



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report

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## National Crime Victimization Survey

# Stalking Victimization in the United States

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During a 12-month period, an estimated 3.4 million persons age 18 or older were victims of stalking. Stalking is defined as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. The Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS), which is the basis of this report, was conducted in 2006. The SVS identified seven types of harassing or unwanted behaviors consistent with a course of conduct experienced by stalking victims. The survey classified individuals as stalking victims if they responded that they experienced at least one of these behaviors on at least two separate occasions. In addition, the individuals must have feared for their safety or that of a family member as a result of the course of conduct, or have experienced additional threatening behaviors that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

The SVS measured the following stalking behaviors:

- making unwanted phone calls
- sending unsolicited or unwanted letters or e-mails
- following or spying on the victim
- showing up at places without a legitimate reason
- waiting at places for the victim
- leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers
- posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.

While individually these acts may not be criminal, collectively and repetitively these behaviors may cause a victim to fear for his or her safety or the safety of a family member. These behaviors constitute stalking for the purposes of this

**During a 12-month period an estimated 14 in every 1,000 persons age 18 or older were victims of stalking**

- About half (46%) of stalking victims experienced at least one unwanted contact per week, and 11% of victims said they had been stalked for 5 years or more.
- The risk of stalking victimization was highest for individuals who were divorced or separated—34 per 1,000 individuals.
- Women were at greater risk than men for stalking victimization; however, women and men were equally likely to experience harassment.
- Male (37%) and female (41%) stalking victimizations were equally likely to be reported to the police.
- Approximately 1 in 4 stalking victims reported some form of cyberstalking such as e-mail (83%) or instant messaging (35%).
- 46% of stalking victims felt fear of not knowing what would happen next.
- Nearly 3 in 4 stalking victims knew their offender in some capacity.

study. The federal government, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories have enacted laws making stalking a criminal act, although the elements defining the act of stalking differ across states (see box, Stalking laws).

The SVS also identified victims who experienced the behaviors associated with stalking but neither reported feeling fear as a result of such conduct nor experienced actions that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. This report characterizes such individuals as harassment victims. These instances of harassment might eventually have risen to the definitional requirement for stalking. However, at the time of the interview, the offender's actions and victim's responses did not rise to the threshold of stalking victimization as measured by the SVS.

Few national studies have measured the extent and nature of stalking in the United States. The Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women funded the 2006 SVS as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to enhance empirical knowledge about stalking (see *Methodology*). The SVS, which represents the largest study of stalking conducted to date, incorporated elements contained in federal and state laws to construct a working definition of stalking.

This report presents information on stalking victimization. Harassment is discussed where appropriate to provide fuller context. Appendix tables focus solely on stalking victims and exclude the people who experienced what this report terms as harassment. Persons interested in viewing the SVS data in its entirety may obtain the data file from the University of Michigan's Archive of Criminal Justice Data <[www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD)>.

**During a 12-month period an estimated 14 in every 1,000 persons age 18 or older were victims of stalking**

An estimated 5.9 million U.S. residents age 18 or older experienced behaviors consistent with either stalking or harassment in the 12 months preceding the SVS interview (table 1).<sup>1</sup> Of the 5.9 million victims, more than half experienced behavior that met the definition of stalking. Approximately 14 per 1,000 persons age 18 or older experienced the repetitive behaviors associated with stalking in addition to feeling fear or experiencing behaviors that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. Harassment victims, who experienced a course of conduct consistent with stalking but who did not report feeling fear, experienced these behaviors at a rate of 10 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 18 or older.

About half (46%) of all stalking victims experienced at least one unwanted contact per week (appendix table 6). Many victims of stalking reported being stalked over a period of months or years, and 11% of victims said they had been stalked for 5 years or more (figure 1). The fears and emotional distress that stalking engenders are many and varied. About 1 in 5 victims feared bodily harm to themselves, and 1 in 6 feared for the safety of a child or other family member.<sup>2</sup> One in 20 stalking victims feared being killed by the stalker. About 4 in 10 stalkers threatened the victim or the victim's family, friends, co-workers, or family pet.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>To place this estimate in perspective, there were about 5.2 million violent crimes—rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault—committed in 2005.

<sup>2</sup>Table 10 lists the range of fearful reactions about which victims were surveyed.

<sup>3</sup>Table 13 lists various threats stalkers made to victims.

**The most common type of stalking behavior victims experienced was unwanted phone calls and messages**

With the exception of receiving unwanted letters, e-mails, or other correspondence, stalking victims were more likely than harassment victims to experience all forms of unwanted behaviors (table 2). In particular, victims of stalking experienced higher levels of three unwanted behaviors most commonly associated with stalking. These included an offender following or spying on the victim, showing up at places without a legitimate reason, or waiting outside (or inside) places for the victim. Stalking victims were about 3 times more likely to report experiencing these three behaviors than individuals who were harassed. For example, 34% of stalking victims reported that the offender followed or spied on them compared with 11% of harassment

**Table 1. Prevalence of stalking and harassment over the 12 months prior to interview**

	Number	Rate
All victims	5,857,030	23.8
Stalking victims	3,424,100	13.9
Harassment victims	2,432,930	9.9

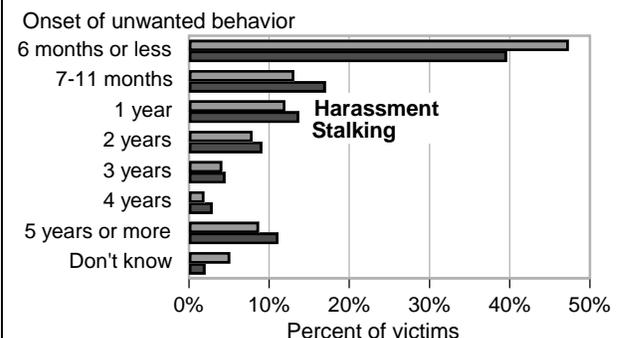
Note: The total population age 18 or older was 246,500,200 in 2006. Victimization rates are per 1,000 persons age 18 or older.

