

Recent Stats Show Trends in Stalking

Stalking Victimization, 2019

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Stalking was defined as repeated unwanted contacts or behaviors that caused the victim to experience fear or substantial emotional distress or would cause a reasonable person to experience fear or substantial emotional distress in the Stalking Victimization 2019 report. In 2019, an estimated 1.3% (3.4 million) of all U.S. residents age 16 or older were victims of stalking. This was a statistically significant decrease from 2016 (1.5%) that was largely driven by a decline in stalking with technology only, from 1.3 million victims in 2016 to 1.1 million in 2019. In comparison, the number of victims of traditional stalking only or both traditional and technology stalking did not change significantly during this period.

Findings are based on the 2019 Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey. This report details the characteristics of stalking victimization, including the victim-offender relationship, self-protective actions taken by the victim, patterns of reporting to police, whether the victim contacted a victim service provider after the victimization, and demographics of victims. Below is a summation of the findings.

About 1.3% (3.4 million) of all persons age 16 or older were victims of stalking in 2019.

The percentage of persons who experienced stalking declined from 1.5% in 2016 to 1.3% in 2019.

Less than a third (29%) of all stalking victims reported the victimization to police in 2019.

In 2019, females (1.8%) were stalked more than twice as often as males (0.8%).

In 2019, an estimated 67% of victims of both traditional stalking and stalking with technology were fearful of being killed or physically harmed.

Most (67%) stalking victims knew their stalker. Victims of both types of stalking in 2019 were more likely to be stalked by an intimate partner (35%) than victims of only traditional stalking (11%) or only stalking with technology (18%).

Victims of both stalking types were more than twice as likely to have applied for a restraining, protection, or no-contact order as victims of traditional or technology stalking only.

In 2019, about 16% of all stalking victims sought victim services and 74% of the victims who sought services received them.

Two-thirds of victims of stalking with technology received unwanted phone calls, voice messages, or text messages in 2019. The most frequently reported traditional stalking behaviors in 2019 included the offender following and watching the victim (58%) or showing up at,

riding by, or driving by places where the offender had no reasonable business being (49%).

Nearly 42% of victims of traditional stalking said the offender harassed their friends or family for information on their whereabouts. Almost a third (31%) of traditional stalking victims said the offender waited for them at home, school, or another place. More than a fifth (22%) said the offender left or sent unwanted items.

In 2019, less than a fifth (17%) of victims said that the offender snuck into their home, car, or another place to let them know the offender had been there.

Stalking with technology victims most commonly received unwanted phone calls, voice messages, or text messages (66%) in 2019, followed by unwanted emails or messages via the Internet (55%).

About 32% of victims of this type of stalking said their activities were monitored using social media. Twenty-nine percent experienced the offender posting or threatening to post inappropriate, unwanted, or personal information about them on the Internet.

Twenty-two percent of stalking with technology victims said the offender spied on them or monitored their activities using technologies such as listening devices, cameras, or computer or cellphone monitoring software. About 14% were tracked with an electronic tracking device or application.

Increasing shares of all victims stalked did not think police could do anything to help and grew from 27% to 33% from 2016 - 2019, while the percentage of traditional stalking victims citing this reason rose from 21% to 39%.

This study gives the most up-to-date understanding of stalking and was released in 2022. The full report, including demographics, questionnaires, tables, and analysis can be found at the U.S. Department of Justice / Office of Justice Programs / Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin / February 2022, NCJ 301735. The link is <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/sv19.pdf>.