



STALKING IN OHIO – 2014

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What is stalking?

Similar to other states' laws, the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) statute 2903.211, Menacing by Stalking, 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. It is important to note however that stalking can be masked and charged as other crimes such as criminal trespass, burglary, or domestic violence, especially if the pattern of behavior has not been established for law enforcement. This report details the characteristics of stalking specific to ORC 2903.211.

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. At the end of 2014, 550 agencies covering approximately 75 percent of the Ohio population were 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.

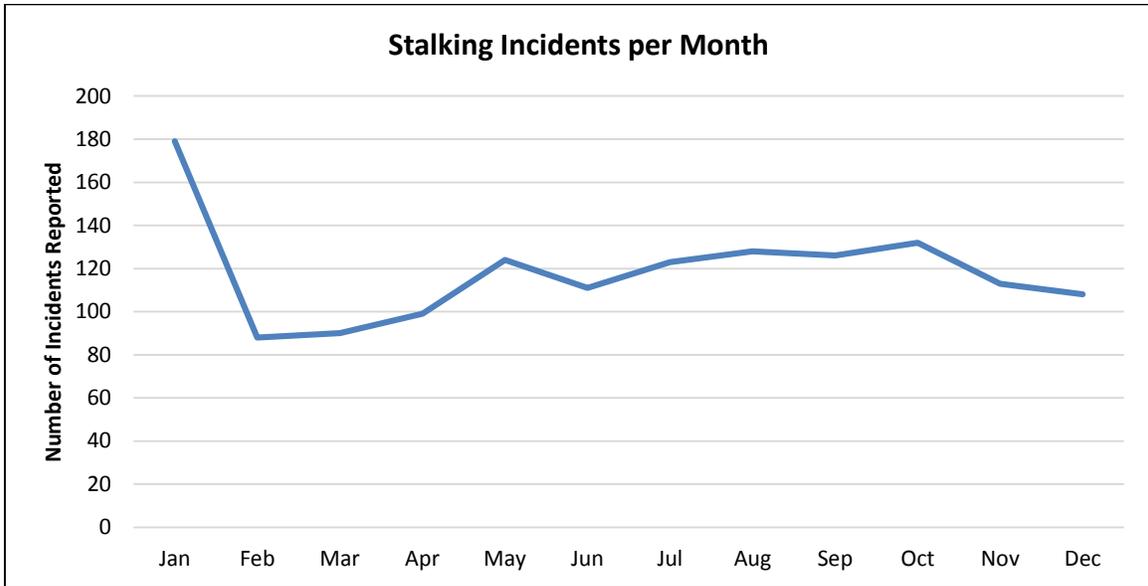
OIBRS data are used in this report on stalking. However, some limitations must be noted.

- 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.
- Because the number of agencies submitting OIBRS data increases yearly, no annual comparisons can be made with the data.
- Not all victims choose to report incidents of stalking to law enforcement. Thus, what is reflected in this document are only those incidents that have been reported to police.
- Incidents are often reported that contain missing information (e.g., demographic information) on the victim, the suspect, the victim-suspect relationship, or the particular circumstances of the incident. In this report, statistics are only provided for those instances in which complete information is available.

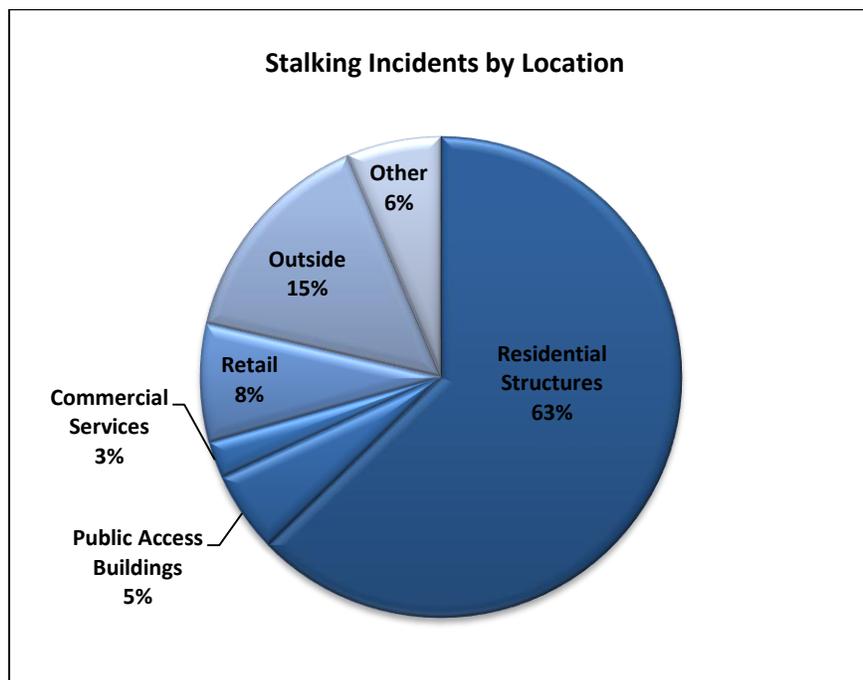
Readers are cautioned against using the statistics contained in this report as a basis of comparison with other states or other years of data.

