



report hate crime

hate is silent so speak up

look inside yourself

HATE CRIMES:

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW &
WHAT YOU CAN DO!



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Author

A. Renwick, MPA
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WHY THIS GUIDE?

Canada continues to build upon its foundation as a nation of newcomers. Alberta's population is becoming increasingly diverse; today more than one-third of Alberta immigrants come from China, the Philippines and India.¹ According to the 2006 census, 454,200 Albertans (approximately 14 per cent of the province's population) belong to a visible minority.² In recent years, the province has also seen growth in the number of refugees from countries in Africa and Asia. Alberta also has one of Canada's most rapidly growing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations.

By 2017, Alberta, like the rest of Canada, will see increasing numbers of allophones; persons whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.³ Albertans will witness more visible minorities in their communities and an increasing number of people with diverse religious backgrounds. Along with ethnoracial, language and religious diversity, Alberta sees an increasingly open and visible gender and sexual identity community, and persons with mental and/or physical disabilities becoming part of our communities.

As Alberta's diversity increases, we hope this guide will empower Albertans with the tools to intervene should a hate crime or bias incident occur in their community. Most people are usually caught off guard when a hate/bias crime or incident occurs and are unprepared or fearful to intervene. Such incidents can make individuals and communities feel powerless or helpless. However, there is evidence that society can intervene to reduce or prevent hate induced crime or violence.⁴ This guide was inspired by active witnesses who continue to intervene on the behalf of hate crime victims. Too often our silence signals our consent in acts of hate or discrimination.

Throughout Canada, hate and bias crime incidents continue to disproportionately impact communities. These crimes are insidious and strike terror and fear into the very heart of a community. According to Statistics Canada, in 2006, Canadian police forces reported 892 hate motivated incidents and 785 in 2007.⁵ Research indicates only ten percent (1 in 10) of hate motivated incidents are actually reported to authorities.⁶ Consequently, hate crime statistics represent only the "tip of the iceberg." A victim's decision to report a hate-motivated crime or bias incident is influenced by several factors:

¹ Statistics Canada, *2006 Census, Place of birth for the immigrant population by period of immigration*, 2006 counts and percentage distribution, for Canada, provinces and territories - 20% sample data.

² Statistics Canada. 2007. *Visible minority groups, 2006 counts, for Canada, provinces and territories* - 20% sample data.

³ Alain Belanger and Eric Caron Malenfant, 'Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada: Prospects for 2017', 2005, p. 1

⁴ See article by Annie Steinberg et. al., 'Youth Hate Crimes: Identification, Prevention and Intervention,' *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 160: 979-989, May 2003.

⁵ Mia Dauvergne et. al., 'Hate Crime in Canada: 2006', *Statistics Canada*, June 2008, p. 6 and 'The Daily', *Statistics Canada*, May 13, 2009 p. 8.

⁶ OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Report, 'Combating Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: An overview of statistics, legislation and national initiatives,' Warsaw, Poland, 2005, p. 23. Website www.osce.org/odihr, last accessed August 20, 2009. This is referred to as OSCE in this guide.

- importance of the incident
- whether the victim believes the police can help
- police sensitivity to the issue
- existence of specialized hate crime units
- fear of retaliation and feelings of humiliation
- fear of having one's privacy compromised
- language or cultural barriers
- ability to access victim services in the community ⁷

The *Alberta Hate and Bias Crimes Report* revealed that victims of hate crime and incidents in Alberta tend to be primarily from minority religious or racial groups including Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Africa, Middle Eastern, Asian and South Asian.⁸ Canadian data indicates that 61 percent of hate crimes have racial or ethnic motivations while 27 percent have religious motivations. In 2006, Calgary had the highest rate of hate crimes reported at the national level, followed by Kingston, Ottawa and Toronto.⁹

WHAT IS A HATE OR BIAS INCIDENT?

Hate/bias incidents can include: name calling; racial slurs; homophobic bullying; distributing or promoting material which endorses hate/prejudice; racist or offensive mail or emails and other prejudicial actions. Not all of these incidents may have the necessary elements required to prove a crime; however, they can be gateway behaviors leading to increasingly violent acts.

WHAT IS A HATE/BIAS CRIME?

Any criminal offence committed against a person or property which is motivated in whole or in part by the suspects' hate, prejudice or bias against an identifiable group based on real, or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor.¹⁰

HATE CRIMES INCLUDE: *graffiti or vandalism; threatening phone calls and destruction of religious symbols.*

⁷ Phil Walsh and Mia Dauvergne, 'Police-reported hate crime in Canada: 2007', Statistics Canada, May 2009 vol. 29, p. 7.

⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁹ Mia Dauvergne et. al., 'Hate Crime in Canada: 2006', Statistics Canada, June 2008, p. 6.

¹⁰ Valerie Pruegger, Alberta Hate/Bias Crime Report, November 2009, p. 8. Alberta Hate Crime Committee.

HOW DO HATE OR BIAS CRIMES AND INCIDENTS IMPACT INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES?

Hate is a destructive, hurtful force, which has a ripple effect within a community. Hate forsakes peace, instills fear, threatens the acceptance of diversity, and impacts the community as a whole.

According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, hate crimes are “*more likely to involve excessive violence, multiple offenders, serial attacks, greater psychological trauma to victims, [and] a heightened risk of social disorder.*”¹¹ When individuals experience a hate crime, it is a fundamental attack on their well-being and assails their right to equally participate in society; hate crimes have been shown to disproportionately affect the victim. Entire communities that associate with the victim are also deeply affected.¹²

Hate crime or bias incidents should be considered in the context of your own family; your child or his or her friend could be a victim or target for hate group recruitment. Hate groups tend to concentrate recruitment efforts primarily online because some youth are attracted to the graphics, images and games found on their websites. Some young people are also more likely to accept racist, sexist, and homophobic ideologies at face value.

Some young people may lack the experience, knowledge, and assertiveness to refute lies or myths being told to them. Emotionally vulnerable, lonely, alienated or marginalized youth seeking a sense of identity or belonging are among the most easily indoctrinated. Eager for acceptance, young recruits often do not recognize how they are being used to engage in violence and or commit criminal acts to “prove” themselves. For early warning signs about teen involvement with hate groups, please see the “*What is Hate*” section of the website www.dontbuyin.ca.

For example, a hate incident may start in a form of bullying someone on public transportation through the use of racial slurs or homophobic name calling; such situations may quickly escalate into dangerous or violent situations in which one’s life or that of loved ones could be threatened or endangered. By acting, you have the power to report or stop hate incidents from continuing or even occurring. You can be a role model to those around you.

Remember, your safety is of paramount importance. Don’t be a bystander, be a good witness and note the description, appearance, sex, and any other noticeable features of the attacker (for more tips on how to be a good witness, please see page 8). Intervene only if it is safe to do so. Don’t antagonize or bait the perpetrator. Walk away and report the incident to local authorities.

¹¹ Derek Janhevich, ‘Hate Crime in Canada: An Overview of the Issues and Data Sources,’ Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001, p. 9.

¹² Janhevich, ‘Hate Crime in Canada: An Overview of the Issues and Data Sources,’ 2001, p 7-8; OSCE, 2005, p. 12.

WHO COMMITS HATE CRIMES?

Hate crimes are unique; they tend to involve young people both as victims and as perpetrators.¹³ In 2007, youth ages 12-17 years accounted for a disproportionate number of accused persons forming one-third or 32% of those accused of hate crime.¹⁴

Some people who commit hate crimes tend to share a high level of aggression and anti-social behavior; they pose a high risk for future violence.¹⁵ Others are consistently troubled; childhood histories of hate crime offenders show high levels of parental or caretaker abuse and use of violence to solve family problems.¹⁶ Those who commit hate crimes also often show a history of actions beginning with small incidents then transitioning to more serious ones.¹⁷

People who commit bias crimes are more likely to deliberate on and plan their attacks than those who commit more spontaneous crimes; they may travel long distances to pursue their victim.¹⁸



WHY DO THEY DO IT?

A combination of anger, fear and ignorance fuels hate crime activity towards a variety of chosen "outgroups".¹⁹ Some people tend to see groups they are not part of as "all alike".

Negative stereotypes about out-group members are developed and applied to all out-group members. Hate towards them is justified through a variety of means.²⁰ The less some people know about certain outgroup members, the stronger the hate or bias sentiments will be especially if there is a perceived invasion of cultural turf.²¹

¹³ Canadian Centre for Justice, 2006.

¹⁴ Phil Walsh and Mia Dauvergne, 'Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2007', Statistics Canada, vol. 29, May 2009, p. 12.

¹⁵ Tori DeAngelis, 'Understanding and preventing hate crimes', *Monitor on Psychology*, vol. 32, November 2001, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.* There is generally a strong pre-meditative component to these crimes.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

WHO ARE THE TARGETS OF HATE CRIME?

