



OffenderWatch App Talking Points for Sheriffs

Why is online safety an important issue?

- We have found that predators are turning to the internet to contact their victims.
- They target our children and the most vulnerable.
- They use messaging and apps to groom their victims before arranging a meeting.

What are we doing about it?

- We can stop an online predator before the unthinkable happens.
- We are providing the OffenderWatch App for free to families or any concerned citizen in our community.
- With the free OffenderWatch App, citizens can easily find sex offenders near them using their smartphone.
- They can also see where family members are located in relation to sex offenders.
- Finally, citizens will receive an alert if a registered sex offender moves into their neighborhood.
- With the OffenderWatch App, we can reduce exposure of the most vulnerable.
- We can decrease the number of abductions and sex crime victims.

What should parents do?

- Parents should download the app for free by going to our Sheriff Office website and clicking on "Free Safety App" or by going to OffenderWatch.com.
- Download is easy and follow the instructions to set up your family's account.
- The app also provides tips for talking to children about online safety.
- The app is available for both Android and iPhone.

How the OffenderWatch App Works

- Parents who sign up for the OffenderWatch App will download the app on their smartphone and their child's smartphone.
- For the free version, citizens can view the location of their children and also location of registered sex offenders in their neighborhood or around town.
- You'll also receive an alert from this agency if a sex offender moves into your neighborhood.
- Parents can choose to upgrade to the "**Protect Plus**" paid subscription of the OffenderWatch App if they so choose.
 - With the **Protect Plus version** of the app, parents will also receive an alert if a registered sex offender contacts their child through Snapchat, email, text or phone calls. The app also monitors the child's location and sends an alert if the device is near a sex offender's home for a prolonged period.

- The upgraded OffenderWatch App version monitors the child's Snapchat activity, texts, emails, location and phone calls in the background, without storing the child's messages or interfering with its use.
- The subscription version costs \$9.99 / year for an entire family. It's worth it to keep your family safer from known sex offenders.
- Download the app on our website or at OffenderWatch.com.

Questions Parents Should Ask

Is your child at risk online? Here are five questions for parents to reduce the risk that your child would become a victim of online exploitation, sextortion, or sex trafficking.

- What is your child's age and gender?
 - Teens and preteens (11-15) are most vulnerable as they are most curious about sex and most naïve about predators.
 - Girls are targeted and exploited 5 times more than boys.
 - Talk to her about making friends online and sharing photos.
- Have you reviewed the apps, messages, calls, and images on your child's phone?
 - Look for unusually suggestive images or conversations. Talk about it with your child.
 - Do her conversations include new slang, or her appearance become overly sexualized?
 - Does your child not allow access to her device? Is she becoming isolated or hiding their device?
- Is your child meeting new 'friends' that they've only known through the Internet?
 - Does she know them in real life? Do they strive to get many followers or to become famous?
 - Does she have a new boyfriend —particularly an older one? Is she hiding a boyfriend or not willing to introduce family or friends to him?
 - Is she prone to run away, perhaps to meet her friend?
- Have you searched for dangerous apps on your child's phone?
 - Predators know which apps parents screen and will move the conversation with your child to another account or a secret chat app.
 - Does your child have a second device and/or multiple accounts on social media?
 - Consider getting apps that detect dangerous apps, monitor app use, and do location tracking with alerts, like the OffenderWatch App.
- Have you had a conversation with your child on online safety, how they choose friends, and how to respond should anyone make them feel uncomfortable or suggest something inappropriate?
 - Is your Child at Risk Online? Consider checking for offenders nearby, and monitoring the movement and communication of your child with the OffenderWatch App.
 - If you suspect abuse, immediately contact local law enforcement office or dial 911 or contact the CyberTipline 1-800-THE LOST.



Important Safety Statistics

- Over 80% of Americans live within a mile of a registered sex offender.
- 89% of teens have a smart phone and 70% are on social media multiple times a day.
- Teens overwhelmingly choose Snapchat (41%) as their main social media site, followed by Instagram (22%) and Facebook (15%).
- At least 25% of teens have received sexually explicit texts and emails, and at least 14% are sending sexts.
- 54% of teens report that if parents knew what happened on social media, they'd be a lot more worried about it.
- 45% of sexual assault victims are under 12 years old.
- We estimate 80% of addresses have a registered sex offender within a 1-mile radius.
- In 2018, NCMEC's CyberTipline received more than 18.4 million reports, most of which related to:
 - Apparent child sexual abuse images.
 - Online enticement, including "sextortion."
 - Child sex trafficking.
 - Child sexual molestation.

Sources: The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Exploited Children Statistics, A 2018 study (Social Media, Social Life) conducted by Common Sense Media in 2018