



SORI – Overview

In Massachusetts, there are specific departments that require Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) checks on all employees and/or volunteers. Specifically, the Department of Early Education and Care requires SORI checks on all individuals licensed or employed prior to September 1, 2013. Further, the Department of Public Health requires “recreational camps” as defined by G.L. c 111 Section 127A and 105 CMR 430.000 perform SORI checks for all camp staff and volunteers.

Although most other positions do not require SORI checks, municipal employers may want to review their hiring policies for employees working in departments such as Parks and Recreation or Elder Services and consider whether a SORI check should be done after an offer is presented to the potential employee. The basis for this suggestion falls within the language of G.L. Chapter 6, Section 178J, which states that sex offender information may be requested “for the protection of a child under the age of 18 or another person for whom such inquirer has responsibility, care or custody “. Municipal employers should give consideration as to whether they have any scenarios that might fall within this language. This is particularly important during periods of seasonal employment.

To perform a SORI check, the employer must complete and sign a record of inquiry, designed by the Sexual Offender Registry Board (“SORB”), which shall include the following information: the name and address of the person making the inquiry, the person or geographic area or street which is the subject of the inquiry, the reason for the inquiry and the date and time of the inquiry. The form that SORB requires the inquirer to fill out is located at mass.gov/sorb.

In response, SORB will provide a report identifying whether the person is a sex offender with an obligation to register, the offenses for which he/she was convicted or adjudicated and the dates of such convictions or adjudications. SORB will only disseminate information on offenders who have been finally classified as a Level 2 (moderate risk) or Level 3 (high risk) offender. The law strictly prohibits the dissemination of information on Level 1 (low risk) offenders. The SORI results will be provided free of charge.

The SORI results will only provide information for those offenders, who live, work and/or attend institutions of higher learning in the communities of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This is not a nationwide search.