

NCJTC- Fox Valley | 2020.07.29 SORNA Precautions and Safety Measures

Welcome, everyone, to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar. Our topic today is precautions and safety measures for sex offender registry personnel. Presenters for today's sessions include Paul Fuentes, Kevin Mariano, and Lea Geurts. My name is Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky. And I will serve as your moderator and also am a presenter for today.

This project is supported by a grant awarded by the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking, also known as the SMART Office, Office of Justice Programs, United States Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice.

I'd like to welcome you again to our webinar. I'm pleased to introduce you to our presenters for today. Paul Fuentes is a Senior Associate with the National Criminal Justice Training Center. He serves as a court administrator for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. Kevin Mariano and Lea Geurts are Project Coordinators with the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College, providing training and technical assistance for tribal grantees.

My name again is Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky. And I am also an associate with the National Criminal Justice Training Center. I am also a licensed clinical social worker and am the program director for the Colorado State Sex Offender Management Board.

Before we begin, we want to begin by opening in a good way. We realize these are very difficult times right now with COVID and that it has had a significant impact on Native American communities. So we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the importance of safety and wish for safety in all of our lives. So let's please clear our thoughts, center ourselves, and get our focus ready for what's important for us. So if we could have a brief moment of silence just to do that, we would appreciate it. Thank you. We appreciate that.

OK. We are now going to begin the presentation. And so I will go over for you the objectives in this training. There will be four different major components to this training. And then there will be a question-and-answer period, as we indicated, at the end.

So the four pieces that will be covered will be, first of all, to talk about the risks and concerns for offender behavior-- so knowing things about offenders and what risk those pose. And then how can we take safety precautions for ourselves, for our communities, for victims as part of that. So that'll be

the first part of the training that will be done by myself.

I will then turn it over to Lea Geurts. And Lea is going to talk about registrar safety and particular safety within the office setting. So what do you need to do in terms of your interaction as a registry person with individuals who have committed sex offenses? And we realize some of you may not be registry personnel. But I think those safety precautions are still important if you're a mental health professional or any other type of professional as well.

The third area will be given to you by Kevin Mariano, who is our law enforcement officer on the call. And Kevin will talk about what it's like to go out into the field and how to make sure that you're safe when you're engaging with registered offenders within the field setting if you're doing compliance checks or address verification or those types of things.

The final component will be to talk about, specifically, how do you operate a registry program and your tribal functions within this current COVID situation? And Paul Fuentes has some great ideas about that, having done some of that for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. So those are the four pieces that we plan to get through. And so without further ado, we'll go ahead and get started with piece number one, which, again, I'll be doing, talking about the risks and concerns in offender behavior.

I think the real important takeaway message from this is that offenders are not all the same. They provide different levels of risk, have different risk concerns. I know when you hear the term "sex offender" and certainly when the public hears the term "sex offender," they maybe have a certain vision in their mind about what that type of a person is or what their risks are, et cetera. But that is very individualized. And they're not all the same.

And so the job for those who are working-- whether it's in a registry aspect or in other aspects-- working with individuals who have committed sex offenses is to figure out what those concerns and risks are and to then use that for safety of self, community, victims, and others. So this is a very important component, I think, for you as a registry official or doing registry work to know some of these things.

So how do you do that, Chris? What do you do? I think you need information. You need to know what the risks are for this individual and then what to do about it. And so that's what I'm going to be talking about.

And I know that many of you are not social workers or mental health professionals. But I think there

are still things that you can gather, learn, understand, and apply. And so hopefully, this will be helpful for you.

So first, we're going to talk about, where do you get this information? And so you need information for both doing the registry itself, as well as for to be able to do the monitoring and to provide for the safety aspects. And where do you get that?

I was thinking about this. And I would use the *Forrest Gump* analogy of look everywhere. You never know what you're going to get. It's like that life is like a box of chocolates analogy thing. Hopefully some of you are smiling out there using my little silly analogy. But look high and low and everywhere for the information that you need.

And some of this information is information that you need for the registry and to do the official registry function. And the other is information for screening and monitoring for safety. And so, again, you're looking for information about the conviction, information about arrest, history, et cetera.

And then once you get that, you might be able to look a little deeper and get some specific documents that describe what those things are. Getting police reports or affidavits and things like that are really important. And again, I think you can also look to your partner. So if somebody is on probation or parole, perhaps they have some information that might be helpful as well. So knowing things about what the status of your registrant is can be very helpful to you.

And then you can certainly talk to the registrant about it. But I don't know about you. But in my experience, oftentimes the registrants are not completely forthcoming about that information. So having that documentation with which to have a conversation with the registrant can be very, very helpful.

So in terms of, then, where else you can get that information from, you can look to the criminal history. And so it's referred to as the Triple I here, the Interstate Identification Index. So getting that criminal history information for those of you who have that criminal justice access-- and I know some of you do have that. And some of you may not have that as well.

If you don't have that access, are there other entities or organizations that can help you access that information, knowing what the person's criminal history is, and then, as I said before, being able to look for more specific documents related to that? And again, from my experience, having specific police reports-- victim statements can be exceedingly helpful in that regard. And so you want things that give detailed information about the offense.

Who was victimized, what the nature of the offense was? How did that offense take place? What types of behaviors occurred? All of that's really, really important and useful, both for your registry purpose, as well as for these safety precautions that you're going to be talking about. And so, again, hopefully through this process, you'll be able to obtain case information, as well as more detailed types of information.

Another good resource if you don't have that law enforcement access is the National Sex Offender Public Website. But it's important to keep in mind that some registrant information and some registrants are not on that website. So it's not an all-inclusive sorts of information. But it is a place where you can start to try to get some information.

So continuing on, then, this is describing where you actually get the registry information. And this is part of the National Crime Information Center, or NCIC, information. And it talks about that that subfolder related to the National Sex Offender Registry.

And so, again, for those of you who have criminal justice access, you can access this information to be able to find information about the registrant. What are their requirements for registering? What is their history? And all of the information that has been put in-- if you're not the original jurisdiction of registry for this client, then what has already been put in there by the other entity? And so you can get information that way.

If you do not have access to the criminal justice-- to NCIC, the SMART Office has started an initiative called the TAP Initiative to make that access available to tribes. So I would strongly encourage you to check in with your SMART Office senior policy advisor about that if that's something that you might be interested in.

So again, thinking about what information is available to you, whether it's through the National Sex Offender Registry or NSOPW, that's information that you can gather. And we did a more thorough what we called a SORNA 101 training earlier in this series. And so you could certainly contact the National Criminal Justice Training Center if you weren't able to attend that training to see a recorded version of that.

So continuing on with where you get the information, I mentioned a few minutes ago about probation and parole officers-- that they are a great source of information. Perhaps if somebody is dually required to register, say, with your jurisdiction and the state or local jurisdiction in your area, those folks can be a great source of information. They may or may not be able to provide confidential

criminal justice records to you. But they can certainly point you in the direction that you need to go. The prosecutor's office can be another great resource.

If you're having trouble in obtaining information, again, I would encourage you to reach out to the SMART Office or some of the other federal personnel listed there, the Marshals office and other folks who could perhaps help you with that as well. So those are just different ideas that we have. But we didn't want to just say, OK, here's the information that you need, and here's what to do, without talking about where you can get it from.

So I'm going to transition now and talk about, what are important elements to consider in this process? So what information do you need to be able-- so I've talked about how to get it. Now what information do you need? And what's important from a risk perspective?

So the first thing you'll notice here in this slide is it talks about risk and protective factors. For those of you who are not familiar with those terms, a risk factor is something as part of the registrant. It could be a behavior. It could be a thought. It could be part of their history. It could be the situation that they're in. But those are things that make the person more likely to commit another offense. So they're risk factors, is what we call them.

And so knowing what those risk factors are-- and those risk factors are things that research has identified as risk factors. And so knowing what those things are can be very helpful to you as a SORNA registry official in terms of being able to know whether the registrant is more likely than not or is trending towards recidivism or something like that.

