

Who is a Stalker?

A stalker may be an intimate partner, a friend, a co-worker, or a neighbor. In fact, 59% of female victims and 30% of male victims are stalked by an intimate partner. One third of the stalkers who commit violent acts such as sexual assault and murder were intimate partners. Most often, the stalker is male.

Usually individuals who stalk are “not psychotic.” Their primary motivation is anger or hostility toward the victim. Stalking victims report that the stalker seeks to have control over them.

How Might Stalking Affect You?

Being stalked continuously causes extreme emotional and physical stress reactions. You may experience:

- Intense feelings of fear or terror
- Increased anger, irritability or agitation
- Decreased energy level or exhaustion
- Indecision or problems concentrating
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Major changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Frequent sadness, tearfulness or crying

You do not have to deal with these feelings by yourself. Contact your local rape crisis or domestic violence program for information and support.

Maryland Hotlines

Regardless of when or where the violence occurs, help is available to every victim through Hotlines at Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence programs throughout Maryland.

Allegany County
301.759.9244

Frederick County
301.662.8800

Anne Arundel County
410.222.7273
410.222.6800

Garrett County
301.334.9000

Baltimore City
410.828.6390
410.889.7884

Harford County
410.836.8430

Baltimore County
410.828.6390

Howard County
410.997.3292
800.752.0191
410.997.2272

Calvert County
410.535.1121

Montgomery County
240.777.1355
301.315.4673

**Caroline, Dorchester,
Kent, Queen Anne's,
Talbot Counties**
410.820.5600
800.927.4673

Prince George's County
301.618.3154
301.864.9101

Easton
410.822.5276

St. Mary's County
301.863.6698
301.863.6661

Carroll County
410.857.7322
410.857.0077

**Somerset, Wicomico,
Worcester Counties**
410.749.4357

Cecil County
410.996.0333

Washington County
301.739.8975

Charles County
301.645.3336

Veterans Affairs
800.949.1003

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A Guide for Victims

How to find safety and sanctuary when someone stalks you



Maryland
Coalition
Against Sexual Assault, Inc.
Working to End Sexual Violence in Maryland

MNADV: 1.800.MD.HELPS

MCASA: 1.800.983.RAPE

What is Stalking?

In Maryland, stalking is a crime and is legally defined as a pattern of approaching or pursuing someone in order to make the person feel afraid of being injured or murdered.

One in 12 women and one in 45 men are stalked during some point in their lifetime.

Stalking is never the victim's fault. It is not normal behavior and is not caused by anything the victim has done. A stalker may engage in any of the following behaviors:

- Watching or following you
- Making threatening phone calls or hang-ups
- Sending hate mail, unwanted personal faxes or email
- Sending unwanted love notes
- Delivering unwanted object(s)
- Driving by your home or work
- Vandalizing property including relative's or neighbor's home or car
- Posting your photo and personal information on the Internet
- Harming or killing your pet
- Approaching you or assaulting you
- Making specific threats that only you recognize

What Can You Do About a Stalker?

Document the abuse.

Keep an incident log. Use the chart below to record any stalking actions (*listed previously*). Call the police and file a report. Give them a copy of your incident log with dates and times. Your police report may become a public record so use a postal box address to protect your privacy.

Collect other documentation that may help you obtain justice.

To supplement the chart, keep a more detailed description of every incident and every situation involving the stalker. Take photos of destroyed property or injuries, and print copies of website postings. Keep email, notes, letters, or items from the stalker. Save answering machine phone messages, any police reports, and all legal documents. Make a record of everything there is to know about the stalker. Give a copy to a friend or relative for safekeeping.

Consider obtaining a peace order or a protective order.

In Maryland, a peace order or protective order can require a stalker to:

- Refrain from threatening or committing abuse
- End all contact with victim
- Order the stalker to stay away from the victim's home, place of employment, or school

Before either order is granted, you must file for a temporary order, which will be in effect up to seven days before the court hearing.

- *If the stalker is a stranger or an acquaintance, you must file a petition in District Court for a peace order, which is good for six months.*
- *If the stalker was previously or is currently related to you and resided with you during the last year, or was an intimate partner, you must file a petition in District or Circuit Court for a protective order. A protective order is good for 12 months, with a possible six-month extension.*

Ask for help.

Phone numbers of agencies that can help you are listed on the back of this brochure. On the Internet, you can go to www.mcasa.org and click on Get Help to see a list of rape crisis centers in Maryland, or to see a list of domestic violence programs, go to www.mnadv.org and click on Service Providers. Trained hotline counselors can talk to you about how you feel, how to stay safe, and your legal options. Tell your family, friends, neighbors, and employers and show them pictures of the stalker so they can tell you if they see him. Do not try to handle this alone.

Sample Incident Log

Date	Time	Incident Type	Officer Name/Phone Badge #	Report # Location (home/work/car, etc.) Name	Incident	Witness Information Name Address Phone

Will Talking to the Stalker Help?

NO. Talking or any form of communication will be seen as a sign of encouragement. Say "no" JUST ONCE. Then do not talk to him or her again. Don't try to "talk sense" into the stalker or agree to meet to "clarify things." Don't bother pleading to be left alone. Do not return items to the stalker. Do not engage the stalker in any way. Try not to have any contact at all.

How Can You Stay Safe?

Protect yourself with these safety measures if you are being stalked:

On the Phone

- Get an additional phone line that is unlisted and keep the number confidential
- Set up an answering machine to receive calls to the listed number and save messages or Caller ID numbers from the stalker as evidence
- If the stalker calls, hang up, wait 20 seconds, and dial *57 for Call Trace
- Dial *67 before placing a call to prevent display of your phone number
- Never verify your home address over the phone
- Report threatening calls to the phone company or the police

By Mail

- Obtain a private postal box – do not use your home address
- Remove your name from "reverse directories" published by marketers who send junk mail. Go to www.privacyrights.org for more information.
- Report mail threats to the FBI

At Home

- Change the locks of your home and/or car
- Install outside motion detectors with bulbs out of reach
- Consider installing a security system

In General

- Carry a cell phone with you at all times. Call 911 immediately if you are being followed and go to a busy place. DO NOT GO HOME!
- Park in well-lit areas and avoid walking alone
- Pack an emergency bag with clothing, money, critical phone numbers/addresses and valuables in case you need to get away quickly
- Temporarily relocate, and in extreme cases, move away from the area

Resources

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
1.800.983.RAPE

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
1.800.MD.HELPS

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)
1.800.656.HOPE (24 hours)

The National Domestic Violence Hotline
1.800.799.SAFE

National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC)
Stalking Resource Center
1.800.FYI.CALL (8:30 a.m-8:30 p.m.)
TTY: 1.800.211.7996

Websites

Stalking Resource Center (NCVC): www.ncvc.org/src
AWARE: www.aware.org/stalking/
Working to Halt Online Abuse: www.haltabuse.org