

Whereabouts of Over 1,200 Missouri Sex Offenders Unknown

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he state auditor serves as Missouri's independent watchdog agency. The audit found that at least 794 of the 1,259 offenders committed offenses including rape, sodomy or child molestation.

Local authorities in Missouri do not know the locations of more than 1,200 sex offenders, including nearly 800 who would be classified as the most dangerous, according to a report by the state auditor released on Monday.

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Missouri law requires those convicted or found guilty of sexual offenses to register their name, address and other information with local law enforcement, the auditor's office said. The information is made public through a database and website maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

But because of local officials' inadequate enforcement of registration requirements, 1,259 registered sex offenders failed to follow the law, [Missouri State Auditor Nicole Galloway](#) said.

"Law enforcement can't track the location of registered sex offenders if sex offender laws are not enforced," Galloway said in a statement. "This also takes away the ability of Missourians to effectively use the sex offender registry when making decisions to protect themselves and their

families."

Failure to comply with registration requirements is a felony, but the audit showed that less than 10 percent of non-compliant offenders had an active arrest warrant.

The audit recommended that local authorities check the data in the registry. "The addition of these automated edits will help reduce but may never be able to identify all the 'human error' entries," Lieutenant Colonel Eric Olson, Missouri State Highway Patrol acting superintendent, said in a Sept. 5 letter to Galloway. The letter was included in the auditor's report.

Olson added that accuracy issues will be addressed in future training sessions for staff who register offenders.

The registry was implemented in 1995, the report said. Missouri was one of 18 states that initially required lifetime registration for all sex offenders, but the state later provided a process for certain registered offenders to petition for removal from the registry.