Protective factors are those things in the registrant's life that reduce the likelihood that they're going to commit another offense-- so for example, things like having stable housing, stable employment, having positive peer social support. Those are protective factors. And so it's important that, as you're considering this information-- you consider what is risk information-- you also consider what is protective factor information. Because what we're hoping for is the balance that there is greater protective factors and less risk factors in what's going on.

So that's what we're looking for in terms of information. And you'll see some examples there of different types of risk and protective factors listed. So the type of the crime, how old the registrant is, the supports, education, some of the things I've already talked about are there.

Another thing that can be very important is if you can have access to actual risk assessment information. Now, this is not required for SORNA tiering. Just to be very clear, SORNA tiering is based

on the offense of conviction. But a risk assessment and knowing what the risk category level of the registrant is can be helpful to know how much safety, precaution, and monitoring practices that you put in place for yourself, for the community, for victims, et cetera.

So finding that risk assessment information-- so you may or may not be trained on a risk assessment tool, but others are. Probation and parole are a great source for risk assessment information. Mental health clinicians are a great source for risk assessment information. So finding out what that risk assessment information is, getting access to it, identifying what the risk factors are, as well as what the overall risk level is, can be a very helpful thing for you.

And then finally, any sort of psychological evaluation information can be extremely helpful, mental health information. What we know is that certain mental health issues can make someone's risk become aggravated, whereas if their mental health conditions are being managed, maybe through therapy or through some kind of medication or something like that, all of those things indicate whether there's risk going on.

And it may be something that you need to be aware of if somebody is sort of falling apart from a mental health perspective, so to speak. That's one of those technical terms I learned in social work school. Just kidding. But anyway, thinking about that can be very helpful. And that could be something that-- if you're seeing some signs of that, we'll talk in a few minutes about what to do about that.

So continuing on, then, with other important elements to consider-- getting a sex offense-specific evaluation. I used to do these types of evaluations when I was doing the work in the field. So you get an evaluation of the person's risk of what their risk factors are, what the treatment issues are, et cetera. That can be very helpful for you as a SORNA registry person in terms of knowing what the risks are, what the treatment needs are, et cetera, and, in particular, knowing what their sexual offense history is and what other types of behaviors they've been involved in.

We know from the research that, typically, when an offender comes into treatment based on a conviction for one crime, there may be other crimes in their background. Now, they may be the same types. So somebody who has molested a child maybe has molested other children in the past. But we also know that sometimes they've engaged in other types of behaviors, perhaps exposure or peeping or forced sexual contact with an age-- somebody of their own age.

So it's important to know what that offending history is and who's at risk from this person to know how to plan for safety, both for your own personal safety, as well as for community and victim safety

as well. And then, as I indicated earlier, the victim statements can also provide for some real good information. Because typically, it's the victim who will report the details and the components of the offense that oftentimes might not be available in any other location.

And I would, again, say that we did a previous training on this called Advanced Techniques for Supervision and Monitoring of Registered Sex Offenders, a webinar of that which was recorded. And if you're interested in seeing this and learning more about that, you can certainly contact the National Criminal Justice Training Center.

So in summary, in important elements to consider, knowing about the offender, knowing what the risks are, what their offense history is, et cetera, that helps with offender accountability in what you're doing. It also helps you begin to plan for how you're going to be monitoring and dealing with the offender.

So what are those characteristics that you need to be looking at? What are the things that are helpful for you as a SORNA registry official or if you're a mental health provider dealing with this population, whatever context you're in? So these are the few things that I would encourage you to think about.

First of all, what we call "tendencies"-- it's, what is their offending style? Is there certain types of things that they have done that means that that is a possibility of something happening again in the future? What we know about offenders is that some offenders commit the same types of offenses over and over. I'll use somebody who does window peeping as an example, what we call "voyeurism."

So one person may have committed voyeurism over and over and over again. And that's the type of offense that they do. And so it's kind of fixed for them. But we also know that voyeurism can also be sort of a gateway crime to, say, going into the house and perhaps engaging in forced rape with the person in the house. And so knowing what that offending style is, what those tendencies are is really important.

But again, you can't just rely on what we know because oftentimes there could be other things that we don't know. Or it's possible that the offender could choose different avenues in the future. But certainly, the trend says that if there's a tendency there that that's something that you need to be aware of and guard against, if you will.

Target of choice really talks about, who is it that they are looking at as being a prospective victim, what we can kind of call a "victim profile," if you will? And so is there a certain type of person that they typically look for? That might be gender, a male or a female. It could be the age, looking for

someone of a certain age.

It could be certain characteristics. I remember working with a client one time. And he picked kids who were having some troubles and things like that under his assumption that if the kid ever told, they wouldn't be believed. So what was it about the person that was selected that led to them to select? And then that's something that you can maybe build in some safety parameters or at least to have some awareness around.

Victim access has to do with, who is it that is in the registrant's life, the offender's life, that they are currently having access to? So if they're living in a home, say, with other people, are those people potential victims in that situation?

Now, maybe they even return home to live with the victim of the previous crime. Or maybe they sexually assaulted a child. And now they're in a new live-in relationship with another partner who has a child of roughly the same gender and the same age. So knowing where they're living, whether there's that access within that, and/or maybe that they are socializing with family members where they could potentially have contact with a prospective victim-- so knowing the level of that victim access that they're having is a very important thing.

Related and unrelated victims-- I think one of the things that we talk a lot about is that the vast majority of victims know the offender prior to the offense. So it's really important to look at that issue of, who are they related to? Who are they around? But certainly, offenders also offend against unrelated or strangers as well. So who is the typical target in that situation? Who is at risk?

And then finally, the issue of undetected offense or deviant sexual behaviors-- what is in their history maybe that they were never caught for? Perhaps through treatment and/or evaluation, that information might be available.

So moving on, then, and talking about offender aggression and violence, then we see a fair amount of crossover between sex offending and domestic violence offending, too. And so does the offender or the registrant also have a history of domestic violence as well? Have they engaged in different types of interpersonal violence? That's important for us to know in terms of our personal safety. It's also important to be aware of within the community, too.

So does this person have a history of violence, again, reported or unreported, charged or uncharged? In their interactions with you, are they engaging in a very controlling personality style? That's a real red flag in terms of somebody who perhaps has that type of a history.

Do they have access to weapons? So is there any weapons charges in their history? Are you aware that they have any weapons or not? That's important to know because when they're coming to your office-- again, Lea is going to talk about safety precautions that you want to take. But you want to make sure that people are not walking into register carrying weapons and things like that-- so knowing what their weapons history is and knowing what level of threat they're providing to you as you're registering within your office if they're coming to your office where other staff are. And then what type of a threat are they posing to the community as well?

Then we'll also talk about mental health and substance abuse. So looking at mental health issues, I referenced this before. Do they have a history of mental health issues, disorders? Have they been diagnosed with some type of a diagnosable mental health disorder? That can aggravate their risk situation, particularly if it's not currently being managed.

Similarly, with substance abuse, if somebody is actively using, has a history of substance abuse, that can also be something that can really be of concern. And so knowing whether they have some kind of mental health issue or some type of substance abuse issue and whether that's being managed successfully or not can be very, very helpful to you in your work with SORNA.

And related to suicidal ideation, if somebody is showing risk to self, risk to others, these are things that are also important to be aware of, both for your own personal safety, as well as any duty to warn issues or things like that. And I know that I'm getting into talking about more social worker stuff. And perhaps you're more of a law enforcement emphasis. I'm not suggesting you become a social worker.

But I do know that in talking with many of the registry folks that they have to be aware of these things. Oftentimes the registrants will come in and talk to you about these things that they don't talk to anybody else about. And so knowing what these issues are and then being able to make referrals-- I mean, obviously, no one's expecting you to provide the counseling or the support related to these things. But if there's a mental health issue or a substance abuse issue, knowing what those are, making referrals can be exceedingly helpful.

So why is this important? I think in terms of, what do you do with it, I think the first and foremost thing we're here to talk about today is your safety. You're providing a public safety service for your tribal community. And so we want to make sure that you're safe in what you want to do-- what you're doing. But we also want to make sure that the community is safe as well and that we want to make sure that the victim, the survivor of the sex assault, is safe.

