

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS

SAFETY TIPS TO DEAL WITH A STALKING SITUATION

Stalking occurs when a person willfully and knowingly commits acts that cause harm, including following and harassing another person, repeatedly causing that person to have reasonable fear of death or bodily harm. Aggravated stalking is when a person commits the act of stalking and causes bodily harm, property damage or confinement, or breaks the provisions of a bond or violates a protective order requiring the person to keep from contact with the victim and/or the victim's immediate family members. Stalkers count on the fact that victims will be too frightened or embarrassed to get help. Stalking is a CRIME! DOCUMENT IT and REPORT IT to the POLICE.

- **If you are threatened by anyone, take it seriously.** Listen carefully and record the incident. Share the information with a trusted friend, family member, coworker or supervisor.
- **Call 911 if the person gives you reason to believe your life or property are in imminent danger.**
- **To make arrest and prosecution more likely,** document every incident as thoroughly as possible, including collecting/keeping videotapes, audiotapes, phone answering machine messages, photos of property damage, letters received including envelopes to show postmarks, objects left, affidavits from eyewitnesses, notes and messages left on social networking sites directed toward you. Experts also recommend victims keep a journal to document all incidents, including time, date, and other relevant information for each.
- **In the presence of a trusted witness, tell the stalker to stop any kind of personal contacts.** Send a registered letter you have signed in the presence of a notary.
- **Have an unlisted phone number and caller ID on your phone and do not answer any number that you do not know.** Keep a cell phone handy.
- **Cancel or avoid social networking sites** (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.) and inform friends and family to not place pictures and general and contact information about you on their sites.
- **Keep physical evidence** if notes are left on your vehicle, your office desk or on the door of your home. Do not remove them until you have a witness to accompany you. Note in your journal the placement of the note and presence of the witness.
- **Call your police community resource officer to request a home security check.**
- **Provide coworkers, office security, neighbors and family members with the stalker's description or picture and a description of the stalker's vehicle, if you have one.** Inform these individuals of your encounters with the stalker. Record information on the encounters as well as whom you have alerted.
- **When coming to or leaving work, always walk with other employees.** If you must leave earlier or later than normal, call security or a coworker for an escort. Keep family and friends informed of your whereabouts.
- **Take a self-defense course.** These courses can assist you with assertiveness and resources.