

Workplace Stalking

A Guide
for
Criminal Justice
Professionals

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Foreword

For thousands of criminal justice professionals, daily contact with suspected, alleged, and convicted criminals is routine. There is, however, an aspect of being an employee in the criminal justice system that many professionals do not plan or prepare for. They do not realize that there is a strong possibility that they themselves may become victimized by a criminal's stalking behavior, at any and all stages of their criminal careers.

A career in the criminal justice system requires a close association with a diverse group of people. Even though police officers, county detention officers, prosecuting attorneys, and state correctional employees are each in contact with an offender at different points during the process, one must realize that the likelihood of an offender exhibiting stalking behaviors towards one of these employees is highly probable, and is becoming an increasingly recognized problem in jurisdictions across the country. Alleged offenders and convicted criminal can become obsessed with the person who arrested them initially, prosecuted their case, or the person who presides over them during their incarceration or supervises them in the community. This obsession can be perpetuated through a variety of delusions ranging from an offender's belief that the stalking victim is in love with them to the belief that the victim deserves to be punished for what they did to the offender.

Even though stalking legislation has existed in the United States since 1991, few human resource managers can identify how many stalking cases have been encountered in their organizations over the past decade. Even more disturbing is the fact that many human resource managers confuse the crime of stalking with sexual harassment.

In some cases, the stalking begins in the workplace and follows the victim outside the workplace. In other cases, the stalking begins outside the workplace and follows the victim into the workplace. Regardless of how stalking invades the workplace, the critical lesson to be learned is this: Taking action against the stalking behaviors earlier rather than later can prevent elevated degrees of psychological trauma, violence, and, in some cases, murder of the direct victim and other workplace victims.

Stalkers manifest a consistent set of behaviors. These are the red flags of stalking which should prompt an early intervention. To ignore or dismiss these red flags is to court problems—and even disaster.

Stalking can lead to costly legal proceedings against employers. Today's companies and agencies are spending as much as \$100,000 a year in premiums for employment practices liability insurance, which covers the various forms of

harassment, including stalking. Most midsize companies are taking out policies having \$1 million to \$25 million in coverage, for which they pay premiums of \$5,000 and more annually. The typical deductible is \$25,000. The reality is that few present-day businesses and organizations can escape unscathed from such lawsuits. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 60 percent of companies have been targets of at least one employment practices liability lawsuit in the past five years. (Schell, B., and N. Lanteigne. 2000. *Stalking, Harassment, and Murder in the Workplace*, p. 8-9). It can be reasonably assumed that stalking cases will consume increasingly larger portions of these claims since stalking is now a criminal offense and there is now a greater awareness and recognition by society of the devastating impact of stalking behaviors.

The self-centered and destructive nature of stalking can no longer be tolerated. The goal of this guide is to inform agencies and organizations and criminal justice workplaces about the perils of stalking so that they will become motivated to take preemptive action against this crime. This is the bottom line: Modern-day workplaces cannot afford to ignore the stalking problem or its high economic and human resource costs. The critical question that this book attempts to raise and provide some answers for is: Will agencies and organizations and criminal justice workplaces be ready to effectively and efficiently deal with stalking cases within their walls or that follow their employees outside the workplace should such events arise?

This Guidebook is the result of a project begun by the South Carolina Department of Corrections. The project brought together criminal justice and victim service professionals from several different agencies and organizations across the state and the continuum of criminal justice and community services. The focus of the project Advisory Group was to identify the critical issues involved in workplace stalking and develop a Guidebook to provide information and recommendations for effective response to workplace stalking of criminal justice professionals. This document is the result of their commitment, expertise and input.

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Section 4: Stalking in the Workplace

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 1 million individuals become victims of violent crime while working or on duty each year. A half million employees miss 1.8 million days of work each year due to violence, resulting in more than \$55 million in lost wages, not including days covered by sick and annual leave. Eight percent of all rapes, seven percent of all robberies, and 16 percent of all assaults occur at work. About 10 percent of all workplace crimes involve offenders with handguns. Workplace violence accounts for 15 percent of the more than 6.5 million acts of violence experienced by individuals age 12 and over.¹

Experts agree that violent episodes at work, no matter what the degree of injury, can have a significant adverse effect on employees resulting in elevated stress levels, fear, and reduced productivity. The problem is widespread. Workplace violence has gotten out of hand because far too many human resource and management professionals either do not understand the depth of the workplace violence problem, or they are in denial. Far too many working adults just do not believe that workplace violence will happen to them. Stalking and other forms of violence occur in workplaces everywhere. All organizational personnel can become unsuspecting targets of workplace violence.