In Alberta, hate and bias crime are strongly motivated by race and religion.²² Hate crimes in Canada have one of three primary motivations: race or ethnicity accounted for 6 in 10 incidents in 2007 (Blacks are targeted most often followed by those with multiple ethnicities and those with East or Southeast Asian backgrounds); religion (24%) and sexual orientation predominantly homosexuality (10%).²³

WHAT MIGHT I SEE AND/OR HEAR?

- Bullying
- Name calling
- Racial slurs
- Distribution of materials encouraging hate/prejudice
- Violence or threats of violence
- Vandalism/graffiti
- Threatening phone calls
- Physical assaults
- Hate mail/emails
- Destruction of religious symbols
- Fire bombings

WHEN/WHERE DO THEY OCCUR?

Hate incidents or crimes are usually random; they can occur at anytime and in any place, often leaving those witnessing or experiencing the incident feeling powerless, helpless or fearful to intervene. Bias incidents tend to be pre-planned; they can occur anytime and anywhere.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON HATE CRIME OFFENCES?

The most common hate crime offences are mischief offences such as acts of vandalism or graffiti on public property.²⁴ Three in ten hate crimes in 2007 involved violence (minor assault or uttering threats) where the victim suffered little to no physical harm. But some hate crimes result in serious injury and even death.

²² Cam Stewart, 'Combating Hate and Bias Crime and Incidents in Alberta: Current responses and recommendation for the future,' July 2007, p. 13. Alberta Hate Crime Committee.

²³ Phil Walsh and Mia Dauvergne, 'Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2007', Statistics Canada, vol. 29, May 2009, p. 5, 10-11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

CAN A PERSON BE CHARGED WITH A HATE CRIME?

YES, a person can be charged with a hate crime if he or she advocates genocide, public incitement/willful promotion of hatred and mischief in relation to religious property. All of these actions are in the *Criminal Code* as distinct hate crime offences.

Sentencing provisions allow for increased penalties when hate is determined to be an aggravating circumstance in any criminal offence.²⁵ In addition, *The Canadian Human Rights Act* section 13(1) prohibits hate messages communicated via telecommunications.

HOW CAN I INTERVENE SAFELY IN A HATE/BIAS CRIME SITUATION OR INCIDENT?

The choice is yours as to whether to intervene. If you do not want to actively intervene, be a great witness and increase your safety factor. To be a great witness and only if it is safe to do so:

- You may want to consider using your cell phone to take pictures or video of the event;
- Take some notes of the incident, record the date and time;
- Record perpetrator(s) description: height, weight, clothing, tattoos, what was said, what occurred, victims and witnesses;
- Provide this information to law enforcement when it is safe to do so.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS AS TO WHETHER TO INTERVENE.

1. First assess if the situation is safe to intervene. Put your safety and loved ones first. A situation may be safer to intervene if:
 - ✓ There are several witnesses willing to assist you in intervening and the incident is occurring in a public place;
 - ✓ There is the ability to contact authorities immediately (e.g. security/police present, c-train alarm system);
 - ✓ There is no threat of violence or actual violent acts occurring like physical assault.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

2. Consider the type(s) of intervention you would like to use to potentially halt or report the incident:

- ✓ Your safety comes first. Only intervene if it is safe to do so.

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	CONSIDERATIONS	POTENTIAL OUTCOME(S)
Verbally address perpetrator(s) asking them to stop their action(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbally addressing the perpetrator may put you in their spotlight and focus negative attention on you. Is your safety in potential danger? Are there people present who can assist you? Is there help readily available from authorities in a quick fashion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person/person(s) stop their actions. Person does not stop their actions and threatens you.
Indicate to perpetrator that you intend to call the police or 9-1-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbally addressing the perpetrator and threatening to call the authorities may put you in their spotlight and focus negative attention on you and/or may or may not put your safety in danger. The response time for police/security to arrive and assist would have to be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person/person(s) stop their actions. Person(s) does not stop their actions and threatens you.
Ask authority (security/police) present for assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When there is help immediately available i.e. on public transit then this may be a viable option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person/person(s) may choose to stop their actions due to fear of potential fine(s) or police/security intervention. Person(s) may not choose to stop their actions because they have no fear of potential fine(s) or police/security intervention.

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	CONSIDERATIONS	POTENTIAL OUTCOME(S)
Ask other witnesses to help you intervene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people are fearful to intervene in situations where people are being bullied, harassed, or threatened. Witnesses may be very reluctant to help you intervene in a situation where they may feel threatened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Witnesses may help you intervene in an incident. If witnesses decide to help, the person/person(s) may stop their actions because they may be fearful of group repercussions. If witnesses decide to help, the person/person(s) may not stop their actions because they may not be fearful of group repercussions.
Text or call anonymously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the perpetrator see you texting or calling? Is the perpetrator aware you have a cell phone and are taking this type of action? This quiet reporting of a hate crime/incident underway may be safe if the perpetrator does not see you calling or texting this information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be safe if the perpetrator does not see you texting or calling. May not be safe if the perpetrator sees you texting or calling and becomes suspicious of your actions.

