

Injury & Violence Prevention Program

January is Stalking Awareness Month

- Stalking is a crime in all 50 states, the U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia.
- In 20% of cases, stalkers use weapons to harm/threaten victims.
- Stalking is a significant risk factor for the murder of women in abusive relationships.
- Victims suffer anxiety, social dysfunction, and severe depression at much higher rates than the general population, and many lose time from work or have to move as a result of their victimization.

Communities that understand stalking can support victims and combat this crime.

Source: Campbell, J. et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multi-site Case Control Study," American Journal of Public Health 93 (2003): 7.

Stalking impacted 6.6 million people in one year.

(Black, M. et al., National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, 2011).

- Stalking is not a single, easily identifiable crime but a series of acts, a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause that person fear.
- Stalking may take many forms, such as assaults, threats, vandalism, burglary, or animal abuse, as well as unwanted cards, calls, gifts, or visits.
- One in four victims reports that the stalker uses technology, such as computers, global positioning system devices, or hidden cameras, to track the victim's daily activities.
- Stalkers fit no standard psychological profile, and many stalkers follow their victims from one jurisdiction to another, making it difficult for authorities to investigate and prosecute their crimes.

California Anti-Stalking Legislation

§ 646.9. Stalking

Related Offenses

§ 422. Punishment for threats

§ 647. Disorderly conduct; Restrictions on probation

§ 653.2. Use of electronic communication to instill fear or to harass; Misdemeanor

§ 653m. Obscene, threatening, harassing or annoying telephone calls

§ 1270.1. Hearing prior to bail for person arrested for serious or violent felony or for certain other offenses including domestic violence or violation of domestic violence protective order; reasons for departure from bail schedule; Departure from schedule without hearing.

Source: National Center for Victims of Crime (2012). Accessed from <http://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center/stalking-laws/criminal-stalking-laws-by-state/california>



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MYTH: *You can't be stalked by someone you're dating.*

FACT: If your "friend" tracks your every move in a way that causes you fear, that is stalking.

MYTH: *Technology is too expensive and confusing for most stalkers to use.*

FACT: Stalkers can buy easy-to-use surveillance equipment for as little as \$30.

MYTH: *If you confront the stalker, he or she will go away.*

FACT: Confronting or trying to reason with a stalker can be dangerous. Get help.

MYTH: *Only celebrities are stalked.*

FACT: The vast majority of the 6.6 million people who were stalked in one year were ordinary citizens.

MYTH: *If you ignore stalking, it will go away.*

FACT: Stalkers seldom "just stop." Victims should seek help from law enforcement to stop the stalking.

Source: The National Center for Victims of Crime, Stalking Resource Center; <http://stalkingawarenessmonth.org>.

- 46% of stalking victims experienced at least one unwanted contact per week; 11% of victims said they had been stalked for 5 years or more
- Risk of stalking victimization was highest for individuals who were divorced or separated
- Women were at greater risk for stalking victimization; however, women and men were equally likely to experience harassment.
- Stalking cases reported to police were equally likely among males (37%) and females (41%).
- Roughly 25% of stalking victims reported cyberstalking such as email (83%) or instant messaging (35%).
- Nearly 3 in 4 stalking victims knew their offender in some capacity.

Baum, K., et al., "Stalking Victimization in the United States," (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009).

Types of stalking behaviors:

- **Making unwanted phone calls**
- **Sending unsolicited/unwanted letters/ e-mails/texts**
- **following/spying on the victim**
- **showing up/waiting at places without a legitimate reason**
- **leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers**
- **spreading information/ rumors about the victim via internet/public place, word of mouth**

Michele C. Black et al., "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report," (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

For additional resources and to help promote National Stalking Awareness Month, please visit:

<http://stalkingawarenessmonth.org> and www.ovw.usdoj.gov.

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