Facts about Stalking in the Workplace

- Anti-stalking legislation exists in all 50 states and at the federal level, and organizational leaders must educate themselves about these laws.
- Employers can be held liable for damages resulting from their failure to prevent or minimize the risk posed by the crime.
- Stalking acts can become vicious and life-threatening.
- Many times violence potential red flags are present before tragedy strikes.
- Stalking targets and other workplace victims can experience a full range of negative outcomes, including psychological trauma, assault and murder.
- Any organizational member can become the target of a relational or revenge stalker.

¹ Barab, J. (1995). Workplace violence: How labor sees it. *New Solutions*, 5, p. 4-14.

- The sooner that the stalking problem is nipped in the bud, the greater the chances are that havoc resulting from stalking can be reduced.

Many businesses, agencies and organizations are failing to identify or are continuing to deny that stalking behavior is present within their workplaces. Some of these employers in denial might be held liable and accountable for the property damage, psychological damage, and physical damage that ensues from this and other workplace violence.²

As an awareness of the crime of stalking has grown in the late 1990s, cases have, increasingly, been reported by both men and women employed in a number of professions. These have included working adults in mental health,³ health care,⁴ business and education,⁵ and government and legal affairs.⁶

Statistics collected in the United States over the past decade indicate that stalking can be vicious and life-threatening. Of those adults who are stalked, personal violence is the outcome from 3 percent to 35 percent of the time. Most forensic science experts suggest that violence occurs a significant 20 percent to 35 percent of the time in the convicted stalker population.⁷

In an ongoing study at the University of Louisville in Kentucky, researchers Feldmann, Holt and Hellard have been examining workplace attacks in the United States and in four Canadian provinces. Their findings indicate that the violence outcomes associated with stalking in workplaces may be higher than recent forensic science statistics seem to suggest. According to these researchers, stalking acts, in general, resulted in workplace violence a significant 44 percent of the time, while in facilities where people are confined, in particular, stalking acts resulted in workplace violence a significant 67 percent of the time.⁸

While one study estimates that the worldwide murder rate from stalking incidents is about 2 percent⁹, other experts warn that this estimate may grossly underreport the problem. For example, Feldmann, Holt, and Hellard note that recently in U.S. and Canadian medical facilities, as organizational cases in point,

² Lawless, P. (1993). *Fear and Violence in the Workplace*. Minneapolis: Northwestern National Life Insurance Company.

Cole, T. (1999). All the rage. *Report on Business Magazine*, 15 (8), 50-57.

³ Romans, J.S, Hays, J.R., and White, T.K. (1996). Stalking and related behaviors experienced by counseling center staff members from current or former clients. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 27 (6), 595-599.

⁴ Feldmann, T.B., Holt, J. and Hellard, S. (1997). Violence in medical facilities, a review of 40 incidents. *Journal of the Kentucky Medical Association*, 95 (5), 183-189.

⁵ Lawless. (1993).

⁶ Tam, P. (June 21, 1997). Woman charged with stalking lawyer. *Ottawa Citizen*, p. C1.

⁷ Meloy, J.R. (1998). *The Psychology of Stalking: Clinical and Forensic Perspectives*. San Diego: Academic Press.

⁸ Feldmann, Holt, and Hellard. (1997), p. 183.

⁹ Meloy, J. R. (1998).

after stalking incidents took place, hostage-taking events later occurred about 12.5 percent of the time, and murder later occurred about 90 percent of the time.¹⁰

Even more alarming from an organizational point of view, emphasize Feldmann, Holt, and Hellard, is the finding that in 90 percent of these violence-outcome cases, clear warning signs were apparent to workplace managers and union leaders. If these red flags had been acted upon expeditiously and judiciously, these workplace tragedies may never have occurred. These researchers note: “Common indicators included bizarre or unusual behavior, reports of domestic violence, a history of complaints against the perpetrator lodged by patients or staff, and frequent disciplinary actions. **The frequency of warning signs implies that many of these incidents could have been prevented if appropriate steps had been taken earlier.** [Emphasis added.]¹¹