And so knowing about these risk factors and what's going on are helpful for you to know. What does the client come to the table with? What are these issues? And then keeping an eye on them-- are they getting worse? Are they getting better? How are they doing? And then when they're in your office or you're in the field or you're talking to others about this registrant, all of those things can be very helpful to be, again, keeping in the back of your mind, watching out for, et cetera.

Also why this is important is, again, if somebody's risk seems to be elevating and aggravating, are there triggering things that are going on, what we call the "dynamic risk factors"? So for example, someone's been sober and has not been using. And all of a sudden, they fall off the wagon. And they start using again.

That could be a trigger for some type of future offending. And so knowing what those triggers are, being able to then maybe put some kind of monitoring accountability in place, whether that's more frequent visits, doing a field verification, referral to mental health, checking in with a supervision officer if something's available-- these are all recourses that are available to you.

So with that, I think I'm going to go ahead and wrap it up. And I'm going to turn it over, Lea, now to you to talk about-- all right. I just shared what you have to watch out for, what you need to know. Now you can talk with them a little bit about what hands-on can they do to make sure that they're safe in their jobs? Thank you, Lea.

Great. Thank you, Chris. So we're going to talk a little bit about registrar safety, like Chris had mentioned. And I want just to emphasize, as we jump into this process, we're really talking about the things that you can observe and things that you can address on a day-to-day-- walking through day-to-day safety procedures and considerations.

And so some of this stuff may be things that you're like, well, I walk by the carpet that's pulling up. Or this rug always trips me every time I walk into the office. Those are the things that we're wanting to become aware of because those can ultimately create a safer environment for us.

And so I would really encourage-- I know some of us are working remotely. Or some of us have limited capacity working in our facilities. Or we're not allowing clients to come into our offices. But as we're starting to get back into our offices, I would encourage you to walk through. Walk through your offices. Walk through space that's shared with your colleagues. Walk through space where your offenders might be coming in to register.

And really analyze that environment to see if there are things that you can do individually to help

reduce some of those safety cautions. So that can be things such as rugs that are rolling up or causing tripping hazards. Are there uneven floors where we can put a sign or a notice to where individuals can be made aware of that? Because we don't want offenders coming into our office and getting hurt.

Exposed electrical or wiring-- how well lit are our porches? If we're having folks that are coming in during the evening time, is there adequate lighting that's outside during the building? Can we adequately see lighting when we're walking to our vehicles?

We're really wanting to look at those risks from our perspective and how we're able to keep our staff safe and then also those risks of, how are we keeping the public safe? How are we keeping our offenders safe when they're coming in to register for us? And then also, how are we keeping others who might be coming to visit our buildings safe as well? Or if we have instances where, say, perhaps law enforcement has to respond, is the building safe and accessible?

So we start off with evaluating the environment and saying, OK, are there those minor things that we can address that create this level of safety when it's looking at, like we mentioned, the area rugs, the flooring? But we also want to look at how the environment can impact scenarios if they were to escalate.

So let's say we have an offender who come in who maybe was triggered by something in their day. How is the environment going to help either increase risk or decrease risk? And are there things that we can evaluate and that we can prepare for as we start looking at those things?

And so one of those things that we want to talk about is looking at those different type of scenarios that might play out. So for me in our building, I had a very, very small office. It was probably about the size of a jail cell. And so there was literally enough room in there for my chair, a desk, and then a chair for the client that was coming into the office.

And so when we sat down and we were running through different scenarios, there was a lot of risks that were posed to me being able to one, get out of the office or that confined space. And so we really ran through different scenarios of different ways that I could navigate the space in order to get out of the office and even leave the client in the office without them being able to follow me. How are we facing the chair in relation to our desk?

So there's a lot of different scenarios that we want to run through. What if somebody enters the building, and they're not even in our office space that they're posing a risk? How are we evaluating

how staff are going to communicate those different risks to each other? What types of role playing can we do to prepare for those different types of situations so, if and when they happen, we have an idea of how it is that we're going to respond?

That also helps us identify where perhaps some additional safety risks exist that we didn't notice prior to running through some of those different scenarios. And then we want to be sure that we're identifying some of those risks. And then we prioritize them in a way of saying, what can we address? What is the most important thing that we address? What is posing the highest level of risk?

I think the third part of that is also being sure that we're documenting those risks. A lot of us do reports to our supervisors or reports to our administration and identifying those risks. So that way, they can be on the radar and hopefully incorporated into some type of budgetary items if it requires that, but then also approval for course of action. So that way, we can implement those things.

I think for us also, when we look at prioritizing the risks, it helps us identify things that we can do here and now. So again, going back to my particular facility, we realized when we were running through different scenarios-- and we said, well, if somebody came in and they were wanting to create harm, what would our first step be? And of course, we're like, well, try to secure the building, especially if you see somebody coming. And what we had realized is that we had no ability to secure our building.

Our building was a big safety hazard. It was a very old building. All around, we had so many incidents where the staff were regularly in harm's way. And so one of the important parts for me was to prioritize the risks and be able to document those.

I was able to make those observations and even make recommendations to our tribal leadership and then, later on, in grants. And that was really helpful because, through that process, I was able to justify and advocate for a new building for us. Right now, this building that we're in is like over 9,000 square feet. The one we had previously had was-- I don't even know if it was 1,000 square feet.

But what really helped us along was to be able to prioritize those risks, to document our observations, and to make recommendations. So I thought that all that was very important for us to improve our facility.

I was saying before-- and I don't think it was being picked up. But I was saying that safety is very comprehensive. And so we're all looking for the one karate move or ninja move that's going to save our lives in every situation. And that's not the case. It's very comprehensive. And it takes multiple levels of safeguards and of, I think, thinking and processing and be able to implement new practices

that are going to keep the registry officials safe, the sex offenders safe, or, if you're in a building that covers multiple services, the general public safe.

So the next slide is the risk analysis and mitigation. So I talked about developing protocols and practices. And I think it starts at when the client or the public or, in this context, when the sex offender enters the building.

What type of screenings do you have? Is someone at the door to not only greet them, but to go through a screening process where they're checking for metal or they're checking for guns or knives, anything like that? What screening process does your registry currently have? Are they checking, like I said, the bags and purses? And then what access does that person have into one's office?

So at our, again, building that we had previously had, we did have a counter. But you could just-- there was a counter. But someone could easily walk to and through the other side to get to our staff. And like I said multiple times, that was the case. And our staff was in a dangerous situation.

And once you've thought those processes through and have established a way that you're going to begin to do things, it's so important that you share that with the clients. Hey, the next time you come in, we're starting a new thing. Everyone's going to go through a metal detector, whether it's that or-- we don't have a big metal detector that everyone goes through.

But the next time you come, we'll have a wand. And we're going to go ahead and wand you before you're able to get to the registration part or the verification part of your visit. And so I think sharing those with our clients is extremely important as well.

So office safety-- so when you're in your office-- and we make an emphasis of this in this training, both in the office setting and in the field setting. But I think it's so important to have a partner who's observing, who's nearby. Again, in our building, we have multiple people who have access to video cameras. So we have a security department who's in a different building.

But they have access to our cameras in the justice center. The clerks have access to it. The bailiff has access. And so there's multiple people viewing through video. But also, there is a partner on standby. Or they're with us as we're doing the registration part or a verification part when we're conducting those with an offender.

When we're talking about keeping a safe distance between you, you don't want to be so close where they have access to you. You want to keep that distance. And now, which we'll talk about in a little bit about COVID-- but even more, we hear that 6 feet of social distancing. Well, both for physical safety

and with that in mind, COVID, it's going to be so important that we keep our distance as we interact with the people that we're serving or with the sex offenders.

So never have your back towards a person. That's an emphasis we continue to make, too. And later on at the end of the presentation, we have a few pictures that we're going to go through and try to identify the problems. But that's something that we continue to emphasize-- never to have your back towards the person and to always have an escape plan. So never be cornered into your office. Be able to get out when you need to.

So continuing on the same topic, what about your social media use? And so most of us probably have Facebook. Or some of you guys may be on TikTok or whatever is out there. Think from the offender's perspective. If they did want to get a hold of you, if they did want to know about you, if they did want to know about your family or what you did last weekend or if you're going to be in the office this week, do they have access to that type of information just by doing a search on Facebook for you?

