



## **STALKING IN OHIO 2007**

### **Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services**

1970 W. Broad Street, 4th Floor

Columbus, Ohio 43223

Toll-Free: (800) 448-4842

Telephone: (614) 466-7782

Fax: (614) 466-0308

[www.ocjs.ohio.gov](http://www.ocjs.ohio.gov)



**OHIO DEPARTMENT  
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## STALKING IN OHIO

### What is stalking?

Similar to other states' laws, the Ohio Revised Code 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. Currently, 480 agencies covering approximately 64 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.

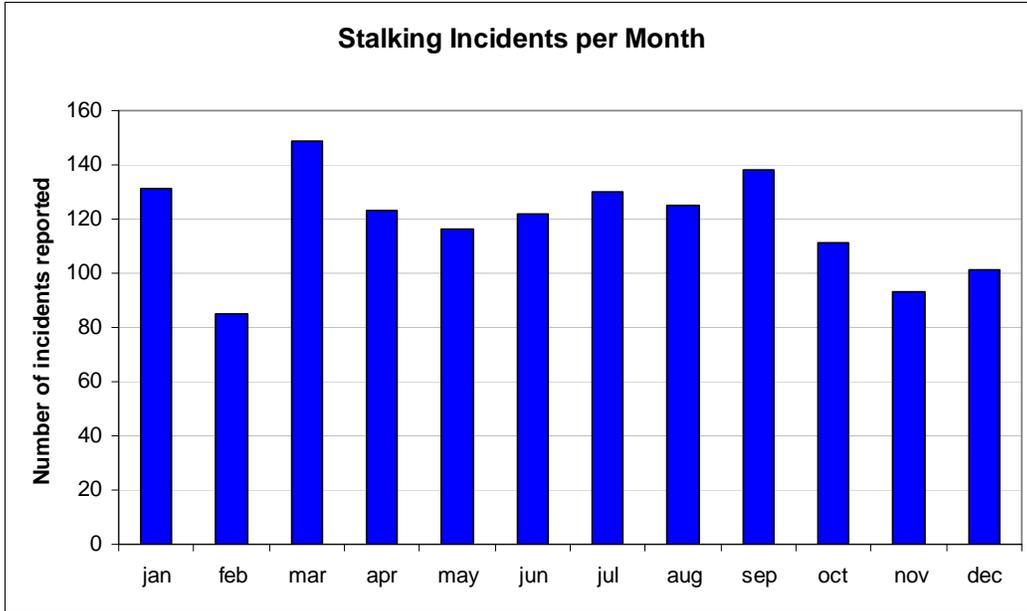
OIBRS data are used in this report on stalking. However, some limitations must be noted.

- 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.
- 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, or the victim-suspect relationship. In this report, statistics are only provided for those instances in which complete information is available.

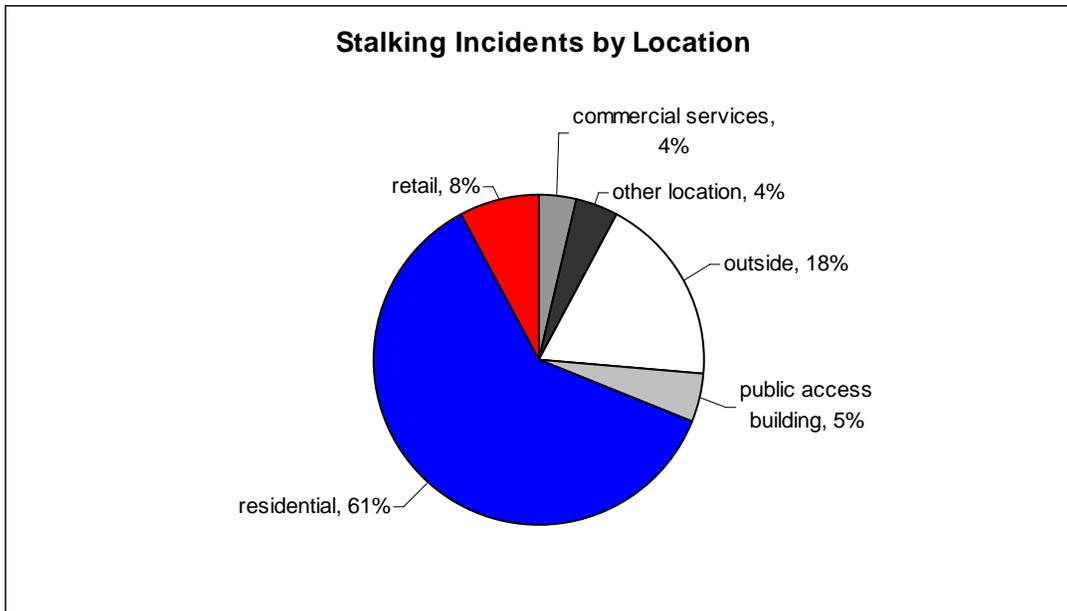
Readers are cautioned against using the statistics contained in this report as a basis of comparison with other states or other years of data.