HOW CAN I HELP THE VICTIM(S)?

Victims of hate crime and incidents often feel deeply psychologically wounded by the words or actions taken towards them. Victimization carries the risk for psychological distress including depression, stress, anxiety and anger. Survivors of violent hate crimes are at risk for developing a variety of mental health problems including depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder which may include:

- Intrusive thoughts/reoccurring dreams
- Refusal or inability to discuss the event

- Pulling away emotionally from others
- Irritability, difficulty concentrating and disturbed sleep²⁶

Hate crimes can also have a ripple effect on a community because they are considered “message crimes” for a target community. As such, individuals from the targeted community may fear that they will be the next target.

During an incident, the victim(s) may or may not express a variety of emotions due to fear or intimidation. In some cultures, it is not acceptable to cry or express emotion in public. Therefore, after the incident, some victims may state they are “fine” or “ok” when that is often not the case. Other victims may be emotionally expressive and want someone to listen to them and sympathize with them. Some may appreciate additional supports available in the community or through police/RCMP stations.

Victim Service Units (VSUs) and/or victim services are available for victims of hate crime in police services and RCMP detachments across Alberta. These specialized supports and services work with victims from the time police respond to a crime until the end of the criminal justice process. Services provided to victims include intervention and support; information about their case and criminal justice proceedings; information about medical, legal, and social services available; referrals to other community agencies; as well as courtroom orientation and accompaniment.

For those victimized as a result of their ethnic background or origin, VSUs across Alberta have access to CanTalk, which is an interpreter service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in several languages. This service allows victims to communicate with Victim Services staff in the language they are most comfortable with. This respects the hate crime victim’s language needs and removes potential barriers to receiving help.

The *Victims of Crime Handbook* is available in several languages including Somali, English, French, Amharic, Kurdish, Punjabi, Spanish, Kiswahili, Tigrigna, and Vietnamese. *Help for Victims of Crime - A Supplement of English Express*, a publication geared towards individuals with lower English literacy levels which outlines how a victim can receive support and services in the province of Alberta.

To refer a victim of hate crime to a VSU, please contact your local police service or RCMP detachment or access the Victim Service Unit contact information along with general information for victims through the following Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security website:

²⁶ Diane Elmore, ‘The Psychology of Hate Crimes’, *American Psychological Association*, 2009, p. 1. From the website <<http://www.apa.org/ppo/pi/hate-crimes.html>>, accessed 29 September, 2009.

Help for Victims of Crime

https://www.solgps.alberta.ca/programs_and_services/victim_services/help_for_victims/Pages/default.aspx

Victim Service Units and Victim Serving Agencies in Alberta

https://www.solgps.alberta.ca/programs_and_services/victim_services/Pages/victimservice_units.aspx

Victims of Crime Handbook (available in 11 different languages)

https://www.solgps.alberta.ca/programs_and_services/victim_services/Publications/Forms/AllItems.aspx

WHAT DO I DO AFTER I WITNESS A HATE/BIAS INCIDENT?

If you used your cell phone, save the pictures and video which you may have taken during the event. Take some notes of the incident as soon as you have a chance and record the perpetrator - description, height, weight, clothing, tattoos, what was said, what occurred, victims, witnesses, date and time. Provide this information to law enforcement. The incident may not be criminal at this stage; however it may lead to criminal offences down the road.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading this guide. We hope it provides you with more knowledge about hate crimes and bias incidents in Alberta, has given you some tools to prepare you to intervene and report hate crimes or bias incidents when they occur, and has empowered you to feel more comfortable in taking action should a hate crime or bias incident occur.

As an active witness, your actions are very important in ensuring your community remains safe and free from hate crime.

For more information on police/RCMP agencies in your area, please use an Internet search Engine e.g. Google or dial 411. Alternately please see the white or yellow pages of the telephone directory for your area.

For more information on hate or bias crime, please see the Alberta Hate Crime Committee website at www.AHCC.ab.ca. (*under construction*).

For additional community supports, please call 211 if you are in Edmonton or Calgary. Alternately please see the Edmonton website www.211Edmonton.com and Calgary website [211Calgary.ca](http://www.211Calgary.ca).