And so it's very important, I think, that we are considering that if we need to put some more privacy settings on our social media account that we go through the extra effort of doing that. Because like I said, we don't want the people that we're serving to have our personal information. So I think that that part's important.

In your office, personal identifiers-- do you have pictures of your kids or grandkids, any of that information? Again, what they know of us is just our professional side. And in that type of relationship, there is no need for them to know all of our personal information-- and so, again, that reminder to keep our personal life private.

So security controls and risk management-- and so when an officer is going to meet with the sex offender maybe to do registration or to do a verification-- but in both cases, and especially if you're doing finger and palm printing, the officer should secure their weapons before entering into that room. You can imagine doing finger and palm printing and having your weapon there where the offender can have access to it. So you definitely want to secure those weapons before meeting with the offender.

It's a good idea to search your room prior and after the interview depending on what access the individual has to that room. So for us, someone from the public could not get into the room that we conduct our registration visits. But there are a lot of buildings that we've gone through to visit as we've gone to other tribes where someone easily has access to those rooms. So you want to search it

beforehand and make sure there's no weapons stashed or anything like that.

We had a similar incident happen like that in our court system at the other building. So that does happen. I think in that room where you're doing registration, it needs to just be extremely simple-- maybe the desk, chairs, that's it. Or maybe two chairs if you have your registration where the kiosk is where you do finger or palm printing, and that's if. But you don't want heavy, large, or sharp objects, all your office supplies, all of that extra stuff. You don't want to have it in that room.

And it's great, if you can, to be away from the general public and noise. You don't want to expose the sex offender to just the general public and the other services that they may be looking for if that occurs in the same room or the same building. And you don't want the public to have access to the information that the sex offender is sharing. So do those things separately, the public from the sex offender.

We talked about the screenings that occur when one enters the building. But the utilizing of technology, I think, is so important-- so whether that is the walk-through metal detector or if it's the handheld metal detector. And then I talked briefly about security cameras. Being able to implement technology-- I think using technology and making it your friend is going to be so important, such an important part of the staying safe, keeping staff safe, keeping the public safe, keeping the sex offenders safe.

And as always, those things, the technology part-- you probably want to have the approval of your administrator or whoever would have that decision authority not only implement this, but to develop a protocol or procedures for it. So when can you go back on a camera and review? Or do men only want men and women security officers want women who are coming from the public? Any of those things that you think may be an issue-- that you work those things out and have a clear way of operating as far as utilizing technology.

So we talked about the maintaining safety during registration. And to go a little further on the subject, it's so important that we have our forms prepared ahead of time. If you could have packages, maybe you have a registration package, like an initial one. And maybe you have the update registration package. And so you have those prepared and ready.

Because a lot of times, our offenders-- they're supposed to be here Monday at 2 o'clock. And they don't show. And then Tuesday, out of the blue, they're there acting like that was their set time. And so a lot of times, you or registering officials are just being called again out of the blue to register someone.

And so you're like, well, no, you need to keep your appointment. Or you're like, shoot, they made it. I might as well just get it done now. But it's important that you have that information available and ready, like I said, if it's in a packet, where you're just getting it out real quick. And you're prepared to go in there with it.

And a lot of times, if that's the case here, I know that our SORNA person-- she'll ask them, OK, you can come now. We can do it now. But I need 15 minutes or so. And so in those 15 minutes, she may go through their file, maybe even keeping in mind or reviewing some of the information that Chris just shared before they go in and meet with the individual.

But during that process, I think knowing someone's body language, their attitude, safety risk-- I think that all that is really important. You can gather if the person is-- they come in upset. We have offenders who already come in upset. And maybe their probation officer has told them something that makes them mad at the registry. And so being able to tell those attitudes, I think, is so important that we catch on to those cues.

I think it's important, too, that-- again, in maintaining or being professional-- that if they're upset, I don't think it's good for us on the registration end to match that. I think to remind the person-- hey, I know you may not like having to do this. But it is something that you have to do. And the quicker we can get this information in, the quicker we can get it done with. Or just say, hey, you look real upset. Do you need to take a water break? Or do you need to take a break for a second?

And so I think the registering official just-- we need to stay calm and confident and be able to help the individual and not meet them where they are if they're aggravated to also be aggravated. I don't think matching that is a good idea. I think, again, staying calm, confident-- all those things are going to allow for a better experience and allow you to get more information and get accurate information.

This kind of goes along with about being nonconfrontational. So the privacy concerns-- I know that on all of our codes and acts, we have where to take pictures of scars, marks, and tattoos. And so you know I think that it's important that-- like in our case, our registering official is a female. But sometimes she's dealing with men.

When it comes to the picture-taking and stuff like that, a lot of times it's better if it's me or whether it's our court bailiff, who's also cross-trained in SORNA-- that they're doing it for men. And then, like I said, she's able to do it for women-- that is, take the pictures of those, again, whether it be scars, marks, or tattoos. So I think that that's important.

This was brought up once before. And I think Kevin's on the call. But he brought up a good point that maybe if your tribe has access to a corrections facility, and they are more apt to take pictures-- or maybe they have the male or the female that you don't have that matches the sex offender's gender. And they feel comfortable taking those pictures. If that's something that happens or where you may rely on them, having an agreement in place beforehand, I think, would be a great idea. But again, this is really addressing privacy concerns. So keep those things in mind as you do that.

And I think the last slide on this topic before we go into a video-- but building rapport. I've always thought that this was such an important part of the registering official's approach to registering people. But that is to listen and practice active listening skills when you're meeting with people.

I think that's important because you may pick up on cues that-- maybe some struggles that they're going through that impact your safety when you do a home visit. And I also think it's important because maybe you're getting extra information that they're just kind of sharing off the cuff. And you can later use that information to track them if you lose them or if they've absconded. So I think that doing that is so important.

We talked about this in the 101. But when we're registering someone for the first time, it should take like an hour and a half because it's so much information that you're collecting. And on these verification visits, it's much more than just dropping a form with their signature on them. I think that those are opportunities for you to continue to talk and be able to listen.

And Chris said it's not that the registering officials are going to be a counselor or anything like that. But it is important that if you are able to catch some of their-- to hear about who their network of support is, to encourage them when they've been consistent. Hey, you're a tier three. You've come in every three months, just like you're supposed to. Thank you. That makes my job easier. Thank you. I appreciate that-- recognizing their success that goes with that and, like I said, demonstrating empathy and concern.

So the last part, the last bullet there, is offering resources. So again, it's not that this person is going to be the mental health expert. But it will give you an opportunity to listen, pick up information if you ever need it in the future, again, if they've absconded or for your own personal safety. But also, if you realize that this person may need outside help, whether that be mental health or because of drug use or abuse, I think that it would be great for you to make that referral or for you to at least offer the sex offender maybe a booklet or resources so that they can get the services that they need.

Yeah. So this is actually just a really good example that Paul had actually found when we were looking at wrapping up and kind of, I think, bringing into perspective what it means to be safe and how each day we never know what kind of safety risks we might be exposed to. And so doing all of these steps-- how beneficial it is to being sure, ultimately, that all of us are able to go home and care for our families at night.

And so before I start this video, I just wanted to give just a brief disclaimer that there is some graphic language and images that are included in this video for you to mute out of it if you choose not to hear the audio. But I'll go ahead and start that now. It will take just a moment.

[VIDEO PLAYING]

- So you walked in. How is he sitting? Was he looking at you? Was he turned around?

- No, he looked at me for a minute.

- So what happens next?

- I walked in, and I shot him.

- Pull out the gun. Did you say anything?

- What was there to say?

- Did you make a mistake? He's facing you?

- Yes.

- Standing, sitting?

- He's sitting.

- Where did you aim for?

- His head. Unfortunately, I missed.

- What do you mean?

- I wanted to hit him in the head. The man has been [BLEEP]-ing with me since he's become my parole officer. Before him, I was doing good. I had a good life. This [BLEEP] piece of [BLEEP] comes into my life and [BLEEP] it up. And I was trying to take the [BLEEP] out. I found that gun for a reason. It was like

God said, here, step to the plate. See what you're going to do. The [BLEEP] jammed.

