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## New law: Sex offenders can't hide

Rules mandate fresh photos of parolees who change their appearance

By [Rick Karlin](#)

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ALBANY — Change your appearance, get a new photo.

Those are the new rules for New York's paroled sex offenders who must get new photographs of themselves for criminal records if they grow a beard, shave their head or otherwise alter the way they look.

Under legislation recently signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, high risk, or Level III, offenders are subject to tougher controls. Police have new authority over the parolees, and can order new photos every 90 days for any reason.

But Corrections and Community Supervision Commissioner Brian Fischer said his department will extend the rule to all levels of sex offenders.

"The intent is to give law enforcement a little extra edge," said Fischer, who joined with other officials on Thursday to announce the effort.

"It will no longer be possible for an offender to disappear simply because he has grown a beard," added Elizabeth Glazer, deputy secretary for public safety.

A paroled sex offender can change his appearance in many ways: different hair color, contact lenses or even cosmetic surgery. All would be subject to the new rule.

Level III offenders are viewed by experts as posing a higher risk of recidivism than those who are deemed Level II or Level I.

The photos are important because the state maintains a website where people can view images of paroled offenders who may live in their ZIP codes.

Another law requires the state Board of Parole to record and make a transcript of release interviews with sex offenders before they are let out of jail or prison.

The records are then to be given to the state Office of Mental Health and attorney general who can use them to decide if a convicted offender, even after serving a prison sentence, should be kept in a psychiatric hospital under the state's 2007 civil confinement laws.

"These laws are commonsense measures," said Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, a Utica Democrat who sponsored the measures in the Assembly and who joined in the news conference.

Additionally, the Office of Mental Health is expanding the number of factors considered to be risk factors for recidivism including "sexual pre-occupation" and an "inability to form healthy relationships."

New York has more than 34,000 people listed as sex offenders including 8,452 in the Level III category.

As of the end of June, 229 were in civil confinement.

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### Check website

To find out if there are Level II or III sex offenders in your ZIP code, go to

[http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/SomsSUBDirectory/search\\_index.jsp](http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/SomsSUBDirectory/search_index.jsp)

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