Characteristics of Stalking

In 2014, the Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System agencies reported 1,356 incidents of stalking. The greatest number of incidents were reported in January.



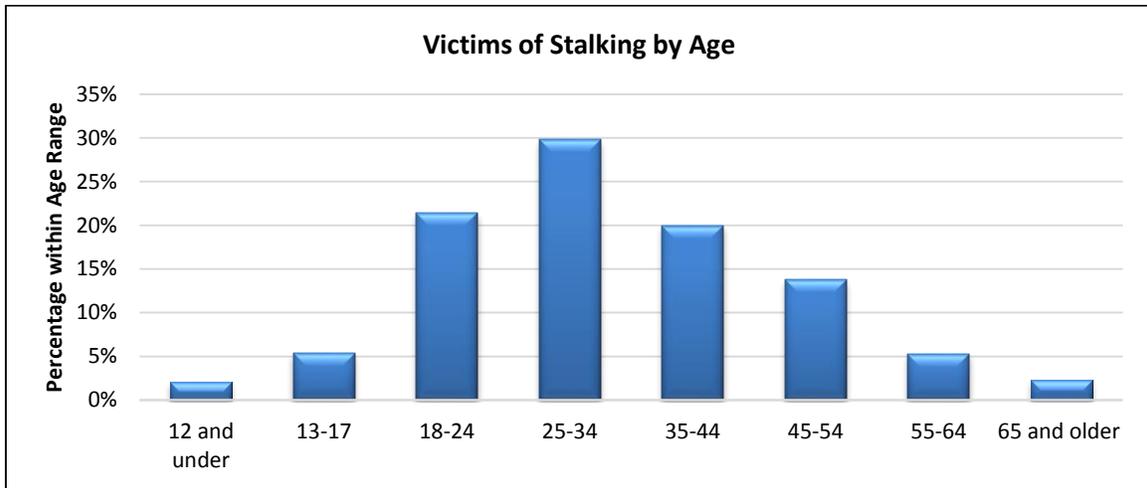
The majority of stalking incidents were reported as occurring at a person's residence; however incidents were reported in numerous public areas as well. Forty-four percent of stalking incidents were reported to have occurred in single-family homes, 10 percent on the street, and two percent of all stalking incidents occurred specifically at schools or colleges.



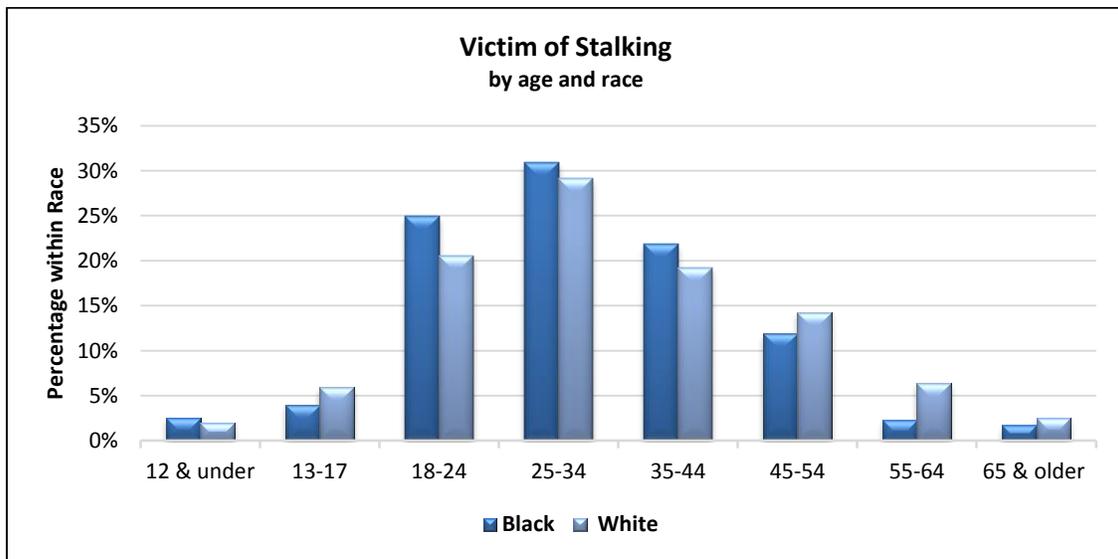
Generally, stalkers did not use or display any sort of weapon. Of those incidents where weapon information was reported, 83 percent involved no weapon and eight percent reported the use of a personal weapon (hands, fists, feet, etc.).

