

Arizona Department of Public Safety

Department has met some of its statutory objectives and purposes but did not include information on the sex offender website for some offenders and included information it should not have for others we reviewed

Audit purpose

To determine whether the Department maintained the sex offender website in compliance with statutory requirements, complied with State purchasing card and conflict-of-interest requirements, and followed its complaint-processing policies and procedures; and provide information on the Border Strike Force Bureau and responses to the statutory sunset factors.

Key findings

- Department responsibilities include patrolling State highways, conducting criminal investigations, and regulating private investigators, security guards, school buses, and school bus drivers. Additionally, the Department maintains a central repository of criminal history records and a sex offender website.
- The Department is statutorily required to provide certain sex offenders' information to the public on the sex offender website. However, for some offenders we reviewed, the Department:
 - Did not but should have published names and photographs for 2 of 33 offenders on the website.
 - Published names and photographs for 3 of 12 offenders it should not have.
 - Did not update offenders' photographs for 2 of 15 offenders on the website.
 - Did not determine whether 26 of 72 offenders met website publication requirements.

Not publishing or updating offender information on the website may potentially put public safety at risk, and improperly publishing offender information may potentially result in unwarranted public scrutiny of those offenders.

- In 2019 and 2020, we notified the Department of 13 school districts that did not comply with the *Minimum Standards for School Buses and School Bus Drivers* (Minimum Standards), but the Department reported not following up on these instances of noncompliance. Although the Department conducted inspections on school buses at these school districts during 2019 and 2020 and found instances of noncompliance, some of the issues we identified and reported to the Department were not included within the scope of the Department's inspections.
- In 2015, the Department established the Border Strike Force, an enforcement initiative enacted to target border crimes. In fiscal year 2016, the Department created the Border Strike Force Bureau. To support the Border Strike Force Bureau's costs, the Department receives an appropriation to pay for 37 Department positions, 16 of which are assigned to the Border Strike Force Bureau with the remaining 21 positions assigned to other Department areas.

Key recommendations

The Department should:

- Publish and update all statutorily required sex offender website information and develop and implement policies and procedures for verifying that offenders' risk levels are correctly recorded, offenders with convictions from other jurisdictions have been referred for legal review, and required information is published on the sex offender website.
- Review and follow up on the instances of noncompliance with the Minimum Standards for the 13 school districts that we reported to it during calendar years 2019 and 2020 and continue to develop and implement written policies and procedures to track, review, and follow up on instances of reported Minimum Standards noncompliance.