

# What is Stalking?



You are being stalked when a person repeatedly watches, follows or harasses you, making you feel afraid or unsafe. A stalker can be someone you know, a past boyfriend or girlfriend or a stranger. While the actual legal definition varies from one state to another, here are some examples of what stalkers may do:

- Show up at your home or place of work unannounced or uninvited.
- Send you unwanted text messages, letters, emails and voicemails.
- Leave unwanted items, gifts or flowers.
- Constantly call you and hang up.
- Use social networking sites and technology to track you.
- Spread rumors about you via the internet or word of mouth.
- Make unwanted phone calls to you.
- Call your employer or professor.
- Wait at places you hang out.
- Damage your home, car or other property.

## What if I'm Being Stalked?

If you're being stalked, you may be feeling stressed, vulnerable or anxious. You may also have trouble sleeping or concentrating at work or school. Remember, you are not alone. Every year in the United States, 3.4 million people are stalked and youth between the ages of 18-24 experience the highest rates. Most people assume that stalkers are strangers, but actually three in four victims are harassed by someone they know.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911 and report everything that's happened to the police. Get additional support by obtaining a protection order that makes it illegal for the stalker to come near. Know that the person harassing you may also get arrested and convicted in the criminal justice system.

Remember to save important evidence such as:


- Text messages
- Voicemails
- Videos
- Letters, photos and cards
- Unwanted items or gifts
- Social media friend requests
- Emails


You should also write down the times, places and dates all incidents occurred. Include the names and contact information of people who witnessed what happened.

Stalking is traumatic. You may experience nightmares, lose sleep, get depressed or feel like you're no longer in control of your life. These reactions are normal. It can help to tell your friends and family about the stalking and develop a safety plan. You can also chat with a peer advocate at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org) for support.

**connect now!**

**chat** at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

 **text** "loveis" to 22522

 **call** 1-866-331-9474

Discuss your options anonymously.  
Peer advocates are available 24/7.

For more information, visit [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Repurposing is allowed and encouraged.

Please contact Break the Cycle or the National Dating Abuse Helpline for more information.