



Auburn Police Department



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stalking Awareness Info from Auburn Police

January is National Stalking Awareness Month. The Auburn Police Department would like to take this opportunity to share potential warning signs that a stalking incident may be occurring. There are strategies and safety plans that can be implemented that will help combat this pervasive issue. In 1990, California became the first state to enact a specific stalking law. Since that time, all 50 states have enacted stalking laws.

According to State of Maine law, a person is guilty of stalking if:

“The actor intentionally or knowingly engages in a course of conduct directed at or concerning a specific person that would cause a reasonable person:

- (1) To suffer serious inconvenience or emotional distress;
- (2) To fear bodily injury or to fear bodily injury to a close relation;
- (3) To fear death or to fear the death of a close relation;
- (4) To fear damage or destruction to or tampering with property; or
- (5) To fear injury to or the death of an animal owned by or in the possession and control of that specific person.”

Violation of this paragraph is a Class D crime.

"Course of conduct" means 2 or more acts, including but not limited to acts in which the actor, by any action, method, device or means, directly or indirectly follows, monitors, tracks, observes, surveils, threatens, harasses or communicates to or about a person or interferes with a person's property. "Course of conduct" also includes, but is not limited to, threats implied by conduct and gaining unauthorized access to personal, medical, financial or other identifying or confidential information.

"Close relation" means a current or former spouse or domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, stepchild, stepparent, grandparent, any person who regularly resides in the household or who within the prior 6 months regularly resided in the household or any person with a significant personal or professional relationship.

"Emotional distress" means mental or emotional suffering of the person being stalked as evidenced by anxiety, fear, torment or apprehension that may or may not result in a physical manifestation of emotional distress or a mental health diagnosis.

"Serious inconvenience" means that a person significantly modifies that person's actions or routines in an attempt to avoid the actor or because of the actor's course of conduct. "Serious inconvenience" includes, but is not limited to, changing a phone number, changing an electronic mail address, moving from an established residence, changing daily routines, changing routes to and from work, changing employment or work schedule or losing time from work or a job.

Stalking Warning Signs:

- Following or constantly showing up wherever you are.
- Sending unwanted gifts, letters, cards, or emails.
- Damaging your home, car, or other property.
- Monitoring your phone calls or computer use i.e. hacking into your social network sites.
- Using technology, like hidden cameras or global positioning systems (GPS), to track your whereabouts.
- Driving by or hanging out at your home, school, or work.
- Threatening to hurt you, your family, friends, or pets.
- Finding out about you by using public records or online search services, hiring investigators, going through your garbage, or contacting friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers.

Emotional Warning Signs:

- You feel vulnerable, unsafe, and unsure who to trust.
- You feel anxious, irritable, or on edge.
- You are having feelings of depression and hopelessness.
- You are having trouble focusing on work or have feelings of stress.
- You are having trouble eating and sleeping.
- You are experiencing feelings of frustration with family, police, and others around you.

Stalking is unpredictable and dangerous. No two stalking situations are alike. If you - or someone you know - may be in danger of stalking, tell a trusted adult or friend. Modify your social networking accounts to limit access to your information. Change your cell or home phone number.

Alert your local authorities and/or contact an outreach center near you:

- Auburn Police Department - 60 Court St. Auburn, ME 04210 – Phone (207) 333-6650
- Lewiston Police Department - 171 Park St. Lewiston, ME 04240 – Phone (207) 513-3001
- Androscoggin County Sheriff's Dept - 2 Turner St. Auburn, ME 04210 – Phone (207) 784-7361
- Maine State Police, Troop B - 1 Game Farm Rd. Gray, Maine 04039 – Phone (207) 657-3030
- Safe Voices - Administrative Office - P.O. Box 713 Auburn, ME 04212 – Phone (207) 795-6744 or email: info@safevoices.org, 24 hrs hotline 1-800-559-2927.

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