**Table 2. Nature of stalking and harassment behaviors experienced by victims**

	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
Unwanted phone calls and messages	62.5%	66.2%	57.2%
Unwanted letters and e-mail	30.1	30.6	29.4
Spreading rumors	29.1	35.7	19.9
Following or spying	24.5	34.3	10.6
Showing up at places	22.4	31.1	10.2
Waiting for victim	20.4	29.0	8.3
Leaving unwanted presents	9.1	12.2	4.8
Number of victims	5,857,030	3,424,100	2,432,930

Note: Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

**About 10% of victims were stalked for 5 years or more**



Note: Estimates exclude 1.2% of stalking and 10.2% of harassment victims due to missing data. All victims experience at least one unwanted behavior in the year before the interview.

Figure 1

victims who reported experiencing this behavior. Thirty-one percent of stalking victims reported that the offenders showed up in places where they had no legitimate purpose being; approximately 10% of harassment victims reported this type of unwanted behavior. Also, 29% of stalking victims stated that the offender waited in places for them, while 8% of harassment victims reported this type of behavior.

**Risk of victimization varies more for stalking than for harassment**

Females were at higher risk of stalking victimization than males (table 3). During the study period, females experienced 20 stalking victimizations per 1,000 females age 18 or older. The rate of stalking victimization for males was approximately 7 per 1,000 males age 18 or older. Males and females were equally likely to experience harassment.

**Age**

As with victimization risk more generally, risk of being stalked diminished with age. Persons age 18 to 19 and 20 to 24 experienced the highest rates of stalking victimization. About 30 per 1,000 persons age 18 to 19 and 28 per 1,000 persons age 20 to 24 were stalked during 2006.

**Race and Hispanic origin of victim**

Asians and Pacific Islanders (7 per 1,000 persons age 18 and older) were less likely to experience stalking than whites (14 per 1,000), blacks (12 per 1,000), and persons of two or more races (32 per 1,000). Despite apparent racial differences, no other consistent patterns of risk for stalking victimization emerged. Non-Hispanics were more likely than Hispanics to experience stalking. During the study period, non-Hispanics experienced about 14 stalking victimizations per 1,000 individuals age 18 and older. The rate for Hispanics during this period was 11 stalking victimizations per 1,000 persons age 18 or older.

**Stalking laws**

While the federal government, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories have enacted criminal laws to address stalking, the legal definition for stalking varies across jurisdictions. State laws vary regarding the element of victim fear and emotional distress, as well as the requisite intent of the stalker. Some state laws specify that the victim must have been frightened by the stalking, while others require only that the stalking behavior would have caused a reasonable person to experience fear. In addition states vary regarding what level of fear is required. Some state laws require prosecutors to establish fear of death or serious bodily harm, while others require only that prosecutors establish that the victim suffered emotional distress. Interstate stalking is defined by federal law 18 U.S.C. § 2261A.

**Marital status**

The rate of stalking victimization for individuals who were divorced or separated was 34 per 1,000 individuals age 18 or older—a higher rate of victimization than for persons of other marital status. Individuals who had never been married (17 per 1,000 individuals) were at a lower risk of stalking victimization than divorced or separated persons, but were at a higher risk of stalking victimization than persons who were married (9 per 1,000) or widowed (8 per 1,000).

**Income**

As with crime more generally, a pattern of decreasing risk for stalking victimization existed for persons residing in households with higher incomes. Individuals in households with an annual income under \$7,500 and \$7,500 to \$14,999 were equally likely to be stalked but more likely to be victimized than were persons in households with an annual income at or above \$25,000.

**Table 3. Characteristics of stalking and harassment victims**

	Population	Rate per 1,000 victims <sup>a</sup>		
		All	Stalking	Harassment
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	120,068,420	16.9	7.4	9.5
Female	126,431,780	30.3	20.0	10.2
<b>Age</b>				
18-19	8,047,540	47.2	29.7	17.5
20-24	20,346,940	45.7	28.4	17.3
25-34	39,835,680	30.1	20.2	9.9
35-49	65,886,490	29.9	17.3	12.6
50-64	51,400,990	20.4	10.4	10.0
65 or older	35,515,670	9.3	3.6	5.7
<b>Race</b>				
White	200,874,080	24.1	14.2	9.8
Black	29,853,700	22.7	12.2	10.5
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1,695,400	33.0	19.6*	13.4*
Asian/Pacific Islander	11,317,780	13.4	7.0	6.4
More than one race <sup>b</sup>	2,759,240	49.3	31.6	17.7
<b>Hispanic origin</b>				
Hispanic	29,522,670	16.5	10.6	5.9
Non-Hispanic	215,025,170	24.7	14.4	10.3
<b>Marital status</b>				
Never married	79,715,080	26.9	16.6	10.3
Married	123,633,560	16.8	8.7	8.1
Divorced or separated	26,334,200	51.8	34.0	17.8
Widowed	14,318,190	16.0	7.5	8.5
<b>Household Income</b>				
Less than \$7,500	8,418,570	47.0	31.7	15.3
\$7,500 - \$14,999	14,562,850	40.1	27.4	12.6
\$15,000 - \$24,999	22,428,240	32.3	21.1	11.1
\$25,000 - \$34,999	22,862,680	27.4	15.8	11.5
\$35,000 - \$49,999	30,345,140	25.2	15.8	9.4
\$50,000 - \$74,999	37,956,910	23.1	12.6	10.6
\$75,000 or more	56,633,800	18.8	9.6	9.2

Note: Table excludes missing data.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

<sup>a</sup>Victimization rates are per 1,000 persons age 18 or older.

