

Ego Surf. Put your first name and last name in quotes in a search engine and see if there are any results regarding you. You just might be surprised at what you find.

Be very cautious about putting any pictures of yourself online anywhere or allowing anyone else to publish any photos. Some stalkers become obsessed because of an image. A random e-mail address or screen name is simply much less attractive to most obsessive personalities than a photograph.

Stalking End Results:

- Victims are commonly injured, beaten, as well as mentally and emotionally battered from the abuse of stalking.
- Victims often feel law enforcement did little or nothing to help them with their stalker.
- Stalking violence may even result in death.

Stalking in Montana

A person commits the offense of stalking if the person purposely or knowingly engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person and knows or should know that the course of conduct would cause a reasonable person to:

- Fear for the person's own safety or the safety of a third person
- Suffer other substantial emotional distress.

Course of conduct defined

Means two or more acts, including but not limited to acts in which the offender directly or indirectly, by any action, method, communication, or physical or electronic device or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, harasses, or intimidates a person or interferes with a person's property.

Important Numbers:

Stevensville Police Department

406-777-3011

Ravalli County Sheriff's Office

406-375-4060

Non-Emergency Number

406-363-3033

Ravalli County Attorney

406-375-6750

SAFE 24-Hour Crisis Hotline

406-363-4600

Stalking and the signs of Danger

Stevensville Police Department

102 Main St. Ste D

Stevensville, Mt 59870



Typical Stalking Behaviors

- Repeated telephone calls to home or offices, including hang-ups.
- Unsolicited letter writing.
- Unsolicited e-mail messages.
- Unsolicited text messages.
- Unsolicited electronic pages.
- Unsolicited sending or leaving gifts.
- Nots on cars or residence.
- Surveillance behavior, both on foot and in a car.
- Driving past your residence
- Unexpected appearances at places you frequent, such as stores, classrooms, etc.
- Contacting your friends, family or co-workers.
- Searching public and private records to gain personal information.
- Vandalism (residence, car, personal possessions).
- Entering your residence to move things or steal personal items.

Helpful Strategies

Documentation

- Maintain a log/journal/record of all incidents or events.
- Keep all correspondence (letters, notes, e-mails, voice mails).

Responding

- If the offender is known, cease all contact.
- If the offender is known, consider obtaining an Order of Protection.
- If the offender is unknown, do not respond to any attempts by the offender to make contact.

Making Reports

- Immediately report all incident to law enforcement.
- Keep law enforcement informed as to all new events or incidents.

Retain Support

- Inform family, friends, co-workers, etc.
- Do not run, jog, or walk alone.
- Utilize all available resources.

Change Behaviors and Routines

- Make an effort to always be alert and to always be aware of your surroundings.
- Vary your routine. Change your route to and from work, school, etc.
- Have your keys in hand and check inside the car before entering.

Protecting Privacy

- Make sure you have caller I.D. on your phone.

- Secure your residence – replace locks, install window and sliding glass locks, install large peepholes.

On-Line Tips

Always select a gender-neutral username for your email address or for chat, etc.

Don't fill out profiles – When you sign up for your email account, whether it's through your ISP or a free one, fill out as little information about yourself as possible.

Do block or ignore unwanted users. When you are in a chat room, always check out what options are available to you and take advantage of the “Block all users except those on my buddy list” or adding unwanted usernames to an ignore list on chat.

Watch what you say online. When you do participate online, be careful. Only type what you would say in person. If you wouldn't say it to a stranger standing next to you in line, do not say it online.

Signature Files. If you use a signature file for all of your e-mail messages, newsgroups, posts, etc., make sure you know what information is in there. Check to be sure you are not giving out your full name, address, and phone number.