[END PLAYBACK]

Hello, everyone. And welcome to this portion of the webinar, Field Verification Safety. I will be your presenter for this section. My name is Kevin Mariano. And I'm a project coordinator with the National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College. And I have 23 years in law enforcement, three years in corrections. So with this quick introduction, I will move into the presentation here.

Working away from the office and conducting on-site, in-person checks may be a safety concern at times. And I want to share information that will assist you in your safety. I know the current COVID-19 situation may not allow this at this time. If you are doing on-site, in-person checks, please tune into the section that will be presenting information on COVID-19 and take away some good information that will help you out in the field when you're doing the work and all.

But with that said, I'd like to talk about dress attire and equipment that will assist you in your safety. And when you're getting ready to go out into the field and do your work and do your checks and so forth, we want to make sure that you have everything in working condition. And to start that off, of course, it's going to be your dress attire. What type of attire do you have that's going to assist you when you do your work out there in the field?

What type of equipment do you have? Make sure that everything is functional, everything is working properly. So you do have some sort of communication if you need to get some help to your location. And that will be available for you and so forth.

And also allow that-- if you're going into an area where you're going to be working at, dress and also obtain as much information as you can about the area where you're going to be. If it's going to be a home that you're going to be going into, gather as much information as you can about the place and the location. And we'll talk more about as you go out into the field.

As you get ready to go out into the field, you want to make sure that the uniform-- if you are wearing a uniform that it's going to allow you for some movement to take place. And if you have to get into a situation where they become physical that the uniform or your dress attire will allow you to protect yourself in a way that you can keep the individual away from the URV to back off and get away from the area. So we want to make sure that that's also good and properly fitting you and so forth.

So when you do go out, of course, make sure you check everything that you have. If you have any

type of jewelry, you also may want to maybe take it off until you finish your visit and so forth. I know a lot of us use these lanyards that we hold our identification in and so forth and all. You might want to take that off.

If the person asks who you are, you can quickly present that to them. Put it in your pocket. Put it in a secure location. But remove anything that's going to become a weapon of some sort. It could be a necklace. It could be even a piece of jewelry that you're wearing on yourself, a necktie. Anything that you have that may be used against you, you may want to remove that just till you finish your visit and all.

And lastly is if you have this available, it's always good to wear as much equipment as you can that's going to protect you. And wearing a ballistic vest if it's available to you is always a good thing to have as well too. But make sure that you do understand how to wear it, to actually put it on. You may want to even ask a law enforcement person and ask them to make sure that the vest is fitting in accordance to your body build and all so you're ready to go out into the field.

And you can see here in the picture, this is a uniform that is used to go out into the field. And you see the equipment, the duty belt that is worn on the uniform. You notice that there's really nothing on the uniform there that can be used or grabbed against you and all.

If you are carrying a firearm, you may also want to secure that, depending on what your guidelines and all are, depending on the location where you're going into. But always get with-- if you're going in with another person, if you are law enforcement, obviously you've been trained. That's going to be a key thing is the training that you receive if you are carrying a weapon and so forth. So again, get as much training as you can. And evaluate, inspect your equipment before going out into the field.

When you do go out into the field, make note that it's always good to plan and have a backup, because if something does go down, obviously your safety is number one. And you want to have a way of how you're going to deal with that situation if something does occur. Before going out into the field, if you want to sit down with-- if you're going to go with a partner, talk about how you're going to approach the house, what you're going to do if something does occur, who is going to make contact, who you're going to contact. So again, just sitting down with the individual, or if you're going to go in alone, let the dispatcher know or let someone know if you don't have a dispatch center that you're going to be at a location.

If you want to also identify maybe even a length of time that you're going to be out there, maybe 45

minutes to an hour or less than that, let them know. And then they can have maybe an officer or somebody come by and do a welfare check to make sure that you are OK and all that. So again, just making sure that you're going to inform someone of where you're going and what you're going to be doing. And also maybe even if you have some information that you can provide to the dispatcher of the location would be also great.

And again, it's a good thing to have as to going out into the field. If you're not too sure about the location, maybe you might want to ask someone, a coworker or law enforcement or somebody there that has some information about where you're going to be going to is always good to have. And again, it's always good to have a partner if you do have someone that's available to take and sitting down with the partner, again, talking about the safety plan of what you're going to do. And if it does occur, how is this going to take out-- what are you going to do in that situation and so forth. So again, it's always good to have a partner and to take them along with you.

And again, assessing the location of where you're going to be going out to do your checks and all. If you're going to be going out to a residence, gather as much information as you can. How many people are living at the home? Is there any neighbors nearby? How many vehicles, descriptions? All that is good to have, even if you want to call in license plates or take down information like that. As much information as you can give to dispatch is always useful in ways that hopefully nothing does go wrong that they need to get some help out to your location, but it's always good to have that information available for others to have before going out to a location where you need some help and all.

And again, get to know the person that-- as much information as you can of who you're going to be checking into and doing your checks and all. It was mentioned earlier about NCIC, all the information that was there to gather your information, maybe keep a file with you. Go through it. Review it.

If this individual has a violent history, obviously you may want to look at partner up with somebody to take with you to that location. Gather as much-- I'm always stressing on gathering as much information as you can about the individual before going out to the location. And sometimes all checks ain't made at a residence. Some are made away from the residence.

It's up to you that's going to control that environment. So if you're not too sure, you may have that person even step outside the house and all that. But again, going back and planning what you're going to do and how you're going approach the location is always good to have. As you gather all your information, you find out about the individual. If you come across a person that maybe let's say

they have a warrant, an active warrant and all, obviously that's going to be the time to get law enforcement involved and make sure that you all have a plan on how you're going to take care of that situation and so forth before actually going to the location. So again, gathering as much information as you can is always useful. And again, it's your safety as well too.

As far as a treatment schedule goes and knowing the offender themselves there, if you're not going to be doing this visit at the home, let's say you have to do it at the person's work site and all that. Again, gather as much information as you can about the work environment, the location. Is it a safe location, or could we do this at another time? Again, you control that environment in that time.

If it's a different location where you have to have that person come into, then you obviously can make that call and have that person show up at that location, because your safety is a big concern. And make sure that the situation is going to be safe.

And again, planning-- you want to make sure-- obviously you're not going to do a check in the middle of the night or when it's not daylight, which poses a safety concern. Again, making sure the time that you're going to be going out to the location-- is there going to be enough light available should something happen or occur? How long are you going to be out there?

Depending on what time-- if it has to be a late in the evening check, do you have enough time before the sun goes down? You're going to lose some light. If it's early in the morning, again, make sure that the location has all these lighting conditions. But again, you control that side of it there. Say no, I'm going to do this when there's more lighting in the area and all. So again, just make sure that you know the location.

And again, never-- I always like to look at this as if you schedule a visit at a certain time, that allows a person to do some planning themselves there too. So if you say you're going to show up at 1 o'clock, that person knows that you're going to be there at 1 o'clock. And if the person isn't in the right mindset of themselves and they're planning something, they know what time you're going to be showing up.

So maybe you might want to look at times that you show up of using an unexpected time and just showing up at the residence. You know, if you said 1 o'clock, well, do 10 o'clock. But try not to let the other individual know of when you're going to be showing up to a location. Again, they may be planning. And it's important to gather as much information as you can about the person themselves and all.

So again, the approach to the home when you're going out to the location is knowing the offender themselves. What was their conviction? What case-- are they a violent individual? Is there some mental health conditions that you need to be concerned with?

Obviously if there is, you, again, want to partner up with someone going out to the location. If you think that something doesn't seem right, always ask in some direction from a partner, whether it be law enforcement, probation, courts. But if in your mind, if you're not too sure, always make sure that you have everything in place before going out to the location. Again, you're thinking safety for yourself and others. So make sure that you're going to be out there in the field OK. And safety, again, is a big concern.

Knowing, again, the location of the residence of where you're going to be going to. And if you wanted-- you probably should if you could print a map. I know there are some websites that allow you to do that. And I think Google has one with Google Maps that you can also print an optional map of the location of the residence or business and all. So if you want to make that available, you can also give a copy to dispatch and then let them know that this is the location of where you're going to be at.