<sup>b</sup>Includes all persons of any race, including persons who identify two or more races.

## Victims were more likely to be stalked by an offender of the same age and race

### Offender age

Individuals were more likely to be stalked by offenders of similar age (appendix table 1). Nearly half of victims age 21 to 29 were stalked by offenders perceived to also be in their twenties, and 38% of victims age 30 to 39 perceived the offender to also be in their thirties.

### Race

Similar to other types of victimization, stalking is primarily intraracial in nature (appendix table 2). Most (83%) of white stalking victims perceived the offender to be white compared to 66% of black stalking victims who perceived the offender to be black. This pattern of intraracial victimization changes for persons of other races. Despite apparent differences, persons of other races were equally likely to be stalked by an offender who was black, white, or of another race.<sup>4</sup>

### Offender gender

Males were as likely to report being stalked by a male as a female offender (table 4). Forty-three percent of male stalking victims stated that the offender was female, while 41% of male victims stated that the offender was another male. Female victims of stalking were significantly more likely to be stalked by a male (67%) rather than a female (24%) offender.

Stalking is unlike most crimes because a course of conduct designed to create fear in another person does not necessarily require that the victim come into contact with the offender. For example, a victim may receive repeated threatening correspondence without knowing the source of the communication. Sixteen percent of male stalking victims and approximately 10% of female stalking victims were not able to identify the gender of the offender.

<sup>4</sup>Other races include American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, and persons identifying two or more races.

Gender of offender	Gender of victim					
	All		Stalking		Harassment	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Male	31.7	58.3	41.3	66.9	24.2	41.3
Female	37.9	22.4	42.5	23.5	34.3	20.3
Don't know	30.4	19.3	16.1	9.6	41.5	38.4
Number of victims	2,028,800	3,821,140	888,680	2,531,770	1,140,120	1,289,370

Note: Table excludes missing data about offenders from 0.2% of all victims, 0.1% of all female victims, 0.4% of female stalking victims, and 0.3% of female harassment victims. Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Number of offenders

About 6 in 10 stalking victims stated that the perpetrator was a single offender (appendix table 3). A much lower percentage of victims reported being stalked by two (18%) or three (13%) offenders.

## Relationship

About a tenth of all victims were stalked by a stranger, and nearly 3 in 4 of all victims knew their offender in some capacity (table 5). Stalking victims most often identified the stalker as a former intimate (21.5%) or a friend, roommate, or neighbor (16.4%).

**Table 5. Victim-offender relationship in stalking and harassment**

	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
Total**	100%	100%	100%
<b>Known, intimate</b>	27.6%	30.3%	22.5%
Current intimate			
Spouse	4.3	5.6	1.8*
Boy/girlfriend	3.8	3.2	5.1
Former intimate			
Ex-spouse	7.1%	8.4%	4.6%
Ex-boy/girlfriend	12.4	13.1	11.0
<b>Known, other</b>	44.7%	45.1%	44.4%
Friend/roommate/neighbor	16.7	16.4	17.4
Known from work or school	10.1	9.9	10.6
Acquaintance	9.4	9.8	8.8
Relative	8.5	9.0	7.6
<b>Stranger</b>	10.6%	9.7%	12.5%
<b>Unknown</b>	16.9%	15.0%	20.6%
Number of victims	4,619,430	3,064,950	1,554,480

Note: Table excludes 0.5% of all victims, 0.3% of stalking victims, and 0.7% of harassment victims due to missing data. Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer cases.

\*\*Includes victims who could identify a single offender who was most responsible.

### Employment status of the offender

Forty-two percent of stalking victims stated that the offender was employed during the time stalking occurred (appendix table 4). Victims were equally likely to report that the offender was unemployed or that the victim was unable to ascertain the employment status of the offender.

### Problems with the law

Thirty-six percent of stalking victims stated that the offender had some previous interaction with law enforcement (appendix table 5). A similar percentage of victims (38%) were unable to identify whether the offender had problems with the law prior to the stalking victimization.

### One in 10 victims reported that the stalking started 5 years or more before the survey

Over half of all victims reported that the stalking or harassment began “less than a year ago” (figure 1). Harassment victims had characteristically experienced the harassing behavior for a shorter period leading up to the interview (6 months or less). Stalking victims were most likely to be stalked once or twice a week or with no set pattern (appendix table 6). Nearly a quarter of all victims reported that they were stalked almost every day (16.9%) or at least once a day (6%).

### Victim perception of why stalking began

The most common reasons victims perceived for the stalking were retaliation, anger, spite (37%), or desire to control the victim (33%) (table 6). About 1 in 6 victims believed the stalking started to keep him or her in the relationship with the offender, and 1 in 10 reported the stalking began while living with the offender (not referenced in a table). About a tenth of victims did not know why the stalking began.