## Characteristics of stalking

In 2007, Ohio OIBRS agencies reported 1,424 incidents of stalking. Stalking incidents in 2007 tended to be lower in the winter months, but not consistently so.



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 at schools and colleges made up 2.4 percent of all incidents.



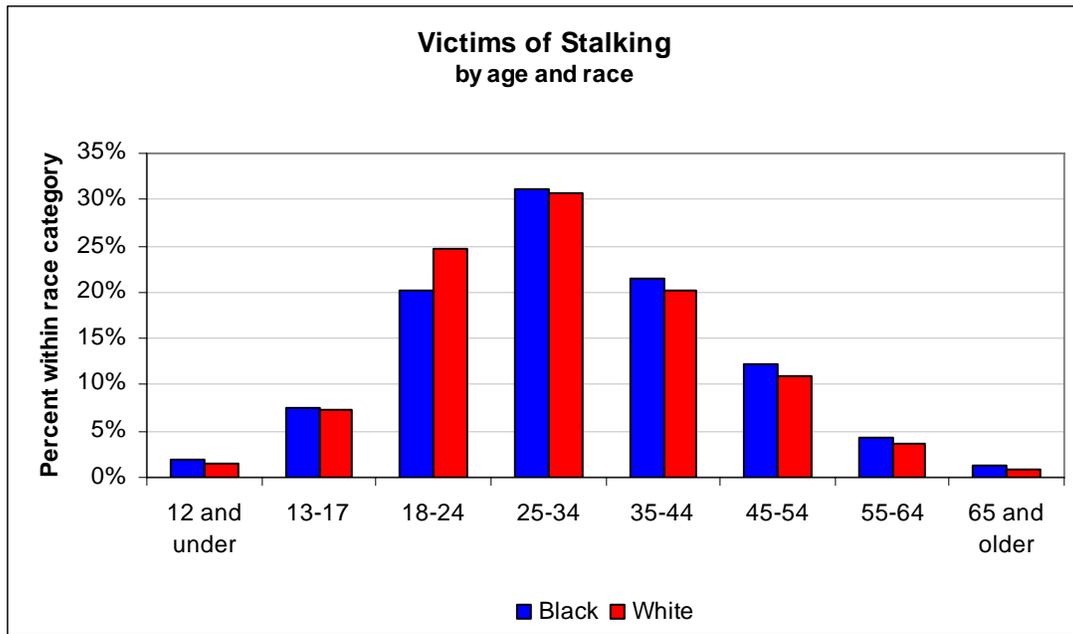
Generally, stalkers did not use or display any sort of weapon. Seventy-nine percent of incidents included information on the use (or nonuse) of weapons. Of these incidents, 90 percent involved no weapon and eight percent reported the use of personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.).

### Characteristics of victims<sup>1</sup>

Over 90 percent of stalking incidents involved a single victim. Seventy-five percent of victims fall between the ages of 18 and 44.

Victim Age	Percent
12 and under	1.9%
13-17	7.3%
18-24	24.3%
25-34	30.4%
35-44	20.3%
45-54	11.1%
55-64	3.7%
65 and older	1.0%

Over 81 percent of victims were female. Three-fourths of victims were White, 24 percent were Black, and less than one percent fell in the ‘Other’ category. Similar breakdowns emerged when Black and White victims were compared within each age grouping.



<sup>1</sup> 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.

