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## **California to keep closer watch on sex offenders**

**After criticism over high-profile lapses, state parole officials issue new rules that increase monitoring of sex offenders.**

By Tony Barboza

March 20, 2010

California parole officials issued new rules this week that increase monitoring of thousands of sex offenders already required to wear global positioning system tracking devices, a move that comes after sharp criticism of high-profile lapses by the department.

Parole agents must now track the whereabouts of the state's nearly 5,000 low-level sex offenders through ankle monitors at least four days a month. Previously, no policy mandated how often low-level offenders had to be tracked.

An additional 2,000 high-risk sex offenders, who already are supposed to be monitored daily, must be visited by a parole officer at their homes twice a month, up from one monthly visit.

"We've never claimed that GPS monitoring is a cure-all -- it can't prevent a crime from happening or tell us what a parolee is doing," said Gordon Hinkle, press secretary for the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. "But it can tell us where they are."

The changes, issued in a Thursday policy memo, were spurred by a review of the parole agency in the wake of the Jaycee Lee Dugard case. The review found that parole agents for Phillip Garrido, who has been charged with Dugard's kidnapping, missed numerous clues over the course of a decade that could have led them to Dugard far sooner.

Dugard was 11 when she disappeared in 1991 from outside her South Lake Tahoe home.

She was 29 when she was found last year in Garrido's Antioch backyard, where he allegedly confined her to a ramshackle set of buildings and tents.

The new parole policies also require agents to investigate and document each time a device is unable to acquire a signal or is detected in a prohibited zone. The more stringent reporting requirements are designed to alert authorities to misbehavior that might signal a crime is in the works, officials said.

Parole agents also must notify local law enforcement when an offender is released from parole.

The supervision of sex offenders came under renewed scrutiny this month after it was reported

that the man charged with killing 17-year-old Chelsea King of Poway had violated parole in 2007 by living near a school. But state officials decided not to send John Albert Gardner III -- who was on parole after serving five years in prison for molesting a 13-year-old girl -- back to prison because he complied with orders to relocate.

King's body was found in a shallow grave this month, just days after Gardner was arrested in connection with her disappearance.

San Diego state Assemblyman Nathan Fletcher, with the backing of King's family, has said he will propose a new law in Chelsea's name, which could include extending sentences and upping parole requirements for sex offenders.