### Cyberstalking and electronic monitoring

More than 1 in 4 stalking victims reported some form of cyberstalking was used, such as e-mail (83%) or instant messaging (35%) (table 7). Electronic monitoring was used to stalk 1 in 13 victims. Video or digital cameras were equally likely as listening devices or bugs to be used to electronically monitor victims (46% and 42%). Global positioning system (GPS) technology comprised about a tenth of the electronic monitoring of stalking victims.

**Table 6. Victim perception of reasons stalking or harassment began**

	Percent of all victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
Retaliation/anger/spite	30.0%	36.6%	20.0%
Control	25.2	32.9	13.4
Mentally ill/emotionally unstable	16.7	23.4	6.6
Liked me/found me attractive/ had crush	13.7	16.8	9.0
Keep in relationship	12.9	16.2	7.9
Substance abuser	10.3	14.4	4.1
Stalker liked attention	7.7	9.1	5.7
Proximity/convenience/ I was alone	4.8	6.6	2.2
Catch me doing something	3.3	4.3	1.9
Different cultural beliefs/back- ground	3.2	4.0	1.8
Thought I liked attention	2.5	2.4	2.6
Other reasons	23.8	19.3	30.7
Don't know why	16.6	10.6	25.7
Number of victims	5,644,500	3,416,460	2,228,050

Note: Table excludes 3.6% of all victims, 0.2% of stalking victims, and 8.4% of harassment victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

**Table 7. Involvement of cyberstalking or electronic monitoring in stalking and harassment**

	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
Total	100%	100%	100%
<b>No cyberstalking or elec- tronic monitoring involved</b>	72.7%	73.2%	72.1%
<b>Any type of cyberstalking or electronic monitoring</b>	26.6%	26.1%	27.4%
Cyberstalking	23.4	21.5	26.4
Electronic monitoring	6.0	7.8	3.4
Don't know	0.6	0.7	0.6
<b>Percent of cyberstalking involving —<sup>a</sup></b>			
E-mail	82.6%	82.5%	82.7%
Instant messenger	28.7	35.1	20.7
Blogs or bulletin boards	12.5	12.3	12.8
Internet sites about victim	8.8	9.4	8.1
Chat rooms	4.0	4.4*	3.4*
<b>Percent of electronic monitoring involving —<sup>b</sup></b>			
Computer spyware	44.1%	33.6%	81.0%*
Video/digital cameras	40.3	46.3	19.3*
Listening devices/bugs	35.8	41.8	14.8
GPS	9.7*	10.9*	5.2*
Number	5,200,410	3,158,340	2,042,070

Note: Table excludes 8.8% of all victims, 7.8% of stalking victims, and 10.2% of harassment victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\* Estimate based on 10 or fewer samples.

<sup>a</sup>Based on 1,217,680 total victims, 677,870 stalking victims, and 539,820 harassment victims who experienced cyberstalking.

<sup>b</sup>Based on 314,400 total victims, 244,880 stalking victims, and 69,530 harassment victims who experienced electronic monitoring.

## One in 7 victims reported they moved as a result of the stalking

The most common types of actions victims took to stop the stalking from continuing were to change usual activities outside of work or school, stay with family, or install caller ID or call blocking (table 8). The least frequent actions taken were to alter one's appearance or get pepper spray, a gun, or some other kind of weapon. Forty percent of stalking victims did not change their usual activities outside of work or school, take protective actions, or change their personal information.

### Help from others

Seven in 10 victims of stalking sought help to protect themselves or to stop the stalking (table 9). Victims were most likely to enlist the help of family or friends, followed by asking people not to release information about him or her (43% versus 33%). About 7% of victims contacted victim services, a shelter, or a helpline.

**Table 8. Whether stalking or harassment victims took actions to protect themselves or stop unwanted behaviors**

	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
<b>Changed usual activities outside work or school</b>			
Changed day-to-day activities	14.3%	21.6%	4.1%
Stayed with family	11.6	18.1	2.6
Took time off work or school	10.8	16.7	2.6
Avoided family/friends	10.3	14.9	3.7
Changed route to work or school	9.2	13.4	3.3
Changed or quit job or school	6.7	9.5	2.9
Altered appearance	1.5	2.3	0.4*
<b>Took protective actions</b>			
Installed caller ID/call blocking	13.4%	18.1%	6.7%
Changed telephone number	12.6	17.3	5.8
Changed locks/got security system	8.7	13.2	2.4
Got pepper spray	4.0	6.3	0.8*
Got a gun	1.9	2.9	0.5*
Got another kind of weapon	1.8	2.1	1.4*
Took self-defense classes	0.9	1.1	0.5*
<b>Changed personal information</b>			
Changed email address	5.9%	6.9%	4.4%
Changed social security number	0.3	0.2*	0.3*
<b>Did not change behaviors listed</b>	55.1%	39.7%	76.9%
Number	5,857,030	3,424,100	2,432,930

Note: Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

### Reasons stalking stopped

At the time of the interview, 3 in 5 of the victims reported the stalking had stopped, while about 2 in 5 reported it was ongoing (appendix table 7). The most common victim perceptions for why the unwanted contacts stopped were that the police warned the stalker (15.6%), the victim talked to the stalker (13.3%), or a friend or relative intervened (12.2%). About a tenth of victims attributed the cessation of the unwanted behavior to obtaining a restraining, protection, or stay away order.

### Emotional impact

For stalking victims, the most common fear cited was not knowing what would happen next (table 10). Nine percent of stalking victims reported their worst fear was death. Twenty-nine percent of stalking victims feared the behavior would never stop. More than half of the stalking victims feared bodily harm to themselves, their child, or another family member.

