straight line, without regard to intervening structures or objects, from the nearest portion of the property on which the sex offender resides to the nearest property line of the premises of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground, whichever is closer.

(B) It is unlawful for a sex offender who has been convicted of any of the following offenses to reside within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground:

- (1) criminal sexual conduct with a minor, first degree;
- (2) criminal sexual conduct with a minor, second degree;
- (3) assault with intent to commit criminal sexual conduct with a minor; or
- (4) kidnapping a person under eighteen years of age.

(C) This section does not apply to a sex offender who:

- (1) resided within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground before the effective date of this act;
- (2) resided within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground on property the sex offender owned before the sex offender was charged with any of the offenses enumerated in subsection (B);
- (3) resides within one thousand feet of a school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground as a result of the establishment of a new school, daycare center, children's recreational facility, park, or public playground;
- (4) resides in a jail, prison, detention facility, group home for persons under the age of twenty-one licensed by the Department of Social Services, residential treatment facility for persons under the age of twenty-one licensed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control, or other holding facility, including a mental health facility;
- (5) resides in a homeless shelter for no more than one year, a group home for persons under the age of twenty-one licensed by the Department of Social Services, or a residential treatment facility for persons under the age of twenty-one licensed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the site was purchased by the organization prior to the effective date of this act;
- (6) resides in a community residential care facility, as defined in Section 44-7-130(6); or
- (7) resides in a nursing home, as defined in Section 44-7-130(13).

(D) If upon registration of a sex offender, or at any other time, a local law enforcement agency determines that a sex offender is in violation of this section, the local law enforcement agency must, within thirty days, notify the sex offender of the violation, provide the sex offender with a list of areas in which the sex offender is not permitted to reside, and notify the sex offender that the sex offender has thirty days to vacate the residence. If the sex offender fails to vacate the residence within thirty days, the sex offender must be punished as follows:

- (1) for a first offense, the sex offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than thirty days, or fined not more than five hundred dollars, or both;
- (2) for a second offense, the sex offender is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than three years, or fined not more than one thousand dollars, or both;
- (3) for a third or subsequent offense, the sex offender is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned for not more than five years, or fined not more than five thousand dollars, or both.

(E) A local government may not enact an ordinance that contains penalties that exceed or are less lenient than the penalties contained in this section.

(F)(1) At the beginning of each school year, each school district must provide:

{a) the names and addresses of every sex offender who resides within one thousand feet of a school bus stop within the school district to the parents or guardians of a student who boards or disembarks a school bus at a stop covered by this subsection: or

(b) the hyperlink to the sex offender registry web site on the school district's web site for the purpose of gathering this information.

(2) Local law enforcement agencies must check the school districts' web sites to determine if each school district has complied with this subsection. If a hyperlink does not appear on a school district web site, the local law enforcement agency must contact the school district to confirm that the school district has provided the parents or guardians with the names and addresses of every sex offender who resides within one thousand feet of a school bus stop within the school district. If the local law enforcement agency determines that this information has not been provided, the local law enforcement agency must inform the school district that it is in violation of this subsection. If the school district does not comply within thirty days after notice of its violation, the school district is subject to equitable injunctive relief and, if the plaintiff prevails, the district shall pay the plaintiff's attorney's fees and costs.