

# UNDERSTANDING STALKING

## ARE YOU BEING STALKED?

**Stalking is a series of actions that make you feel afraid, distressed or in danger.**

Stalking is serious, often violent, and can escalate over time.

### **Are you...**

- Always looking over your shoulder?
- Confused about how someone always seems to know where you are?
- Unsure when that person will show up again?
- Nervous about checking your e-mail or phone because it might be him/her/them again?
- Scared of what that person might do next?

**You may be a victim of stalking.**

**“Going to work, attending your kids activities, going out for the evening... these things seem routine. For me, they’re terrifying because I never know what he will do or when he will show up.”**

*—Stalking Survivor*

**Stalking victims often feel scared, angry, annoyed, isolated and/or confused.**



## WHO ARE STALKERS?

### **Most stalkers target people they know.**

Many stalkers commit this crime against people who they've dated/been romantically involved with. Stalkers may also be acquaintances, family members and/or strangers.

**More than 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men will be stalked in their lifetimes.**

While most stalking victims are female and the majority of perpetrators are male, anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of stalking.

**Stalking is a crime in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.**

# WHAT DO STALKERS DO?

Most stalkers use multiple tactics to scare their victims. These behaviors may include (but are not limited to):

- **Unwanted contact** through repeated calls (including hang-ups), texts, e-mails or messages.
- **Following** you.
- Sending **unwanted gifts** or letters.
- **Tracking you** using technology (like GPS, apps or hidden cameras)
- **Showing up** or **waiting for you** at your home, work or school.
- **Damaging** your property.
- **Spreading rumors** about you – in person or online.
- **Posting or sharing or threatening** to post or share intimate photographs of you.
- **Harassing** your co-workers, family or friends.



- **Gathering information** about you by using the internet or going through your trash.
- **Hacking your accounts**, changing your passwords or impersonating you online.
- **Threatening** to hurt you or those close to you – family, friends, pets.
- Other actions that **control, track, or frighten you**.

**The stalking is not your fault and you cannot control the stalker's behaviors.**

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BE SAFE?

It can be helpful to think of strategies to help keep yourself and loved ones safe. You may want to:

- Call **9-1-1** if you're in imminent danger or have been threatened.
- **Trust your instincts**. If you think that you're in danger, you probably are.
- Connect with a **local victim service provider** who can help you explore options and make a detailed safety plan. Not sure where to go? Call the hotlines listed under "Resources."

**The stalking is not your fault and you cannot control the stalker's behaviors.**

- **Document** everything that happens – keep a record or log. See [stalkingawareness.org/what-to-do-if-you-are-being-stalked/](https://stalkingawareness.org/what-to-do-if-you-are-being-stalked/) for a sample log.
- **Tell people you trust** about the situation. See if your school, workplace, or building security can help with your safety plans.
- Consider getting a **court order** to keep the stalker away from you. Contact your local domestic violence/sexual assault agency or family court for more information.
- Learn more **safety strategies** at [stalkingawareness.org](https://stalkingawareness.org).

## RESOURCES

If you do not know how to reach your local service provider, or for additional assistance, you can contact the following hotlines:

### **Victim Connect**

[victimconnect.org/](https://victimconnect.org/)

855-4-VICTIM (855-484-2846)

### **National Sexual Assault Hotline**

[RAINN.org](https://RAINN.org)

800.656.HOPE (4673)

### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

[thehotline.org](https://thehotline.org)

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

### **SPARC**

Learn more at [StalkingAwareness.org](https://StalkingAwareness.org)