More than 7 in 10 of all victims felt angry or annoyed at the beginning of the unwanted contacts or as they progressed (table 11). Stalking victims were about twice as likely as harassment victims to feel anxious or concerned at the

**Table 9. Types of help sought by stalking or harassment victims**

	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
Total	100%	100%	100%
Enlisted help of friends/family	30.0	42.6	12.2
Asked people not to release information	24.0	32.9	11.6
Talked to boss/employer	16.2	21.6	8.6
Talked to an attorney	13.5	19.9	4.4
Obtained a restraining/protection/stay away order	9.4	15.6	0.6
Talked to a mental health professional	8.3	12.4	2.6
Contacted building/office security	6.4	9.2	2.5
Talked to clergy/faith leader	6.1	9.0	2.0
Talked to a doctor or nurse	6.0	9.1	1.5
Contacted victim services/shelter/helpline	4.5	7.3	0.5*
Hired a private investigator	0.7	1.1	0.1*
Did not seek help**	47.3	30.3	71.2
Number of victims	5,857,030	3,424,100	2,432,930

Note: Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

\*\*Victims might have sought help from someone other than those listed above.

beginning of the unwanted contacts (52.7% versus 25.4%). As the unwanted contacts progressed, about 15% of stalking victims felt depressed or sick, and 1% reported feeling suicidal.

### Workplace impact

Of the 79% of stalking victims who had a job during the 12 months preceding the interview, about 1 in 8 lost time from work because of fear for their safety or to pursue activities such as obtaining a restraining order or testifying in court (appendix table 8). Seven percent of victims lost time from work for activities such as changing a phone

number, moving, or fixing or replacing damaged property. For 1 in 7 of these victims, a day or less was lost from work (appendix table 9). More than half of victims lost 5 or more days from work. About 130,000 victims reported that they had been fired from or asked to leave their jobs because of the stalking (not referenced in table).

### Financial impact of stalking on victim

About 3 in 10 of stalking victims accrued out-of-pocket costs for things such as attorney fees, damage to property, child care costs, moving expenses, or changing phone numbers (appendix table 10). About a tenth of victims spent less than \$250, while 13% spent \$1,000 or more. About 296,000 stalking victims lost pay from work (appendix table 11). Over half of the victims lost less than \$1,000 of pay, and 8% of victims lost \$5,000 in pay or more.

### Stalkers commit various types of crimes against their victims

Stalking offenders committed identity theft against about 204,000 victims. Over half of these victims had financial accounts opened or closed in their names or money taken from their accounts, and 3 in 10 of these victims had items charged to their credit cards without their consent.

Any identity theft	204,230	100%
Opened/closed accounts	110,850	54.3
Took money from accounts	105,130	51.5
Charged items to credit card	60,790	29.8

Note: Estimates exclude 0.1% of missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

**Table 10. Victims' worst fears resulting from stalking**

	Percent of victim
Not knowing what would happen next	46.1%
Behavior would never stop	29.1
Bodily harm	30.4
Harm or kidnap child	12.9
Harm other family member	12.2
Loss of freedom	10.3
Death	8.9
Loss of job	6.3
Harm current partner	6.0
Losing one's mind	4.3
Other	16.6
Don't know	5.3
Number of victims	3,416,900

Note: Table excludes 0.2% of stalking victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Table 11. How the victim felt when the stalking or harassment began and progressed**

	Percent of victims					
	All		Stalking		Harassment	
	Beginning	Progressed	Beginning	Progressed	Beginning	Progressed
Annoyed/angry	72.5%	74.2%	68.9%	69.6%	78.1%	81.4%
Anxious/concerned	42.2	36.2	52.7	46.7	25.4	19.4
Frightened	26.8	25.7	41.7	41.7	3.2*	~ <sup>a</sup>
Helpless	15.6	16.4	22.4	23.4	4.8	5.1
Depressed	10.8	10.2	15.9	15.2	2.8	2.3
Sick	10.0	9.8	14.8	14.7	2.2*	1.8
Suicidal	0.9	0.9	1.4	1.4	~	~ <sup>b</sup>
Other way	9.7	10.1	7.9	8.9	12.4	11.9
Number of victims	5,574,400	5,530,940	3,416,430	3,406,220	2,157,980	2,124,720

Note: Table excludes 4.8% of all victims, 5.6% of all stalking victims, and 0.2% of harassment victims at the beginning of the behaviors and 0.5% of all victims, 11.3% of all stalking victims, and 12.7% of harassment victims as the behaviors progressed due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

~Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup>Harassment victims, by definition, were not frightened as the unwanted behaviors progressed.

<sup>b</sup>Harassment victims, by definition, did not report feeling suicidal as a result of the unwanted behaviors.

About 16% of all victims suffered property damage in conjunction with the stalking (table 12). Among stalking victims, the most common type of violent crime experienced in conjunction with stalking was to be hit, slapped, or knocked down (12.3%). About 6% of the stalking victims had a family member, friend, or co-worker who was attacked.

### Weapon involvement and injuries

About 139,000 stalking victims were attacked with a weapon. Stalkers were equally likely to use a knife, blunt instrument, or other object, and 23% of the weapons used were handguns. Of the 279,000 victims who were injured in an attack, nearly all (99%) of these victims sustained minor bruises and other injuries. About a fifth sustained serious injuries, including gunshot or knife wounds, internal injuries, or broken bones.

