



You don't have to be a high-profile celebrity or a star athlete to become a victim of stalking. More than a million ordinary Americans are stalked each year, and it's a crime that affects both men and women. Victims terrorized by the repeated and often obsessive behavior of a stalker often must deal with harassment and unwanted contact.

Stalking can evolve into other criminal behavior, including violence and criminal damage, burglary and trespassing. Stalking is sometimes used as a form of psychological abuse. It is also a felony, punishable by jail time if the offender is caught and prosecuted.

Reporting the crime to police is the first step in ensuring justice for a victim of stalking. Keeping evidence and preparing documentation of stalking behavior are important. Individuals who suspect they are being stalked should also take the necessary steps to be on alert for suspicious persons and take extra precautions to protect their safety. This guide provides helpful information and techniques you can use to help protect yourself from the crime of stalking.

Stalking is a disturbing and menacing crime, and as Maricopa County Attorney I am dedicated to seeking justice for victims of this crime as well as urging the public to take precautions against this kind of criminal behavior.

Sincerely,

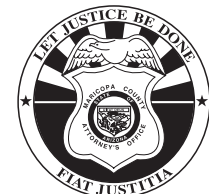
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STALKING



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County Attorney

Definition of stalking

A person commits stalking if they intentionally or knowingly engage in a course of conduct that is directed toward another person on two or more occasions over a period of time and either:

- Causes that person to fear for their safety or the safety of an immediate family member.
- Causes that person to fear physical injury or death to themselves or to an immediate family member.

Reporting stalking violations

If stalking is suspected, documentation and reporting are vital to successful prosecution. Experts recommend keeping a detailed log of suspicious events. This should include date, time, place and a description of the occurrence. Written documentation should also include:

- Documentation of all telephone calls
- Recorded telephone conversations
- Witness information for in-person contacts
- Retention of any mailed communications (including the envelope)
- Preserved electronic communication (e-mail)

Victims should contact the Police to request a report for every contact. Contact the Maricopa County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Division for a sample log sheet.

Stalker profiles I

1. Simple Obsessional — This type of stalker is the most common. It is usually a male who knows the victim as an ex-spouse, ex-lover, or former boss and begins a campaign of harassment against them.
 - A prior relationship exists.
 - It can be a love relationship gone sour, or a perception of mistreatment.

- Stalking begins after breaking off the relationship.
 - It is shorter in duration.
2. Erotomania — The stalker falsely believes that the victim is in love with him/her, but for some external influence, they would be together.
 - The suspect believes (falsely) that it is the victim who really loves the suspect.
 - The suspect usually knows the victim through the media only (TV anchor, actor or actress, political figure).
 - The suspect may have delusional disorders, in rare cases.
 3. Love Obsessional — This stalker is a stranger to the victim, but is obsessed and thus mounts a campaign of harassment to make the victim aware of the stalker's existence.
 - Usually, no prior relationship exists.
 - The suspect may be fanatic in the extreme and usually has schizophrenia or bi-polar.
 - The suspect begins a campaign of stalking and other contact behavior.

Victim safety

Stalking victims should think of their personal safety at all times.

- Be on alert for suspicious persons.
- Positively identify anyone at the door prior to opening. Require identification of all repairmen prior to admission to the residence.
- Install security lighting, dead bolt locks on all outside doors and locks on all fence gates. Keep doors locked at all times.
- Keep the fuse box locked and backup flashlights in the residence.
- Obtain an unlisted telephone number. Record any phone calls, if possible. Retain any answering

machine or voice mail messages. If unusual calls are received, notify law enforcement.

- Be alert for unusual packages or boxes found. Notify law enforcement prior to touching such packages if received anonymously. Install smoke detectors and keep fire extinguishers in more than one location in the residence and in the garage.
- List emergency numbers on all phones.
- Routines should be varied. Do not consistently use the same routes or times.
- Prepare an evacuation plan for the household and teach children what to do in an emergency.
- Utilize a private mailbox service (mail drop, not a U.S. Post Office Box) to receive all incoming mail.
- File a change of address with the U.S. Postal Service listing the mail drop address as the new address. Contact all current creditors and give the change of address to the mail drop location. Contact credit-reporting agencies and request all past addresses be removed and the current mail drop address be used.
- Place real property in a trust and list all contracts, titles and utilities in the name of the trust.
- Re-register to vote using the mail drop address and file for confidential status.
- Destroy all discarded mail.

This list is a condensed version of a detailed list compiled by Detective Diane McNair, Los Angeles Police Department. For a complete list, telephone the Maricopa County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Division at (602) 506-8522.

¹By Dr. Michael Zona, M.D., consultant for the Los Angeles Police Department Threat Management Unit.