Other researchers caution that it is highly possible that current guesstimates on the incidence of stalking in workplaces are only reflective of the tip of the iceberg. As is generally the case for personally intrusive, humiliating, and dehumanizing crimes (like sexual assault), for every personally intrusive stalking case that is reported to authorities, there are probably two other cases not reported.¹² Recent large-scale studies confirm that the underreporting of stalking seems to be especially great for same-sex and male targets.¹³

A fact that must be recognized is that any agency or organization employee can become a target of a relational or revenge stalker—even an inadvertent target. According to researchers, worldwide data suggest that the most likely intended target of violence (about 86 percent of the time) is either the “relational object” or the “revenge object,” and the second most common victims of violence are third parties preventing access to the target (like receptionists or security guards).¹⁴ Of course, it must also be recognized that there are two other potential categories of workplace victims of violence: innocent bystanders and the stalkers themselves (by suicide, murder-suicide, or attacks by others).

Employees who are being stalked by individuals who are also co-workers, whether they are prior intimates, acquaintances, or strangers, encounter a particularly difficult situation. When the stalker is a co-worker, he/she is provided ready access within the workplace to observe and approach the victim. Unless the stalker has been barred from the workplace, it is unlikely that anyone will question the stalker’s presence in the facility, and if the stalker chooses to

¹⁰ Feldmann, Holt, and Hellard. (1997). p. 185.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 188.

¹² Doerner, W.G., and Lab, S.P. (1998). *Victimology*. Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Company.

¹³ Tjaden, P. (November 1997). *The Crime of Stalking: How Big Is the Problem? National Institute of Justice Research Preview*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice and the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Policy Research.

¹⁴ Meloy, J.R. (1996). Stalking (obsessional following): A review of some preliminary studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 1, p. 147-162.

become violent, he/she has the ability to enter the work site, even in workplaces where security measures such as key cards and access codes are in place.

Within the workplace, stalking victims are commonly harassed via letters, e-mails, gifts, and phone calls. Common workplace stalking behaviors also include driving through the parking lot looking for the victim's car, and watching for the victim to enter and leave the workplace each day. If the stalker works within the same organization as the victim (internal), behaviors may extend to monitoring the victim's workstation, leaving gifts on the victim's desk, or taking "souvenirs" from the victim's belongings. The internal workplace stalker often has the ability to observe many of the workplace social interactions of the victim, and in some cases may even attempt to gain access to confidential personnel files to obtain more information about his/her target.

Agencies and organizations must take note of the personal costs of stalking, because stalking victims—direct targets and the targets' co-workers—can and often do suffer tremendously, and so does the bottom line for the workplace. The impact of stalking on the workplace can result in decreased productivity for the target/victims as well as their co-workers, bad press for the agency or organization if violence eventually results (and law suits), and a potentially devastating impact on the bottom line of the agency or organization.

Despite an increased awareness of the costs of stalking and the legal progress that has been made with the passing of anti-stalking legislation, workplace tragedies resulting from this crime continue to occur. More education on the red flags of stalking and improved policies on stalking and workplace violence are needed.

Section 5: The Impact of Workplace Stalking: The Victim's Perspective

Stalking victims often initially deny that they have a problem with the perpetrator. Once the stalking process is well under way, victims often naively feel that they can resolve the problem on their own—without outside intervention. Victims tend to remain silent because they are embarrassed that they are caught in the web of staking, they fear that they will be blamed for their stupidity by family members and co-workers, and they are intimidated by what the stalker will do next. Victims often naively think that they alone can make the problem go away, or that it will go away on its own.

There is little doubt that stalking has a tremendous impact on the lives of those who are targeted. Indeed, many victim service professionals contend that the threat of violence inherent in stalking cases can take a higher toll on its victims than those who have been victims of completed acts of violence. The following are signs of stalking-related stress: loss of sleep; weight loss; depression; anxiety, difficulty concentrating.

The 1998 *Stalking in America* study indicated that 30% of women and 20% of men in stalking cases sought psychological counseling as a result of the victimization.¹⁵ Moreover, many victims experience a loss of personal support systems at the very moment they need them most. Stalking victims often turn to family, friends, and co-workers for help, guidance, and emotional support. However, given the intractability of many stalking cases, victims often find that their friends, co-workers, neighbors, and even their family members are unable to sustain levels of long-term support.