Weapon used in attack	Number	Percent
Knife/other sharp object	58,850	42.4
Handgun	31,610	22.8*
Blunt or other object	52,670	38.0

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

Injuries sustained in attacks	Number	Percent
Rape/sexual assault	38,590	13.9*
Serious injuries	52,080	18.7
Minor or other injuries	276,440	99.2

Note: Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Estimate based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

### Threats

Stalkers made one or more threats to 43% of victims (table 13). Stalking offenders were most likely to threaten to hit, slap, or otherwise harm the victim (13.6%) or to kill the victim (12.1%). Somewhat less likely was the stalker threatening to kill himself or herself (9.2%). Less than 5% of the threats involved harm to a child, friend, co-worker, pet, or the threat of rape or sexual assault.

### Stalking victimization was equally likely to be reported to police whether the victim was male or female

For violent crime more generally, victimizations experienced by females are more likely to be reported to the police than those experienced by males. However, this pattern of reporting by gender is not observed for the crime of stalking. Male and female stalking victimizations were equally likely to be reported to the police (table 14). Thirty-seven percent of male and 41% of female victimizations were reported to the police by the victim or another person aware of the crime.

The most common reasons for not reporting stalking victimization to the police were that it was a private or personal matter or that it was a minor incident (appendix table 12).

About 40% of victims stated that police were contacted once regarding the stalking, while 3% of victims stated that police were contacted in excess of 15 times (appendix table 13). Stalking victimization was most often reported to the police by the victim (83%), the victim's family (26%), or a friend or neighbor (12%) (appendix table 14).

**Table 12. Other crimes perpetrated by the offender against the stalking or harassment victim**

	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
<b>Property damage</b>	15.9%	24.4%	4.0%
Damaged property of victim or someone in victim's household	9.5	15.0	1.8
Illegally entered house/apartment	8.6	13.2	2.2
Illegally entered car	3.8	6.3	0.5*
<b>Attacked victim</b>	12.3%	21.0%	0.0%
Hit/slapped/knocked down	7.2	12.3	~
Choked or strangled victim	2.4	4.2	~
Attacked victim with a weapon	2.4	4.0	~
Chased or dragged with a car	2.1	3.5	~
Raped/sexually assaulted victim	0.9	1.6	~
Attacked or attempted to attack in some other way	4.3	7.3	~
<b>Attacked person/pet other than victim</b>	8.8%	15.0	4.0%
Attack or attempt to attack a family member	3.5	6.0	~
Attack or attempt to attack a friend or co-worker	3.4	5.8	~
Attack or attempt to attack a pet	2.2	3.7	~
Attack or attempt to attack a child	2.2	3.7	~
Number of victims	5,857,030	3,424,100	2,432,930

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

~Not applicable. Harassment victims by definition were not attacked, nor were their friends, co-workers, family members, or pets.

**Table 13. Threats offenders made against stalking victims**

	Percent of victims	
	Number	Percent
Total	3,392,520	100%
<b>No threats made</b>	1,927,020	56.8%
<b>Threatened to—</b>	1,465,510	43.2%
Hit/slap/harm	462,610	13.6
Kill victim	411,830	12.1
Harm or kill self	313,580	9.2
Harm with a weapon	242,420	7.1
Harm another family member	209,770	6.2
Harm or kidnap child	166,230	4.9
Harm friend or co-worker	151,460	4.5
Harm a pet	87,020	2.6
Rape/sexually assault	56,050	1.7
Other way	511,530	15.1

Note: Table excludes 0.9% of stalking victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

## Stalking victims report differing experiences with the criminal justice system

When contacted about a stalking victimization, the most common police response was to take a report. More than half of police officers took a report when contacted regarding the stalking (appendix table 15). Seventeen percent of responding officers gave the victim self-protection advice, while 8% of the officers arrested the perpetrator.

Nearly 20% of victims stated the police took no action when contacted. Of this 20%, victims were equally likely to perceive that no action was taken by law enforcement because police did not want to get involved (29%), had no legal authority (18%), or were inefficient or ineffective (16%) (appendix table 16). About 50% of victims perceived the stalking situation stayed the same after contacting the police (appendix table 17). Victims were equally likely to

perceive the situation “improved” or “worsened” following a report to the police. For victims who had contacted police on more than one occasion, the survey recorded only the police action taken in response to the latest call.

A fifth of victims filed charges against the stalking perpetrator (appendix table 18). Of those individuals filing charges, 3 out of 10 victims stated the outcome was still pending or that a restraining, protection, or stay away order was issued to deal with the offender. Victims were equally likely to report being satisfied (46%) or dissatisfied (49%) with the criminal justice system’s responses to their stalking incident (appendix table 19) and were generally split on the helpfulness or lack of helpfulness of criminal justice representatives, with one exception: some victims said that victim advocates were helpful (6%) during the criminal justice process (appendix table 20).

**Table 14. Percent of stalking and harassment victimizations reported to the police, by victim gender**

	Percent of victims					
	All		Stalking		Harassment	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Reported	20.6	32.8	36.8	41.0	6.8	13.9
Not reported	79.4	67.2	63.2	59.0	93.2	86.1
Number of victims	1,941,650	3,637,570	892,340	2,528,990	1,049,320	1,108,580

Note: Table excludes 4.5% of all male victims, 4.9% of all female victims, 0.1% of female stalking victims, 8% of male harassment victims, and 14.2% of female harassment victims due to missing data.

## Methodology

The Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS) was administered as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) during January through June, 2006. All NCVS respondents age 18 and older were eligible for the supplement. About 65,270 persons participated in the supplemental survey. The response rate for eligible individuals was 83%.