Characteristics of Victims¹

Ninety-four percent of stalking incidents involved a single victim. The average age of stalking victims was 33.2 years and approximately 51 percent of victims were between the ages of 18 and 34 years.



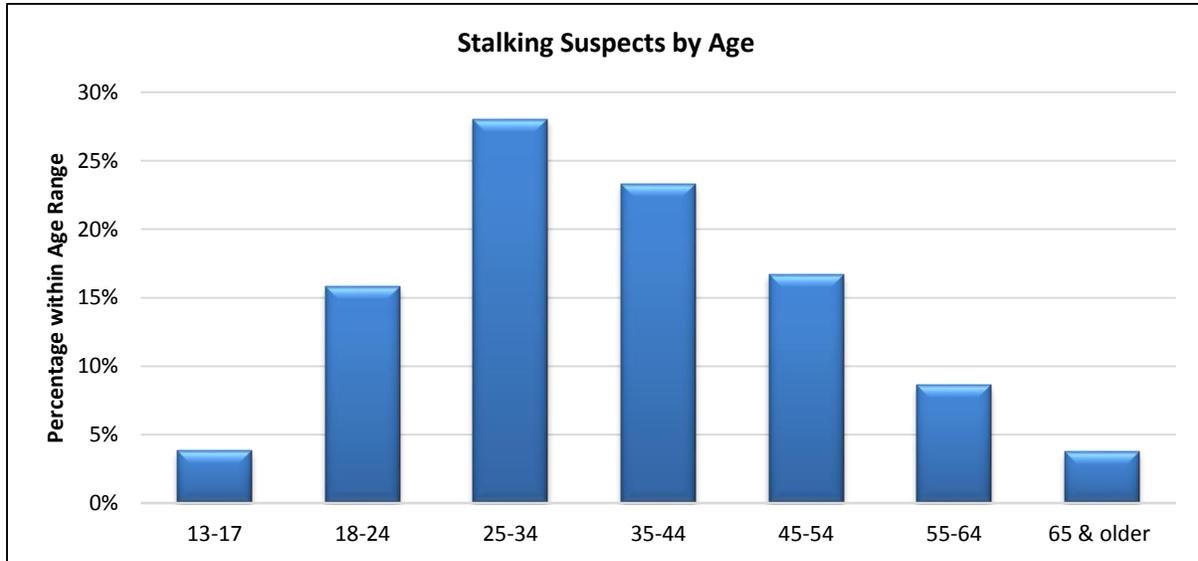
Eighty-one percent of victims were female. About 74 percent of victims were White, 25 percent were Black and less than one percent fell within the 'Other' category. White females made up 75 percent of all female stalking victims and White males made up 69 percent of all male stalking victims.



