

Why do people stalk others?

Anyone can be a stalker, male or female, young or old. The majority of stalkers are men with female victims although it is not rare for this to be reversed. Stalkers tend to be young to middle-aged and are usually intelligent. They come from all walks of life and socio-economic backgrounds.

Stalking facts:

- ▶ Approximately one in five Texans have been a victim of stalking in the past two years (Sam Houston State University, 2006).
- ▶ Two-thirds of stalkers pursue their victims at least once per week, many daily, using more than one method.
- ▶ Weapons are used to harm or threaten victims in one out of five cases.
- ▶ Seventy-six percent of intimate partner femicide (murder) victims had been stalked by their intimate partner. (NCVC Stalking Resource Center).

Resources

National Center for Victims of Crime

Stalking Resource Center

www.ncvc.org/src

1-800-FYI-CALL (394-2255)

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org

Stalking



National Sexual Assault Hotline
Free. Confidential. 24/7.

1-800-656-HOPE

TAASA
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

6200 La Calma, Suite 110
Austin, Texas 78752

www.taasa.org

What is stalking?

The act of stalking occurs when a person intentionally and knowingly engages in a behavior that is directed towards another person that would cause a reasonable individual to fear for their safety or the safety of their immediate family. This could include maintaining close visual or physical contact (following, spying, watching, etc.) or making overt or implied verbal or written threats to a person on at least two occasions (phone calls, letters, messages, e-mail, etc).

Anti-Stalking Law

Texas' anti-stalking law (Penal Code §42.072) became effective on January 28, 1997. This law forbids the following actions by the stalker or other(s) who act on his/her behalf:

- ▶ On more than one occasion, following, placing a person under surveillance, making threats, restraining, confining, or behavior or threats that cause the victim to fear immediate or future injury, death, or damage to his/her property.
- ▶ Threats and/or actions can be conveyed either directly to the victim or through family or household members.



Security Recommendations

At home

- ▶ Positively identify callers before opening doors. Install wide angle viewer in all primary doors.
- ▶ Keep fuse box locked. Have battery lanterns in residence.
- ▶ Maintain an unlisted number.
- ▶ Be alert for any unusual packages or boxes on the premises. Do not disturb such objects.
- ▶ Keep doors and windows locked. Change locks if necessary.
- ▶ A family dog is one of the least expensive but most effective alarms.
- ▶ Children should be accompanied to school and bus stops.
- ▶ Inform trusted neighbors, on-site manager and/or doorman regarding the situation. Provide them with a picture of the suspect.
- ▶ Inform trusted neighbors of any anticipated extended vacations, trips, etc.

At work

- ▶ Central reception should handle visitors and packages.
- ▶ If there is on-site security, make them aware that you are being stalked and provide them with a picture.
- ▶ Have a co-worker or secretary screen calls and incoming mail.
- ▶ Do not accept any package unless you personally ordered an item.
- ▶ Always park in a secured area.
- ▶ Be alert to cars following you home from work.

Personal security

- ▶ Remove home address and phone number on personal checks.
- ▶ Place property in trust and list utilities under the name of the trust.
- ▶ Utilize a private mail box service. Do not use U.S. Post Office box.
- ▶ Register to vote using mail box address.
- ▶ Place rental agreements in another person's name.

Documentation

- ▶ Documentation of stalking should be saved and given to law enforcement.
- ▶ Documentation may take the form of photos of destroyed property/vandalism, voicemail, letters or notes.
- ▶ Victims should keep a written log of any crimes or suspicious activities committed by the perpetrator.
- ▶ Log: date, witnesses, witnesses' phone number, address, and description of incident.

Online

- ▶ Limit who can view identifying information about you to those you know well.
- ▶ Change passwords frequently.
- ▶ Don't give out your screen name or email address to strangers no matter how nice or friendly they seem.
- ▶ Keep in touch with what children are doing online.
- ▶ Set up family agreements for Internet usage. This can address issues like the time of day allowed on, length of time allowed online, how to deal with privacy, netiquette etc.