And sometimes when you do those maps, it also gives good, detailed information about what type of-- I guess you could say the vehicles or sheds or any other thing that may be around the house. They'll give you that information. But just make sure that you do know the location of where you're going to be going into.

And again, maybe there are some wooded areas too in some locations. But it's always good to have that information of knowing that that's going to be part of your plan if something should occur.

You also want to know who's living in the home. Is there more than one person that you're going to be-- than the offender? Maybe they may at the time have friends over, and you're not too sure about. And again, you control that side of it there. If the friends shouldn't be there, you're going to make that call, well, I need to talk just to you alone, you know, and making sure that that location is going to be safe for you and, if you take a partner, for both of you.

If it's a person that's living at the house, again, if you want to take the person into a room that you see that is going to be more safe, obviously, you wouldn't want to use a kitchen. A kitchen has many weapons that are easily accessible if something does occur. Maybe a living room. Have the person sit down on the chair or something like that.

And if you have to stand or if you're not too comfortable-- again, if you're going to sit down, make

sure that you know-- you always have to have an escape route of some sort. And make sure that you're going to have some way of getting out of that area in a safe manner, in a quick manner as well too. So if you're going with somebody else, again, you're going to plan, and you're going to let your partner know that if something does occur, this is what we're going to do and all.

So having that plan in place is really important. If you're not too sure about the location, law enforcement is usually always good about having information available. And it's good to partner with them as well too to gather as much information as you can. So if you don't do that currently, it would be a suggestion that if you can get with somebody from the law enforcement department and let them know that you're going to be going out to this location. But also too you might want to mention that you would need some information to the area and all that if you're not able to get that information.

When you actually drive up to the house too, another thing is how you're going to position your vehicle. Are you going to park behind another vehicle or in front of a vehicle? Are you going to be able to get away from the area as soon as you can if something does occur?

So again, it's just making sure that you have an escape route of some sort to back out of the area and having that available should something occur. Hopefully nothing does happen and all that. And again, if you're in a location where let's say the road has a dead end, you want to know about that as well too, because if you had to get out of the area quickly, you obviously don't want to go down a dead-end street there and get stuck in that dead-end street.

But maybe again, having that mapped, if you want to do a map search of the area to know the streets, the location is always good to have. And you can also put that in your plan as well too.

So again, inspecting your equipment before you go out into the field-- you want to make sure that it's operable, that if you're taking a radio with you, you want to make sure that that radio is working good, that the battery's been charged, that the channel that you're going to be on is the same channel that you're going to be using to contact dispatch. And you can do a test with it by going to the dispatch center or giving them a call and doing a test check on it. Make sure that you have some sort of communication with the dispatch center or even with another person that's in the area that's law enforcement-- a ranger or somebody else that's in the field that you'll be heard if anything should go down or take place.

And usually in some of the radios, they do have these panic buttons that you can also push. So again, it's getting familiarized with the equipment that you have to make sure you understand how it works

that if something does occur, you're able to push that button and get some help to your location as soon as possible. And also making sure that you understand and know how to use your equipment is good to know.

I had mentioned earlier about calling in vehicles when you do get to the location of the residence or even if it's a business that you give a description of the vehicle. As much information as you can is always useful and good. If it's a license plate that's just a temporary, doesn't have a license plate on it-- say it's a temporary sticker-- you know, give that information to dispatch that there's a temp stick on this vehicle. There's no license plate given. But again, giving as much description to that vehicle-- if it's a motorcycle as well too, you may even want to give the motorcycle description.

But giving as much information as you can to dispatch is really important so they know where you're at and the personnel that they'll be sending in there to assist you will know the area as well too. But again, as much information as you can provide and give to if it's dispatch, law enforcement, any other type of department, program that's going to assist you if you need some help is always useful.

Talked about assessing the environment before you get out of your vehicle, you know, what to look for before you pull up to the house. Let's say you went to the home and you noticed that there was only one vehicle out there. Next time you pull up, there's like five vehicles at the house and all that. Is that the time that you want to actually go out and do your visit? No, probably not if you are out there by yourself.

Make sure that you have some sort of communication with the person that you're going to be having contact with. If it's a phone, you can also have them maybe even step out of the house, and you have to use a different location. Then use that different location. Again, it goes back to your safety and making sure that you are safe in that environment.

And again, if there's more people in the house that you didn't know about, cancel that time that you're going to do your visit or your check. You can always come back and get with the person. Or if you don't want to get with the person like I mentioned that, you don't want to obviously let them know when you're going to be coming to the home and all that. But if you can gather as much information as you can, it's very useful.

Being alert for animals-- dogs seem to be a big thing there when you approach a residence of some sort. And if it's a dog that you didn't know that was out there when you visited the home, and let's say now this person has a dog out there, you can get a hold of this person. Can you secure your animal or your dog? And put it in a secure location is what you can let them know and all that. So

again, just making sure that you know the location, the environment of where you're going to be visiting and all.

And here's another one here that if you are going out to location, and once you pull up to the home, you want to obviously have your keys in a location where you're going to get to them as soon as you can. And it's always a good thing to have-- if you want to carry them in your hand, but sometimes you get that mindset of where you can just set them down somewhere. So maybe even put them in an easy location where you can grab them, and if you had to get out of the area and back out that you'll have easy access to finding your keys, because if you can't find them, obviously you're left without a ride to get out of the area and all that.

If it's a radio that you're going to be using as well too, make sure that you have a location for that radio. Maybe you want to use a duty belt where you can connect a radio and just have it along the side on your waist there is another thing to look at too. So again, always making sure the equipment that you have isn't going to be used against you.

And you got to be familiarized with knowing what type of equipment you're going to be using as you go into the location and all. If you're not too familiar, always get some training. Training is a really big thing to have behind that side of it there. So make sure that you do not operate all that equipment that you're going to be using.

As far as sitting down with the offender and doing your visit, I know I talked earlier about having the person sitting on a couch, and you sitting down along with them there, maybe across from them, again, putting yourself in a location where you're going to have an easy access to back out of the area if it came down to that. And always be glancing the area, looking around, seeing what's available that could be used against you if it came down to it and all that you want to make sure that you're going to get out of that area if it came down to it and all.

You can also-- if you're really being very observant, you can also kind of get an idea from the person themselves on what type of matter they are. And if they're really high-pitched and just really maybe nervous or something-- maybe they're sweating, or something's going on with them that doesn't seem right, that may be a time to look at backing out of the area. Say, OK, I'll come and visit you later and reschedule the visit and so forth. So again, it's just being safe in the area and the location of where you're going to be doing your checks and all.

I talked about the escape route. Again, don't box yourself in. Make sure that you do have an escape

plan of some sort, that if something does occur that you're going to be able to get out of the area as soon as you can. One thing in places to look for, again, is what they call the fatal funnel-- doorway, stairwell, hallways, other doors. Stuff like that is what you want also be visual and make sure that you see that when you go into a home. That may be some sort of escape route, or it may be an area of danger that you're going to be putting yourself into.

So again, always looking at is there a back door? What doors actually leave the home and all that, that can get you out of the house or the location easy without getting hurt if you need to do that escape? Always ask someone else too in the residence if you want to get as much information as you can. But sometimes they may not be truthful to you and all that. So just keep that in mind as well too.

And here we have-- again, I talked about location inside the house. Obviously you don't want to use the kitchen area as an area to do your visit, because there's many weapons that can be used in a kitchen. You got knives. You got pots. You got pans. You got spoons. Anything in there could be a weapon used against you.

So you pick the location that's going to be secure for you to do the visit and all that. Usually your living rooms are a good location. Again, being mindful that you scan the area and see what's in the area is that nothing or anything that is available in the reach of the person can be used against you. So always keep that in mind as well too.

Always keep visual of the person that you will be talking with. You know, keep watch of their hands. What are they doing with their hands? Do they have them, like, on the side that they're ready to get up off that couch if you have them sitting down? You know, just stuff to look out for that you make sure that if something is about to happen here, you're ready to react to it. So just be alert. Be focused. Be mindful of the environment that you're going to be going into. And always keep alert and keep others informed of what you're going to be doing and where you're going to be going out into.

