

RECORDING INCIDENTS & COLLECTING EVIDENCE



Please note: all the advice contained within these information sheets is general, and we strongly urge anyone experiencing stalking to contact us directly for tailored advice and risk assessment. We also recommend that you seek independent legal advice regarding civil or family law issues.

If you ever feel threatened or unsafe call the Police immediately on 999.

We strongly advise that you do not delay making a report to the police, or undertake any action for the sole purpose of collecting evidence – this can be extremely dangerous.

We often advise that victims of stalking keep a log of incidents and collate any evidence that they may have, this is for several reasons. Foremost, if you wish to make a report to the police or take civil legal action then this log will help you demonstrate that what is happening to you constitutes a course of conduct, and also show the impact it is having on you; secondly many victims find that recording what is happening to them can help them cope emotionally as they don't have to worry about remembering things if they do report, it may also help stopping rumination and anxiety about what is happening.

Please remember that you do not need to have made a log, or have collected evidence in order to make a report to the police – it can help make the situation clearer to them, however the police only need to have a reasonable belief that a crime has taken place in order to investigate, they do not need to be presented with definitive proof.



www.stalkinghelpline.org
advice@stalkinghelpline.org
f facebook.com/suzylamplughtrust
t [@live_life_safe](https://twitter.com/live_life_safe)



Information about your stalker

If you know, record the following information about who is stalking you:

- **Name**
- **Date of Birth / age**
- **Address / contact details**
- **Occupation**
- **Place of work or study, and other places they frequent (such as a gym, local pub, etc)**
- **Physical description (hair colour and style, facial features, height, build, ethnic origin)**

Recording Incidents

If you are able to it is useful to record as many incidents as you can from the beginning of your contact with the person who is stalking you – don't worry if you can't remember every detail, but a history of what sort of incidents happen and how often is helpful for any police or civil action and can form the basis of your statement.

Whenever there is an incident, as soon as practicably possible record the following information:

- **Date and time**
- **What happened – in as much detail as possible**
 - If it was a physical incident (such as following or approaching you, any face to face communication, or any incident of violence / attempted violence)
 - Record exactly where it happened
 - Do you know if the area is covered by CCTV?
- **Any evidence**
 - Such as call records, physical evidence, screen shots of messages or online behaviour
 - Were there any witnesses? For example - if it was a physical incident was anyone with you or nearby? Were your work colleagues around when you received an email or message?
- **Did you contact the police?**
 - If yes, what did they do?
 - What reference number did they give you?
- **How did this incident make you feel?**
 - Were you frightened, anxious or worried by the incident?
 - Record here whether there are any hidden messages or particular significance to this incident – for example, if a tweet referenced something only you could know, if an incident happened on an anniversary, or if there is a veiled threat, message, or other reference which only you would understand.

- **Has anything changed, or have you had to change anything as a result of this incident?**

- For example, changing your route to work, seeing your GP for support, blocking them on social media etc

- **Has this impacted any children, or anyone else – such as family, friends, or colleagues?**

Some people find it easier to keep their log electronically or to record the impact of the incident in an audio or video diary – if you choose to do this ensure the device you are using is secure and your stalker has never had access to it. If you think there is any possibility that your stalker may have compromised your devices or online profiles do not use them until you are confident that they are secure. For more information please see our advice sheet on Personal & Digital Safety.

Collecting Evidence

It is not the responsibility of the victim to investigate the crime they are subjected to or collect all the evidence necessary, but given the nature of stalking much of the evidence is only available to the victim so it can be helpful to ensure it is preserved. If a suspect is arrested on suspicion of stalking the police have additional powers of investigation – such as seizing their devices for evidence of communications – however it is still important to preserve evidence where you can.

- **Don't delete any messages, emails, or voicemails**

- Be aware that your voicemail service may automatically delete messages after a set period of time – check this and if possible remove the auto-delete function
- Some people find it helpful to set up a rule to automatically divert emails to a specific folder so they don't have to read them or see them in their inbox when they arrive – if you do this we advise that you or a trusted friend or family member may wish to read them periodically in case they contain any threats or anything concerning
- Save emails to an external hard drive if possible
- Check what happens to previous messages if you block someone – they may disappear, so ensure you take screenshots before blocking them
- On some platforms someone can still send messages if they are blocked, which you can then see if you unblock them. Some people decide to periodically unblock their stalkers to collect evidence, but you will need to weigh up the risk of doing this against the need for evidence. This may be action you wish to take with the support of the police or other professional – please contact us for more detailed advice.

- **Take screenshots of any social media or other online behaviours**

- The most secure way of storing digital evidence is on an encrypted external hard drive which is kept in a secure place, however some individuals may choose to use cloud storage or email screenshots to themselves. Please be aware that cloud storage has inherent insecurities, even with robust passwords, and this should be considered when deciding where to save your evidence.

- **If there is physical evidence (such as letters or gifts) handle it as little as possible (using gloves if you can), and place things in clean, new plastic bags or containers sealed with tape if necessary. If evidence is perishable (such as flowers) take pictures, ensuring you show any notes or important details.**

Below is a suggested log layout, with an example of how you might wish to complete it. Every situation is different and there may be other aspects of your experience that you wish to record, or you may want to document what is happening in another way. Please contact us for tailored advice if you are unsure how best to create a log.

Evidence Log

Date & time	Location (if relevant)	What happened?	Any evidence?	Did you contact the police? What did they do? Reference no.?	Impact of this incident	Changes as a result of this incident	Impact on children or others?
Example: Monday, 6th January 2018, 3pm.	Example: Sam contacted my sister on Facebook messenger.	Example: Sent a message asking my sister to get me to contact him, saying I owed him money and was telling lies about him.	Example: Jade still has the message and has taken a screenshot – she emailed it to me and it’s saved on my laptop and in the cloud. Jade has also saved it securely on her NAS drive.	Example: No.	Example: Jade is angry. I feel he’s trying to turn my family against me to manipulate me. I don’t feel it will ever end. I’m scared of what might happen when he realises I’m not going to contact him and Jade doesn’t reply.	Example: Jade has increased her privacy so he can’t message her again, I’ve asked the rest of my family to block him.	Example: Jade’s kids (13 & 15) have had to block him too – so we’ve had to explain a bit about what’s going on and they are worried.
Example: Wednesday, 8th January 2018, 1.30pm.	Example: Sam turned up at my office.	Example: Reception called up saying someone was here to see me – I wasn’t expecting anyone. I asked what he looked like and they described Sam. I said I wouldn’t see him because he’s my ex and is difficult. Sam refused to leave – he shouted at the receptionist that I was a “lying whore” and shouldn’t be allowed to work with money because I’m a thief. Reception called security to remove him.	Example: There is CCTV (without audio) of him in reception, and both the receptionist (Dave Hubbard) and security guard (Neil Davies) have made detailed incident reports at work about what happened. The CCTV footage has been saved at work on their network storage system.	Example: Yes – reported to 101 and given a reference of 4756/8th Jan. Told an officer would contact me to take a statement.	Example: My boss is supportive but said she can’t have people coming into the building behaving like that. I’m embarrassed and scared I won’t be able to keep working there if he continues. What if he waits for me after work? I’m so scared of him, he seems to be getting more and more angry and I don’t know what he’ll do next.	Example: I’ve spoken to security at work who are very supportive and won’t let him into the building again. I’ve talked to colleagues about leaving work together so I feel safer, but I don’t feel safe at work now.	Example: Dave was quite shaken by this as Sam was really shouting at him – he said he was worried he would hit him for not getting me to see him.

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