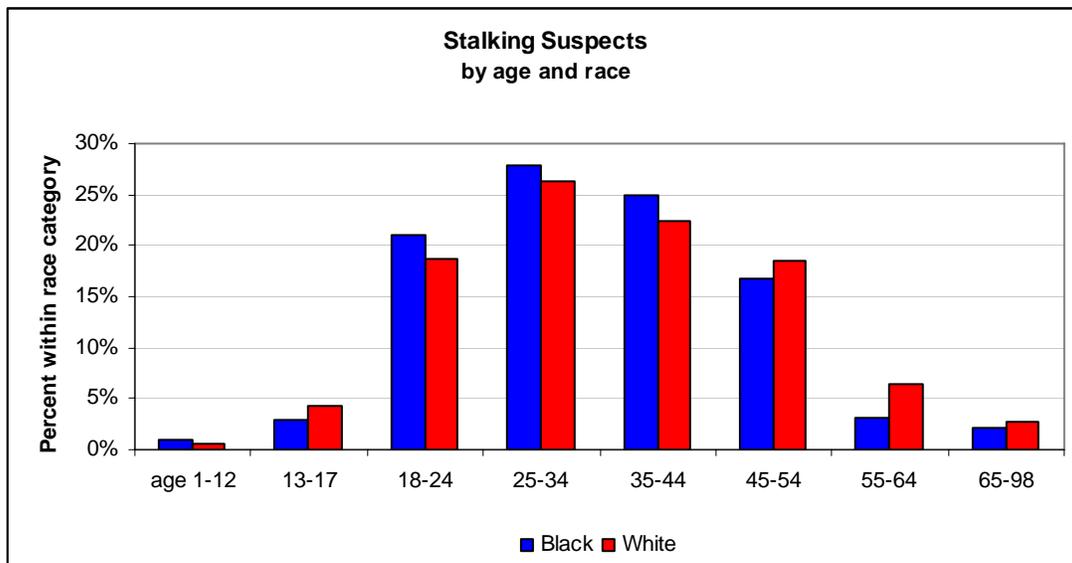
Based on police reports, it is difficult to say with certainty how frequently victims incur physical injury by their stalker. More than 32 percent of victim reports had no information regarding injury (i.e., the question was left blank or was reported as unknown). Of the 68 percent for whom injury information was reported, over 99 percent fell under the category ‘none’ (i.e., no injury). The police report did not assess the extent to which emotional or psychological injury may have occurred.

### Suspect characteristics<sup>2</sup>

Of the suspects for whom demographic information is known, nearly 80 percent of stalkers were male. As with the victims, the majority of stalkers fell within the ages of 18 and 44. Between the ages of 13 and 34, however, the percentage of female stalking suspects was higher than the 20 percent average.

Suspect Age	Percent
12 and under	0.8%
13-17	4.1%
18-24	19.9%
25-34	26.7%
35-44	22.8%
45-54	17.8%
55-64	5.4%
65 and older	2.5%

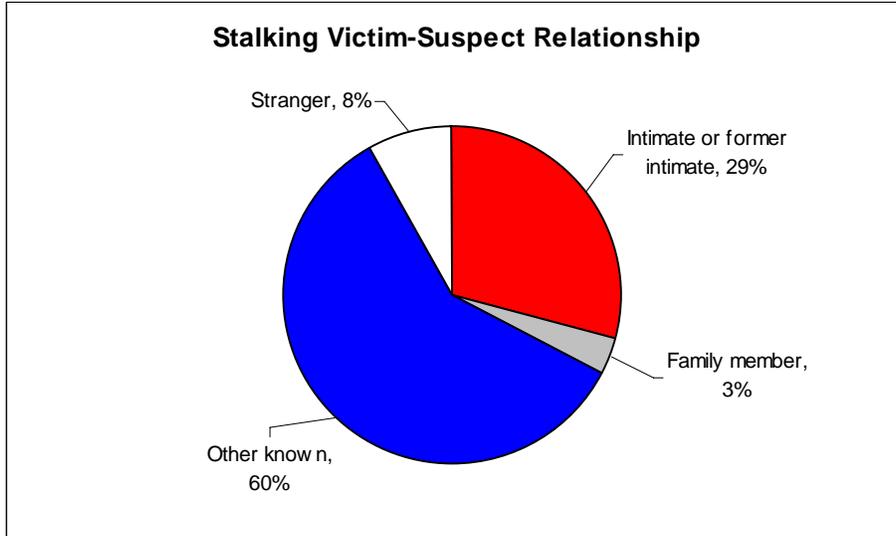
Nearly 70 percent of stalking suspects were White and 30 percent were Black.



<sup>2</sup> 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 cases for which relationship data was known and reported (approximately 88 percent of all incidents), the data show that stalking victims nearly always knew their stalker — only eight percent of victims reported the stalker as a stranger. Approximately 32 percent of known stalkers were an intimate or former intimate (boy/girlfriend, common-law spouse, or current or former spouse). Within the ‘other known’ category, 54 percent were identified as acquaintances, 36 percent were identified as ‘other known’, five percent were neighbors, and three percent were friends.



Breaking down the victim-suspect relationship data into gender categories revealed that 35 percent of female victims (out of all female victims) had an intimate/former intimate stalker, whereas nearly 19 percent of male victims (out of all male victims) had an intimate/former intimate stalker.

