The defense at first argued the sex was consensual, but Wurtzel last year pleaded no contest to sexual battery by restraint and was sentenced to a year in jail. He also was ordered to register as a sex offender.

Three online dating giants agreed to screen for sex offenders and take other safety steps after a woman was assaulted on a date, the California attorney general's office announced Tuesday.

Match.com, eHarmony and Spark Networks signed a joint statement of business principles intended to provide an example for the industry and help guard against sexual predators, identity theft and financial scams.

"Consumers should be able to use websites without the fear of being scammed or targeted," Attorney General Kamala D. Harris said in a statement.

Among other things, the companies agreed Monday to check subscribers against national sex registries, supply members with online safety tips, and provide a quick way to report abuses. Some of the companies already are using some of those practices.

The dating services also will provide the attorney general's office with reports of suspected criminal activity, she said.

The statement is nonbinding and carries no enforcement penalties, but it does publicly hold dating sites to account for their members' safety, said Lynda Gledhill, a spokeswoman for the attorney general's office.

"They can't be sued by private parties based on this agreement. We fully expect that the companies will, in good faith, comply," she said.

Match.com, based in Dallas, was a pioneering dating website. Owned by IAC/InterActiveCorp, It now operates in 24 countries and territories in 15 languages.

Based in Santa Monica, eHarmony operates in the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Spark Networks Inc., based in Beverly Hills, runs a number of dating sites geared to specific religions and ethnicities.

Last year, an estimated 40 million Americans used an online dating service and spent more than $1 billion on dating website memberships, according to the attorney general's office.

In statements, the three companies all said they make the safety of their members a priority and hoped the statement would encourage other companies to adopt similar policies.

The statement was prompted by the 2010 sexual assault of a Los Angeles-area woman by a man she met through Match.com, Gledhill said. Alan Wurtzel had a string of previous convictions for sexual battery.

Prosecutors said that on their second date in 2010, Wurtzel drove the woman to her home, followed her inside and assaulted her.

The defense at first argued the sex was consensual, but Wurtzel last year pleaded no contest to sexual battery by restraint and was sentenced to a year in jail. He also was ordered to register as a sex offender.

The woman sued Match.com, seeking a court order requiring the website to check applicants' backgrounds to weed out convicted sex offenders. She dropped the suit last year after the site provided proof of such screening.