



STALKING IN OHIO 2004

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STALKING IN OHIO

What is stalking?

Similar to other states' laws, the Ohio Revised Code statute 2903.211 characterizes stalking as engaging in a pattern of conduct that knowingly causes a person to believe that he or she will be physically harmed or will endure mental distress. Stalking in and of itself is considered a crime. The victim and the offender do not have to have a relationship or even know each other in order for stalking to occur.

OIBRS data on stalking

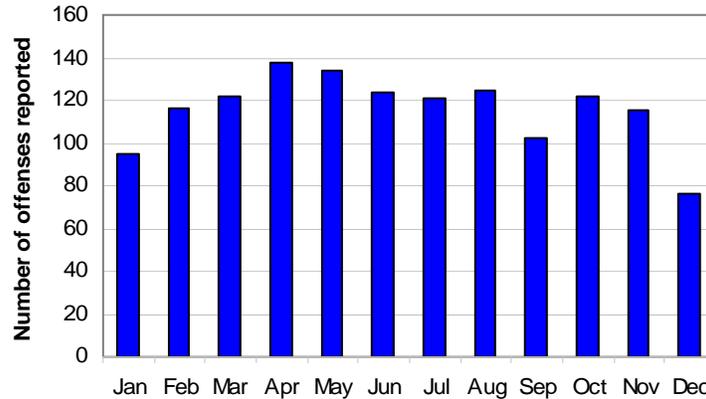
One tool that can be used to examine stalking in Ohio is the Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System (OIBRS). OIBRS is a voluntary crime reporting program in which Ohio law enforcement agencies can submit crime statistics directly to the state and federal government in an automated format. Currently, 270 agencies covering approximately 54 percent of the Ohio population are reporting OIBRS data. The use of OIBRS data allows for detailed information to be obtained on the nature of the offense, the victim, the suspect/arrestee, weapon use, and property involved.

OIBRS data are used in this report on stalking. However, some limitations must be noted. Because reporting for Ohio is incomplete, caution should be used in interpreting the findings reported in this paper, as the data may reflect more the composition of the OIBRS-reporting jurisdictions than the composition of the state as a whole. Additionally, because the number of agencies submitting OIBRS data increases yearly, no annual comparisons can be made with the data.

Characteristics of stalking

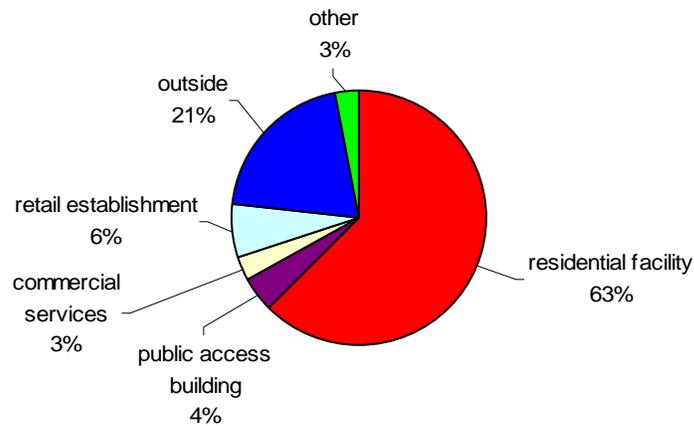
In 2004, Ohio OIBRS agencies reported 1,390 cases of stalking¹. Stalking incidents in 2004 tend to be lower in the winter months, but not consistently so.

Stalking Offenses per Month



The majority of stalking incidents were reported as occurring at a person's residence; however, incidents were reported in numerous public areas as well.

Stalking by Location



¹ Stalking incidents used in this report fall under ORC 2903.211 (menacing by stalking) and 2903.214 (petition for protection order to protect victim of menacing by stalking). 98.5 percent of incidents in this report fall under ORC 2903.211.