The estimates presented in this report are annual prevalence estimates for persons age 18 or older victimized by stalking or other harassing behaviors during the 12 months prior to the interview. Since the interviews were conducted during the first 6 months of 2006, the majority of the stalking behaviors occurred during 2005.

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) convened a 1-day forum with experts in the area of stalking and violence against women. Researchers, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and victim advocates comprised the expert group. Also included in the group were representatives from the Census Bureau, the federal agency that carries out survey development and data collection for BJS. The purpose of the 1-day forum was to discuss definitional and methodological issues surrounding the crime of stalking, determine where gaps in current information on stalking existed, and determine how the SVS could further research and knowledge regarding this crime.

Following this meeting, a small federal working group was formed with representatives from OVW, BJS, and the Census Bureau. The working group met weekly for approximately 12 months until a satisfactory survey instrument was completed and approved. During the last phase of the survey development, the Census Bureau conducted cognitive interviews with stalking victims around the United States to test the reliability and validity of the instrument. Changes to the instrument were made to incorporate findings from these interviews.

The name of the SVS intentionally does not indicate that the focus of the supplemental survey is stalking. This decision was made to avoid biasing the responses of individuals and the subsequent estimates. The respondents had to state that they experienced all of the following in order for a course of behavior to be counted as stalking victimization:

- at least one of the harassing behaviors in the stalking screener
- harassing behavior more than one time on separate days
- at least one of the harassing contacts occurred during the 12 months prior to the interview
- they feared for their own or a family member's safety or experienced another crime committed by the offender that would make a reasonable person fearful (see the survey screen questions on the next page).

### Victim perception of whether behavior was stalking

The SVS screened victims to determine whether they met the behavioral criteria of having unwanted or harassing contacts on more than one occasion during the past year that made them feel annoyed, fearful, anxious, or concerned. Researchers specifically avoided using the term "stalked" throughout the questionnaire so as not to bias findings based on the victim's perception of what was occurring. The final question in the supplement asked whether the victim perceived the unwanted contacts or harassing behaviors to be stalking. Stalking victims were more than twice as likely as harassment victims to label the unwanted behavior as stalking (54% versus 21%).

Victim perception of whether behavior was stalking	Percent of victims		
	All	Stalking	Harassment
Total	100%	100%	100%
<b>Considered to be—</b>			
Stalking	40.3%	53.6%	20.7%
Not stalking	59.7	46.4	79.3
Number of victims	5,588,150	3,325,220	2,262,940

Note: Table excludes 4.6% of all victims, 2.9% of stalking victims, and 7.0% of harassment victims due to missing data.

The final question on the survey asked, "Do you consider the series of unwanted contacts or harassing behavior you told me about to be stalking?"

Victims of harassment met all the requirements for stalking victimization except those associated with induced fear or the commission of additional associated crimes. Harassing acts by bill collectors, telephone solicitors, or other sales people were excluded from the estimates of stalking and harassment.

### Standard error computations

Comparisons of percentages and rates made in this report were tested to determine if observed differences were statistically significant. Differences described as higher, lower, or different passed a test at the 0.05 level of statistical significance (95% confidence level). Differences described as somewhat, lightly, marginally, or some indication passed a test at the 0.10 level of statistical significance (90% confidence level). Caution is required when comparing estimates not explicitly discussed in the report.

### Screener questions for stalking behaviors

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about any unwanted contacts or harassing behavior you may have experienced that frightened, concerned, angered, or annoyed you. Please include acts committed by strangers, casual acquaintances, friends, relatives, and even spouses and partners. I want to remind you that the information you provide is confidential.

1. Not including bill collectors, telephone solicitors, or other sales people, has anyone, male or female, EVER – frightened, concerned, angered or annoyed you by ...
  - a. Making unwanted phone calls to you or leaving messages?
  - b. Sending unsolicited or unwanted letters, e-mails, or other forms of written correspondence or communication?
  - c. Following you or spying on you?
  - d. Waiting outside or inside places for you such as your home, school, workplace, or recreation place?
  - e. Showing up at places where you were even though he or she had no business being there?
  - f. Leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers?
  - g. Posting information or spreading rumors about you on the Internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth?
  - f. None

### Questions used to identify actions that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear

1. In order to frighten or intimidate you, did this person attack or attempt to attack
  - a. a child
  - b. another family member
  - c. a friend or co-worker
  - d. a pet
2. During the last twelve months, did this person attack or attempt to attack you by...
  - a. hitting, slapping, or knocking you down
  - b. choking or strangling you
  - c. raping or sexually assaulting you
  - d. attacking you with a weapon
  - e. chasing or dragging with a car
  - f. attacking you in some other way

3. Other than the attacks or attempted attacks you just told me about, during the last 12 months, did this person threaten to...

- a. kill you
- b. rape or sexually assault you
- c. harm you with a weapon
- d. hit, slap, or harm you in some other way
- e. harm or kidnap a child
- f. harm another family member
- g. harm a friend or co-worker
- h. harm a pet
- i. harm or kill himself/herself

4. What were you most afraid of happening as these unwanted contacts or behaviors were occurring?

- a. death
- b. physical/bodily harm
- c. harm or kidnap respondent's child
- d. harm current partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- e. harm other family members
- f. don't know what would happen

### Questions used to measure fear

1. How did the behavior of (this person/these persons) make you feel when it FIRST started? Anything else?

- a. anxious/concerned
- b. annoyed/angry
- c. frightened
- d. depressed
- e. helpless
- f. sick
- g. suicidal
- h. some other way – *specify*

