



CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®

*Helping families. Protecting children.*



# High Risk Offender Release Notifications:

## Safety Strategies for Parents and Communities

### What Is It?

A high risk offender notification is a province-wide or community-specific warning sent to the public regarding certain high-risk offenders that have been released from prison. They often include a photograph and physical description of the offender, as well as other information regarding past offences.<sup>1</sup>

### What Parents Need to Know:

Notifications are written for adult audiences and are not intended for children to see. They are very descriptive and could be frightening to a child. Scaring children only increases their insecurity and can make them more vulnerable. Parents should avoid sharing community notifications with children.



*This sheet is intended to help parents build their children's safety skills in an age-appropriate manner that will help build confidence. Safety education is an ongoing process and should be incorporated into children's daily lives.*

<sup>1</sup> Community Notifications differ by province and may be referred to differently. For information about the notification process in your area, contact your local police.

## What Parents Can Do:

- Be aware of the risk within your own neighbourhood: Does the offender live within your community? Does the offender have any legitimate purpose for being in your community, such as employment, etc.?
- Supervise your children. Supervision is critical to child safety. See [kidsintheknow.ca/parents](http://kidsintheknow.ca/parents) for more information.
- Additional safety precautions may be needed if the offender lives near your home or is present within your community. Become familiar with the resources available in your community to support your family's personal safety, such as where to report concerns.
- Call police if you have concerns about suspicious behaviour, such as the individual being around children or loitering around parks or playgrounds.
- Stay calm; kids pick up their parents' emotions. Keep discussions about personal safety in a matter-of-fact tone, just as you would when discussing other types of safety with your children (e.g., car safety, bike safety, fire safety, swimming safety).
- Have regular conversations about personal safety so it becomes a habit in everyday life. Information shared with children should be age-appropriate and not fear-based. Scaring children only increases their vulnerability.

*For example, an adult would not discuss an abduction story that was presented in the media with a six-year-old; however, it may be relevant to do so with a 16-year-old. On the other hand, an adolescent may understand and not require explanations on inappropriate touching, but may need a more nuanced understanding of behaviours to be able to distinguish between safe and unsafe situations.*



*Remember, you won't always know if someone within your community is unsafe around children, so regular personal safety discussions are important.*

## General Safety Habits to Teach School-age Children:

- Always get permission from your parents before going anywhere with anyone. Check first!
- Always use the buddy system when going places – there is safety in numbers.
- Pay attention to your surroundings and trust your instincts; leave any situation where you begin to feel uneasy or unsafe.
- Talk to a safe adult when you are feeling uncomfortable about something that has happened.
- Practice assertive behaviour – learn how to establish healthy personal boundaries, how to identify unhealthy boundaries and how to be assertive when someone is being inappropriate or unsafe.



*For safety and supervision tips, visit [kidsintheknow.ca/parents](http://kidsintheknow.ca/parents)*