

Stalking is a series of actions that make you feel afraid or in danger. Stalking is serious, often violent, and can escalate over time. A stalker can be someone you know well or not at all. Most have dated or been involved with the people they stalk. Most stalking cases involve men stalking women, but men do stalk men, women do stalk women, and women do stalk men.

Some things stalkers do:

- ◆ Repeatedly call you, including hang-ups.
- ◆ Follow you and show up wherever you are.
- ◆ Send unwanted gifts, letters, cards, or emails.
- ◆ Damage your home, car, or other property.
- ◆ Monitor your phone calls or computer use.
- ◆ Use technology, like hidden cameras or global positioning systems (GPS), to track where you go.
- ◆ Drive by or hang out at your home, school, or work.
- ◆ Threaten to hurt you, your family, friends, or pets
- ◆ Find out about you by using public records or on-line search services, hiring investigators, going through your garbage, or contacting friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers.
- ◆ Other actions that control, track, or frighten you.

Stalking is a crime. You are not to blame for a stalker's behavior.

Things you can do:

Stalking is unpredictable and dangerous. No two stalking situations are alike. There are no guarantees that what works for one person will work for another, yet you can take steps to increase your safety.

- ◆ If you are in immediate danger, call 911.
- ◆ Trust your instincts. Don't downplay the danger. If you feel you are unsafe, you probably are.
- ◆ Take threats seriously. Danger generally is higher when the stalker talks about suicide or murder, or when a victim tries to leave or end the relationship.
- ◆ Contact a crisis hotline, Victim-Witness Advocate, or a domestic violence or rape crisis program. They can help you devise a safety plan, give you information about local laws, refer you to other services, and weigh options such as seeking a protection order.
- ◆ Develop a safety plan, including things like changing your routine, arranging a place to stay, and having a friend or relative go places with you. Also, decide in advance what to do if the stalker shows up at your home, work, school, or somewhere else. Tell people how they can help you.
- ◆ Don't communicate with the stalker or respond to attempts to contact you.

- ◆ Keep evidence of the stalking. When the stalker follows you or contacts you, write down the time, date, and place. Keep e-mails, phone messages, letters, or notes. Photograph anything of yours the stalker damages and any injuries the stalker causes.
 - ◆ Ask witnesses to write down what they saw.
 - ◆ Contact the police. Every state has stalking laws.
 - ◆ The stalker may also have broken other laws by doing things like assaulting you or stealing or destroying your property.
 - ◆ Consider getting a court order that tells the stalker to stay away from you.
 - ◆ Tell family, friends, roommates, and co-workers about the stalking and seek their support. Tell security staff at your job or school. Ask them to help watch out for your safety.
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Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except holidays

24/7 service is available. Call (406) 225-4075 (Sheriff's Office) and ask for Heather. The dispatcher will contact Heather to return your call.