2. How did you feel as the behavior progressed? Anything else?

- a. no change in feelings
- b. anxious/concerned
- c. annoyed/angry
- d. frightened
- e. depressed
- f. helpless
- g. sick
- h. suicidal
- i. some other way - *specify*





**Appendix table 12. Victim reasons for not reporting stalking to police**

	Percent of victims
<b>Dealt with another way</b>	
Private or personal matter	26.7%
Reported to another official	13.6
<b>Not important enough to report</b>	
Minor incident	27.2
Not clear a crime occurred	11.2
<b>Police couldn't help</b>	
Couldn't identify offender/lacked evidence	9.5
Had no legal authority	3.0
Lacked correct protection, stay away, or restraining order	0.5*
<b>Police wouldn't help</b>	
Police wouldn't think it was important/would be ineffective	11.0
Police wouldn't believe respondent/would blame respondent	4.0
Previous negative experience with police	1.5*
Perpetrator was a police officer	0.8*
<b>Feared the perpetrator</b>	
Afraid of reprisal	5.9
<b>Other reasons</b>	
Protect perpetrator/perpetrator was ex-spouse or ex-partner	6.9
Contacts/behavior stopped	5.9
For the sake of the children	3.8
Respondent felt ashamed/embarrassed	3.3
Respondent or perpetrator moved away	1.3*
Other	17.6
Don't know	1.2*
Number of victims	2,055,080

Note: Table excludes 1.9% of stalking victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses are permitted.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Appendix table 14. Identity of person reporting stalking to police**

	Percent of victims
Victim	83.0%
Victim's family	26.2
Friend/neighbor	11.5
Other	4.1
Employer/co-worker	2.3*
Social worker/counselor	1.4*
School official	1.4*
Security guard	1.2*
Clergy/pastor/priest	0.5*
Stranger/bystander	0.5*
Doctor/nurse	0.5*
Don't know	1.6*
Number of victims	1,350,130

Note: Table excludes 1.2% of stalking victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Appendix table 15. Types of action taken by police after most recent contact about stalking**

	Percent of victims
Took a report	55.3%
Talked to/warned offender	32.2
Suggested protection, stay away or restraining order	20.1
Gave victim self-protection advice	17.4
Referred victim to court	8.9
Arrested offender	7.7
Asked for more evidence	6.4
Referred victim to victim services	5.4
Moved respondent to another location	1.3*
Don't know	4.1
Took no action	18.8
Number of victims	1,343,090

Note: Table excludes 1.7% of stalking victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Appendix table 13. Number of police contacts regarding stalking during the last 12 months**

	Percent of victims
Total	100%
1	39.7
2	22.1
3	12.9
4	6.4
5-10	11.9
11-15	3.7
More than 15	3.2
Number of victims	1,240,280

Note: Table excludes 9.2% of stalking victims due to missing data.

**Appendix table 16. Stalking victims' perceptions about why police did not take action**

	Percent of victims
Didn't want to get involved	28.6%
Had no legal authority	17.7
Police were inefficient/ineffective	16.2
Didn't believe victim	13.2*
Didn't have enough evidence	11.2*
Offender was a police officer	5.7*
Could not find/identify offender	4.0*
Lacked or had incorrect protection order	3.0*
Thought it was victim's fault	2.9*
Didn't find out until too late	2.8*
Other	36.3
Number of victims	240,030

Note: Table excludes 4.9% of stalking victims due to missing data. Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Appendix table 17. Victim perceptions of outcomes after first reporting stalking to police**

	Percent of victims
Total	100%
Situation got better	28.2
Situation got worse	22.9
Situation stayed the same	48.9
Number of victims	1,325,720

Note: Table excludes 3% of stalking victims due to missing data.

**Appendix table 18. Percent of stalkings in which criminal justice charges were filed and outcomes**

	Percent
Total	100%
Charges not filed	71.5
Charges filed	21.0
Still pending	33.3%**
Restraining, protection, stay away order	28.5
Jailed or imprisoned	18.0
Court intervention/counseling program	12.2*
Convicted or guilty	12.0*
Fine was imposed	11.8*
Dismissed or not guilty	9.1*
Probation	8.5*
Other	12.9*
Don't know outcome of charges filed	5.1*
Don't know if charges filed	7.5
Number of victims	1,329,790

Note: Table excludes 2.7% of stalking victims that did not respond to whether charges were filed and 9.4% of victims that did not respond to the outcome of charges filed.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

\*\*Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

**Appendix table 19. Stalking victim satisfaction with criminal justice outcome**

	Percent of victims
Total	100%
Victim satisfied with outcome	45.7
Victim not satisfied with outcome	49.0
Don't know if satisfied with outcome	5.2*
Number of victims	169,040

Note: Table excludes 13.5% of stalking victims that filed charges due to missing data. Detail may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

**Appendix table 20. Stalking victim perceptions about helpfulness of officials in the criminal justice system**

	Percent of victims who perceived official as—	
	Helpful	Not helpful
Patrol/police officer/sheriff	43.0%	41.9%
911 dispatcher	3.6	2.8
Detective	5.3	3.0
Prosecutor/District Attorney	6.9	7.8
Judge	7.4	7.2
Victim advocate	5.7	2.0*
Someone else	8.9	8.0
No person was helpful	36.0	~
No person was unhelpful	~	40.3
Victim did not provide response	3.3	2.7*
Number of victims	1,359,060	1,359,060

Note: Details sum to more than 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

~Not applicable.

\*Based on 10 or fewer sample cases.

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The Bureau of Justice Statistics is the statistical agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Michael D. Sinclair is deputy director.

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