And if you are having the person go into another room or a location, don't have the person behind you. Always keep them in front of you. Always keep them in your vision there, because you want to make sure that what they're doing-- and if they try to run or something like that, obviously you're not going to go chasing after them. Back out. Get out of the area. Do your call, your check saying the individual is being uncooperative, whatever the case may be. But get yourself out of that location.

If you have a partner there, maybe you might want to also let them know that if this does go down, if the person runs, well, we'll let them run. We'll come back and reapproach this. We'll bring backup and all that. But don't put yourself in an environment where you get yourself hurt or others hurt and all

that. So again, just being mindful of that.

Never turn your back on the offender even if you're sitting down, talking with them. Think about putting yourself in a position that you want to get yourself up and out of there quickly as you can. So think about that too.

If the home that you're visiting doesn't seem like it's really safe, again, you can always come back to the home. You don't have to do that visit that time. But just make sure that you know what's in the area, and anything that is there can possibly be a weapon of some sort. So always have that mindful of that thought.

You can always carry a flashlight if you want to. But again, make sure that flashlight is going to be in a secure location and all that, because you don't want to have too much things in your hands where your hands are too-- holding on to too much stuff there that you don't have access to grab anything else. But keep that in mind as well too that you have a uniform that's going to carry all the equipment or pockets or something like that, that you can place whatever you're going to be holding or taking with you. At least your hands are going to be not tied up holding something and that if something does happen, that you'll be able to react to that situation.

And this is the last one before we go into a video here is-- I talked about this-- is having the offenders sit in a location of where you're going to be doing your check-in and all that, your interview and whatever the case may be. But again, making sure that that location of where you're going to be doing this, you can do a walk-through. You can do a visual. Gather as much information in your mind about what type of environment you are in.

Again, looking for those escape routes. If it came down to it, maybe even the windows could be one area and all that. Again, looking out for that escape route, whether it's a back door, a side door, the front door. Is there anything that's going to be in front of you that's going to prevent you from getting out of that area as quickly as you can?

Do I need to jump over it? Do I need to get around it? How am I going to do this? But just make sure that you have that mindset of thinking about that just to get yourself out of that situation as quickly as you can and as safely as you can.

I talked about sitting on hard surfaces instead of sofas or couches. Again, does that person have easy access to get out of that place where they're sitting at very quickly? Because you want make sure it's going to be hard for them to get up in the location where-- if you have to move to a location, to a

different one, you, again, control that environment. Put yourself in a safe environment and pick a location that's going to be easy for you to make that move to, if you have to get up quickly that that's going to be done for you and all that.

So kind of make it harder for them if you're having them sit to get out of that area. Make it difficult for them I guess I should say and all that. So again, safety-- safety, safety, safety is a big thing. Having that plan in place is really important before you go out to the location and communicating with your dispatch, your law enforcement, ranger program or any other personnel that you're going to be using as backup. Provide as much information as you can to those individuals. Make sure your equipment is workable and that you do know how to use the equipment and that you do have a uniform that's going to be helpful for you to actually store the equipment when you do go out into the field and so forth.

So the next slide is going to be a video. And thank you all for listening on this portion of the presentation. Lea, I'll turn it over to you.

Great, Kevin. Thank you. And as I'm loading the video, just a reminder that this video also includes some graphic language and images. It'll take just a moment for the video to play.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- --seat back there. Yeah.

[DOG BARKING]

Come in here with me.

Stay back. Someone is home. She's saying she don't know.

- Jerry's saying-- you may have heard y'all, but not sure.

- Probably that dog bouncing around.

- Yeah.

- That's a back door. Very springy. There he is. Show me your hands.

- Don't [BLEEP] with my phone. I'll kill y'all.

- Show me your hands.

- [BLEEP].

- Back up.

- [BLEEP] you.

- Back up.

- Shoot me, [BLEEP]. Shoot me.

[GUNSHOTS]

[BEEP]

- SO, shots fired! SO, shots fired!

- 10-19, Tim.

- He stabbed me.

- Did you shoot him?

- Need EMS.

- Did you shoot him?

- Shots fired.

- Did you shoot him?

- Yes. Hurry up. Open the door. Brad, open the door. I'm spazzing.

- You're spazzing?

[DOG BARKS]

- SO, shots fired. SO, shots fired.

[END PLAYBACK]

OK. This is Paul, and I will continue from here. But operating safely during COVID-19. And we don't

have a lot of time left, but I wanted to kind of just break it down into three different areas.

So the first area is just the-- I would say, like, the programs approach, or maybe it's the person or people or group or leadership that has decision authority. Maybe they're tasked with the oversight of the program and staff. I think of, like, upper management, program managers, directors, or coordinators. So that part.

The second is, like, the visitor's perspective, and that's both public and also-- the general public and also the sex offender. So our approach with them, how we're going to implement safety measures with them. And then the third area that I wanted to look at is just personal safety as a registration official.

So we have program preparedness and response. So it really was at the beginning of the year that we just started-- everyone just started hearing more and more about COVID. And I think one of the first parts that we did here at the tribe was just to assess the hazards. And so to what extent does the virus spread between people? So that's one of the questions we asked ourselves.

Also, how severe is the illness? How does it affect people with preexisting medical conditions? And what medical conditions if any are predominant among the people that we're serving? And so for us, I definitely think of, like, diabetes. So that was really important.

Another thing was just knowing our tribal population by generation. And a lot of-- we have an older generation at our tribe as well. And then what medical treatment is available in your area? And what resources are there? And then probably the last kind of thing that we probably processed was, are there safety measures? What are they?

And at the very beginning, there wasn't a lot of information out there. And the information that was provided was-- at least from what we had heard was just a best guess. And so we are in a much better position now in July than we were in February and March.

But I think of course one of the resources for us was the CDC, so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but also just local medical providers, so being able to consult with them and getting their advice on what steps the tribe should take. And so I know our governor had multiple meetings with them, with IHS and other medical health representatives who kind of gave the tribes advice.

In our tribe, there's four different branches of government. And I represent the judicial branch. So a lot of the decisions on what the judicial branch would do really rested on me or on the Supreme

Court. So at first, we entered in an order that matched kind of what the executive order was, the executive office. And essentially it was just suspending all of our services. And so that was probably between 30 to 45 days of just almost suspending just absolutely everything. The tribes did identify a few essential personnel, but essentially, again the services were suspended.

Later, we came back and did-- opened just about every day. But our hours were-- we'd set temporary hours or limited hours, I should say. So that-- here in Oklahoma, which is where I'm at, COVID cases continue to increase. So we had to even scale back from there. So now we're open Tuesdays and Thursdays, and from 10:00 to 3:00 is our hours of availability.

But not only that, but as kind of overseeing our program, it was up to me to put in social distancing measures for the workplace. And there's probably at least 10 or 15. And I can make some resources available if you don't have any. But essentially, I'll just read just a couple.

But each employee shall check their temperature before reporting to work. And if the employee is running a fever, the employee should inform their supervisor that they will not be reporting to work due to the fever. Another thing that we have implemented besides, like, the 6 feet and the covering-- that each employee should avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, office tools, and equipment.

And so there was probably about 10 or 15 kind of social distancing measures that we've put in place for the protection of the judicial branch as a whole, but in there lies our sex offender registration program. But consider the type of controls and PPE needed. So for us, I think it was the masks, the gloves, the Lysol or cleaning supplies, sanitizer, Kleenex, hand soap-- having those materials available. And if you remember, especially a couple months ago, everything was on back order. So being able to get that stuff was very important.

Another thing that was important for us is accessing the CARES Act here at the tribes and/or BIA funding for this. And so a lot of the tribes were given money. And I was-- I'm sure multiple program directors, but we applied for funding, created a budget, created justification on all of the things that we needed that would help us during this pandemic. And so I thought that that was really important.

But a thing that is worth highlighting now and as we continue to go into the future is just the possibility of the staff that we supervise needing extra time off or getting sick or their children get sick. Or what we're seeing is, like, their school options, whether it be attending virtually or in person or a hybrid model, all that stuff is-- and if there's child care available I think is going to be-- is difficult for the program managers out there who are concerned about making sure that there's someone

always available in the SORNA office to continue to do these essential services.