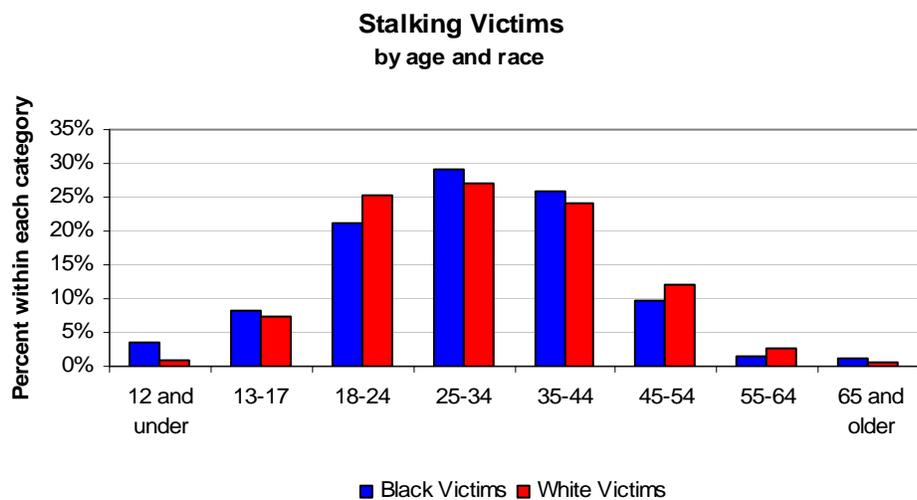
Generally, stalkers did not use or display any sort of weapon. Sixty-two percent of incidents included information on the use (or nonuse) of weapons. Of these incidents, 91 percent involved no weapon and six percent reported the use of personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.).

Characteristics of victims

Of the stalking victims for whom age information is known, the data indicate that more than 76 percent of victims fall between the ages of 25 and 44.

Victim Age	Percent within Category
12 and under	1.7%
13-17	7.5%
18-24	23.9%
25-34	27.7%
35-44	24.7%
45-54	11.4%
55-64	2.4%
65 and older	0.7%

Nearly 85 percent of victims were female. Slightly more than two-thirds of victims were White, 32 percent were Black, and less than one percent were Oriental/Pacific Islanders. Similar breakdowns emerged when Black and White victims were compared within each age grouping.



Based on police reports, it is difficult to say with certainty how frequently victims incur physical injury by their stalker. Although 67 percent of victims reported no physical injury and less than one percent reported an apparent minor injury, more than 31 percent of victim reports had no information regarding injury (i.e., the question was left blank). The police report does not assess the extent to which emotional or psychological injury may have occurred.

Suspect characteristics

Of the suspects for whom demographic information is known, more than three-fourths (76 percent) of stalkers were male. Sixty-four percent of stalking suspects were identified as White, 35 percent were identified as Black. As with the victims, the majority of stalkers fall within the ages of 25 and 44.

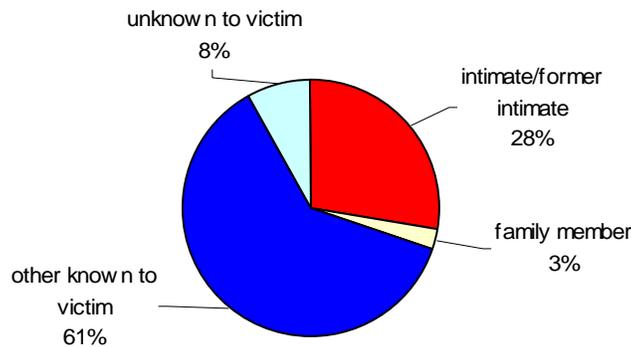
Suspect Age	Percent within Category
12 and under	0.2%
13-17	2.3%
18-24	23.4%
25-34	29.3%
35-44	26.3%
45-54	13.1%
55-64	4.2%
65 and older	1.3%

When the age groups were examined by gender, the data showed a slightly higher percentage of female stalking suspects than male suspects under age 25, 30 percent vs. 25 percent, respectively.

Victim-Suspect Relationship

Of the cases for which relationship data are known, the data show that stalking victims nearly always know their stalker — only 8 percent of victims reported not knowing who their stalker was. Approximately 30 percent of known stalkers were an intimate or former intimate (current or former boy/girlfriend, common-law spouse, or spouse). Within the “other known” category, 51 percent were identified as acquaintances, 42.3 percent were identified as “other known,” 3.7 percent were neighbors, and 2.1 percent were friends.

Victim-Suspect Relationship



Breaking down the victim-suspect relationship data into gender categories revealed that 32 percent of female victims (out of all female victims) had an intimate/former intimate stalker, whereas 23 percent of male victims (out of all male victims) had an intimate/former intimate stalker. Overall, of the total intimate/former intimate stalking relationships reported by males or females, 88 percent had a female victim.

Intimate/Formal Intimate Partner Stalking Cases by gender

