



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Memorandum

July 21, 2026

TO: Interested Persons

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SUBJECT: Sex Offender Housing Restrictions

Summary

This memorandum discusses sex offender residency restrictions in Colorado and additional factors that can influence where sex offenders are allowed to live. In some cases, sex offenders may live in supervised housing facilities, but many have completed their sentences and live independently.

Sex Offender Residency Restrictions

Local government zoning ordinances, not state law, determine where sex offenders may live, and rules vary widely by community. Housing choices depend on a combination of local zoning restrictions, sex offender registration requirements, parole or probation conditions, and broader factors such as public safety concerns and social stigma.

Sex Offender Specific Zoning

At least 30 Colorado municipalities have enacted laws prohibiting registered sex offenders from residing within a set distance (typically between 300 and 1,000 feet) of any school, park, recreational center, or swimming pool. In addition to the buffer zones, some municipalities have limited the number of sex offenders per household. Exceptions may exist for sex offenders who lived in a buffer zone prior to the passage of the zoning ordinance or a minor living with parents or legal guardians.

Legal Challenges

In 2013, the [American Civil Liberties Union challenged Englewood's](#) 2,000-foot buffer restrictions for sex offenders. A federal judge overturned the Englewood ordinance for preempting Colorado law and violating due process of offenders because the regulations were too restrictive. The city later reduced the restriction to 1,000 feet, and the Colorado Supreme Court upheld the revised ordinance.



Table A, below, includes a sample of Colorado jurisdictions that have enacted sex offender specific zoning ordinances, including school buffer zones and other restrictions if applicable.

Table A
Sample of Colorado Municipalities with Sex Offender Residency Restrictions

Municipality	Buffer Zones	Occupancy Limits	Municipal Code
Alamosa	1,000 feet	Special use permits for groups homes/special uses may apply	Sec. 11-54
Alma	None	1 per group quarters; 2 in a family household if related by marriage	Sec. 16-19-10 and Sec. 16-1-90
Colorado Springs	1,000 feet	None	Ordinance No. 26-04
Commerce City	1,000 feet	1 per household; 2 if related to head of household	Sec. 5-303 and Sec. 12-6010
Englewood	1,000 feet	Special zoning districts may apply	Chapter 7-3-3
Firestone	1,000 feet	No more than 2 per household	Chapter 16.13.1
Greeley	300 feet	None	Sec. 14-383
Longmont	500 feet	3 per household	Chapter 10.70
Mancos	750 feet	None	Sec. 10-11-30
Mead	1,000 feet	None	Sec. 10-14-10
Northglenn	1,000 feet	None	Sec. 4-3-3
Thornton	1,000 feet	1 per household	Sec. 38-972
Westminster	1,000 feet	None	Chapter 6-17-3

Source: Legislative Council Staff.

Sex Offender Registry

Sex offender registry and notification laws may significantly limit housing options for people on the registry. Zoning rules often create exclusion areas based on registry status, while landlords, housing authorities, and even neighbors may use registry information to deny housing. In some cases, registration may also prevent access to housing assistance.

In Colorado, the sex offender registry is public and available online through the [Colorado Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#), with additional access through local law enforcement and national databases. Individuals must register if they are convicted of certain sex-related offenses, including crimes such as sexual assault, unlawful sexual contact, sexual exploitation of a child, certain cases of indecent exposure, internet luring of a child, and offenses involving child sexual abuse material (Section 16-22-103, C.R.S.). The registry also includes a map search.



Parole and Probation Conditions

[Parole](#) and [probation](#) supervisory conditions for sex offenders typically require approval of residential locations, strict curfew monitoring, living arrangement limits, and other proximity restrictions, such as those to schools and parks. Sex offenders may be further subject to home visits, electronic monitoring, and restrictions on living with children. Violating the terms or parole or probation can lead to a range of serious consequences, including increased supervision, stricter conditions, short-term jail stays, or a return to prison.

The [Sex Offender Management Board](#) creates guidelines for assessing, treating, and monitoring sex offenders. Parole and probation officers use these evidence-based standards to supervise individuals effectively, reduce reoffending risk, and protect the community.

Zoning for Structured Living Arrangements or Group Homes

Shared Living Arrangements (SLAs) are supervised housing units where multiple sex offenders live together with monitoring and treatment in an effort to support community safety. They are typically classified as residential care or congregate living in zoning codes. Smaller group homes (often up to eight residents) may be allowed in residential areas under fair housing laws, while larger facilities are more often limited to mixed-use or commercial zones, depending on local sex offender regulations or restrictions.

Neighbors may oppose an SLA or group home in a residential area, but they must show it violates zoning rules or safety codes, or creates a serious nuisance. Although fair housing laws generally protect such homes, challenges can still be made through zoning boards, petitions, or legal action if there is a valid safety concern or ordinance violation.