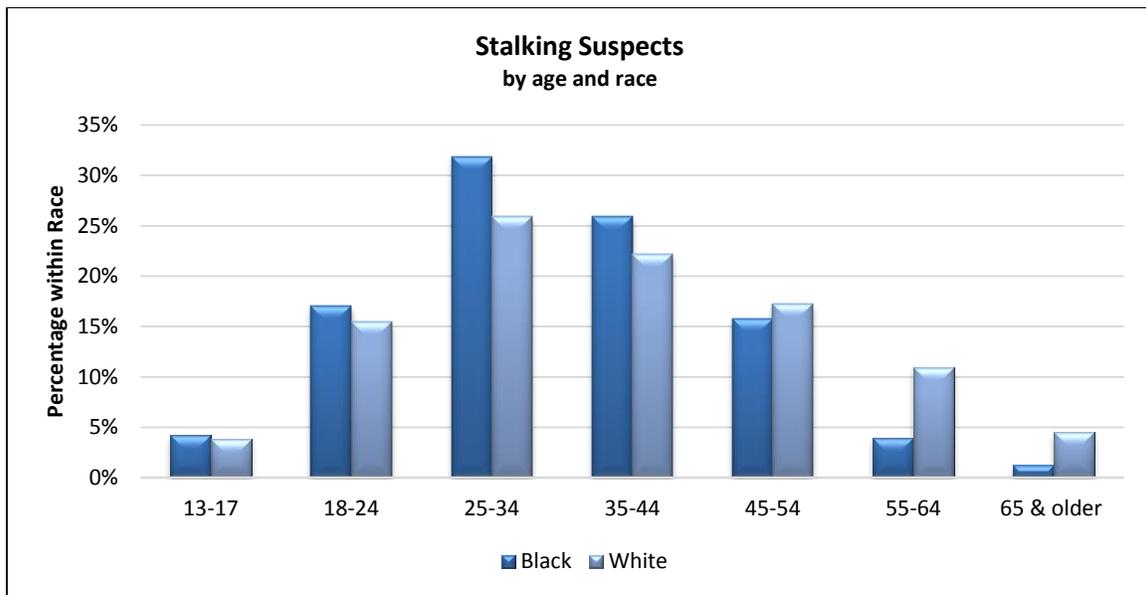
¹ The victim data are based on those victims for whom the information was provided or known. There were instances in which a victim's age, race, sex and/or relationship data were not available.

Suspect characteristics²

Of the suspects for whom demographic information is known, 79 percent of stalkers were male. Fifty-one percent of stalkers fell within the age range of 25 and 44 years.



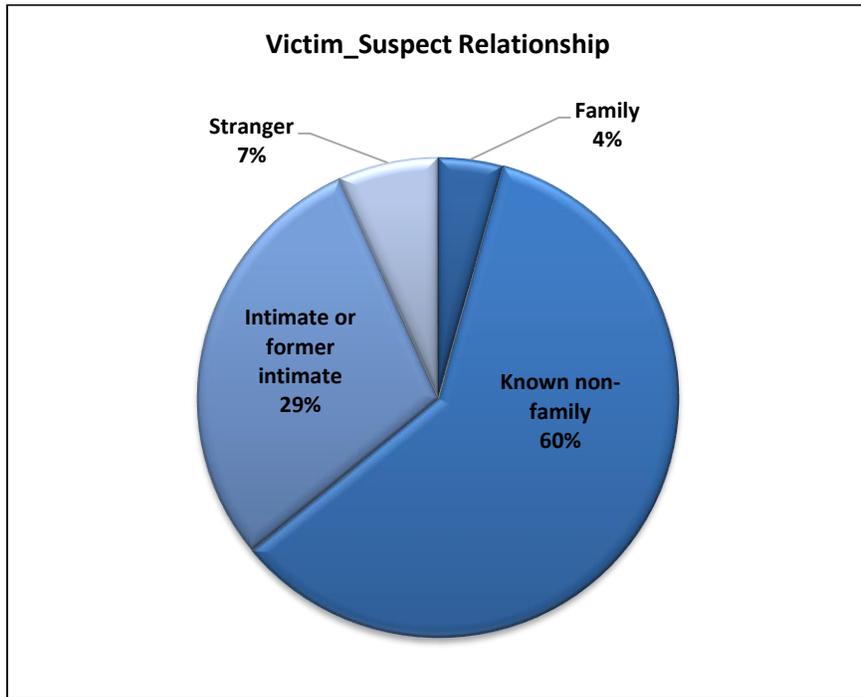
Sixty-six percent of stalking suspects were White and 33 percent were Black. Eighty-eight percent of Black victims reported a Black suspect as their stalker and 86 percent of White victims reported a White suspect as their stalker.



² The suspect data are based on those suspects for whom the information was provided or known. There were instances in which a suspect's age, race, sex and/or relationship data were not available.

Victim-Suspect Relationship

Of the single-victim/single-suspect cases for which relationship data was known and reported (approximately 90 percent), the data show that stalking victims nearly always knew their stalker – only seven percent of victims reported the stalker as a stranger. Approximately 29 percent of known stalkers were an intimate or former intimate (boy/girlfriend, homosexual partner, common-law spouse, or current or former spouse). Within the ‘known non-family’ category, 57 percent were identified as acquaintances, 33 percent were identified generically as ‘otherwise known’, five percent were neighbors and four percent were friends.



Breaking down the victim-suspect relationship data into gender categories revealed that 29 percent of female victims (out of all female victims) had an intimate/former intimate stalker, whereas 13 percent of male victims (out of all male victims) had an intimate/former intimate stalker.