And so one of the things that we highlight or we emphasize in all of our trainings is the cross-training. And so I think that that part is so important that we're cross-training people so that if the registering official is out for a few days, someone else can come in and kind of fulfill those duties. And if you are a program manager or director out there, it's important that you know the job enough as well that if you have to be the one to get in there and do-- just maybe, like, process paperwork or on a verification that that you have enough knowledge about it or if it's getting into TSORS and updating stuff, that you have enough knowledge about it to be able to do some of that stuff.

You know, for us, we've implemented health checks. So once employees and/or visitors come in, that's the first thing they're doing is receiving a health screening. And by that is just we're doing a temperature check. And then we have a survey of multiple questions, and you can find these types of surveys kind of like-- you can find a lot of them online or create your own or ask IHS for a version or maybe your health department.

But it's, "are you currently experiencing or have experienced in the last 14 days any of these symptoms?" And so it may go through some of the symptoms of loss of taste or smell, fever, shortness of breath, that type of thing. There's multiple questions on there, but I think that that was an important feature to include into our response to COVID.

So now we're moving away from the program manager perspective, which was what I just shared about and now entering into the visitor's perspective. And so this is the visitor and/or sex offender, whoever is coming into your office. And so some of the things that I thought were important was the marking of the 6 feet so that people can practice social distancing. And I found that that's really helpful as opposed to just guessing. That really gives someone the structure that some people need to maintain the distance.

And then of course maybe your IHS has posters. Maybe your tribe's developed some posters both for handwashing and for covering nose and mouth through some sort of a device like a mask. I think that that's very important.

I was on a call, and I heard of a tribe who had bought a mobile sink and was able to-- had multiple mobile sinks. And people were able to wash their hands out there outside of the building before coming in. So whether it's that, or maybe something more practical is being able to sanitize your hands before accessing the building. But putting in these measures so that the visitors, people who are visiting are as safe as one can be.

And the other part was just that cleaning-- so either closing for lunch and cleaning then or maybe closing the building every hour for like 5 or 10 minutes and then doing a clean. But keeping the visitor section clean and even the staff area clean, that everyone's cleaning after themselves, I think those things are important.

And then, of course, to communicate whatever measures you've implemented to the public, whether that be through media, through social media outlets, or through the tribal paper, however you get your information out, if it's posting it on your door before people come in. But sharing with them, sharing with the community, with visitors or with sex offenders, what safety measures you have adopted, I think that that's important.

And so entering into this last part of this section, which is how to protect one's own self, or how does the registering official protect themselves. And so we talked about visitors maintaining the distance of 6 feet. It's so important that we do that too. It's important not only for-- again, we've emphasized earlier, but not just because of COVID, but also for our physical safety that we're not close to others, that we maintain a safe distance. Installing physical barriers-- so at our court building, or our tribal justice center, we have, like, the windows in place.

So we have that, but I've heard of other people using partitions or plexiglass, whatever you do to maybe create another barrier, but do it in a way that is safe. Of course, the masks-- a lot of communities, a lot of states or a lot of cities or tribes have implemented a masks-- wherever you go, you have to wear a mask. So I think that that part is really important.

Proper hand hygiene-- giving people the opportunity to do that and then reminding people not to touch their face. And some of the posters that are out there have that information on them too. Using disposable gloves is very-- I think is helpful for registering officials, having the eye protection and disinfecting your gear afterwards.

But I think different registering agencies-- of course, there's probably variation in everyone having a different approach. But if your approach is to continue to-- you're continuing just like normal, I think that when you account all these safety measures, I think that it does improve the situation. So if a sex offender comes in and is being screened, their temperature is being taken. That's one set of safety measures or precautions taken.

The other set would be that they're wearing gloves or a mask or have given the opportunity to either sanitize or wash their hands. And then the registering official-- you know, they're going to have their

gloves on. They're going to have their masks, maybe protective eyewear, maybe even a disposable gown. And then if you're able to conduct a registration or a verification with some form of a barrier-- like, for us, it's glass, a bulletproof glass that's there, I mean, I think that we are increasing the safeguards and the measures that hopefully keep visitors safe and staff safe as well.

So that kind of takes us to considering the field work and what needs to be done at this time and what we can kind of scale back on. And so I think for sure we've emphasized that having a partner in office, having a partner in the field. I think maintaining that kind of philosophy is still so important. So even in these circumstances, I would invite you to talk to a BIA or US Marshal or a sheriff's office and say, hey, we're limited on staff. There's only one of me, but can you send someone else to go with me? I'm going to go out in the field. So if you do have to go out in the field that you're not doing it by yourself. You still have a partner.

Another thing that I think is important as you evaluate to what extent you're fulfilling your duties as a registering agency, but maybe you are taking more things over the phone or doing video check-ins. Maybe you're prioritizing by tier or by risk those offenders that you're going to check in on more often. It's not on here, but having a third party to verify that the information is correct-- I think that that would be important too. But to have a plan to resume once COVID-- once it ends or as you implement phases of reopening.

And so I think that this information is really important. All this stuff is on CDC on their website. And you can continue to get more information there. But having a trained emergency medical service provider, someone there to access and transport anyone you think might have COVID to a health care facility. The other thing is ensuring that everyone who's wearing the PPE has training. And a lot of times, you can get that type of training through your IHS. Sometimes there's a provider who does that type of training, especially now. They have trainings going on I think weekly so staff can get trained and just the general community.

So of course, if close contact does occur, you're going to want to clean and disinfect your gear even the way you dispose of that or whether you have it cleaned, there's instructions on that on the CDC website. But I would-- it's so important that you know that you do-- the other things that we talked about I think go hand in hand with this and increase your safety, which are, again, the masks, the goggles, the gloves. All those things are so important.

This slide is, again, just kind of points back to the CDC website. They have a section, What Law Enforcement Personnel Need to Know About COVID. And so if you go to that, you're going to get this--

you're going to get a lot more information and updated information. So continue to check that. I would check it every couple of weeks or so and see if there are any updated measures.

So what we're going to do is-- I want to thank Paul, Kevin, and Lea for the excellent presentations today and sharing their insight and knowledge. We're going to now spend a couple minutes with question and answers. So I have one question here. So for those of you who do the registry-- maybe, Paul, you could do this one. A registrant who normally registers on time didn't show up for his quarterly registration, which may be due to COVID. What do you think the registrar should do?

I think that there's a lot of variables still there. You know, we're going to do a training on enforcement. That's coming up soon. And I think we're going to have an opportunity to share with it more. So without knowing all the variables, if the person always comes in, you know, a lot of times we give people a few days even after they're due to come in before we actually try to go through the next stages, which is the absconding.

So if that person can come in as soon as possible to do that, maybe that registering official allows for that and can get that person updated. And a lot of times we'll do it, and we'll do it with a warning. And so maybe they take, like, a written warning, and we take a copy of that written warning or just a verbal warning. And then I'll make a note that a verbal warning was given.

So I think we'll cover it in a future webinar a little bit more. But because there's so many variables, I think I would just leave it at that for now, Chris.

Thank you, Paul. We'll do one more question. We had one other question here. Maybe Kevin, as a law enforcement officer, maybe you can address this. The question is, what should you do if you see one of the registrants in the community and you're with your family?

It depends on what the situation is. I mean, if they're an absconder and if you see a person out and about, you know, depending on what the situation is, always contact law enforcement. They're trained up to handle the situation in the area and all that. You don't want to put yourself in an environment or a situation that it may become a safety concern of some sort. So again, maybe just find out and gather as much information as you can and maybe alert law enforcement and let them know of the situation.

Thank you, Kevin. And I'm assuming if the person is not absconded, then you just sort of go about your business. They go about their business and talk about it maybe the next time you see him at the next registration verification.

Right. Yeah. And again, it goes back to gathering as much information as you can depending on what the circumstances and what the situation is.

OK. Thank you, Kevin. So again, I would like to thank everybody, thank all of the presenters from today. This concludes the question and answer portion of the webinar.

If you are interested in additional training, please visit www.ncjtc.org for a listing of upcoming trainings or to review our on demand online training. Again, thank you for joining us today. And we hope you have a wonderful day and the rest of your week. Take care, everybody.