Additionally, the economic security of stalking victims may be shattered as a result of their victimization. This study provides an empirical perspective indicating that 25% of stalking victims lost time from work as a result of being targeted and another 7% said that they were unable to return to work altogether. In some more egregious cases, victims have been fired by unsympathetic employers unwilling to accommodate special needs of victim employees.

It is important to assess the impact of the stalker's behavior on the victim. Stalking is a challenging crime to investigate and prosecute, and especially difficult for a victim to live through. The victim may be forced to alter his/her life and may experience physical, psychological, and emotional effects in order to cope with what the stalker is doing to them.

¹⁵ Tjaden, P., and Thoennes, N. (1998). *Stalking in America: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Questions to Ask

Has the victim recently?

- ✓ Changed residence or employment
- ✓ Installed a second phone line/changed their phone number
- ✓ Replaced/installed door/window lock(s) at residence
- ✓ Installed a home security system
- ✓ Requested escorts to and from car at work/residence
- ✓ Asked to have their phone calls screened at work
- ✓ Stopped going places previously frequented (restaurant, shops, gym, on-line chatrooms)
- ✓ Stopped going out at night
- ✓ Stopped leaving home unaccompanied
- ✓ Changed their daily routine (work hours, religious service attended)
- ✓ Begun carrying a personal protection device
- ✓ Bought a guard dog
- ✓ Sought psychological counseling
- ✓ Cut off contact with family, friends, acquaintances
- ✓ Closed old e-mail account/established a new account, log-in, or password

Does the victim feel?

- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Isolation
- ✓ Denial
- ✓ Guilt
- ✓ Anger or rage
- ✓ Aggression
- ✓ Paranoia
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Exhaustion
- ✓ Inability to trust
- ✓ Constant state of stress and hyper-awareness
- ✓ Pervasive sense of loss of personal safety
- ✓ Changes in sleeping and eating routines
- ✓ Lack of concentration and short-term memory problems
- ✓ Decline in work/academic performance
- ✓ Low self-image or self-esteem
- ✓ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

These are all normal responses for a victim of stalking to have. What a victim is feeling is real and what they are experiencing is never their fault

It is the constant presence of the stalker which unnerves the victim, particularly when a sudden appearance by the stalker reveals a knowledge of the victim's plans and movements which they had believed confidential. It is difficult to overstate the fear produced in most targets of stalkers simply by the repeated and intrusive contacts. It is often the perceived threat in the constant and escalating contacts which most discomforts the targets of stalkers.

Many of the victims of stalking say that the combination of repeated following, watching, and menacing intrusions into their life routines left them feeling chronically fearful and distressed. In one recent study of the impact of stalking on victims, some of the interviewed victims stated that they would have preferred a physical assault to the psychological trauma that they experienced. At least with visible wounds, these victims felt, they probably would have received more third-party empathy and readiness to intervene in the process.¹⁶

¹⁶ Pathe, M., and Mullen, P.E. (1997). The impact of stalkers on their victims. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 170, p. 12-17.

Section 6: Workplace Safety, Risk Management and Legal Liability

All stalking cases need to be taken seriously and dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Workplace safety concerns should never be ignored or minimized by management or other workplace personnel.

In assessing violence risk levels, law enforcement officers gather information on the following five areas:

1. Background information about the stalker and the target.
2. Stalking incident information.
3. Level of physical aggression expressed by the stalker.
4. Style and content of communications from the stalker.
5. Typing of the stalker.¹⁷

Law enforcement experts maintain that the target's risk level generally increases with the amount of stalking incidents, detailed knowledge of the victim, sexual comments, any show of a weapon(s), threats to injure, and delusional content in communications with the target. These experts caution that targets and other workplace personnel need to recognize that all stalking victims are at risk for personal safety. In short, all complaints of stalking must be taken seriously by law enforcement, employers, union leaders, co-workers, and family members.

When stalkers' intimidation and threats do not work with their targets (i.e., control has not occurred or the response the stalker desires has not occurred), they may increase their risk-taking propensity and become physically violent toward their targets. The stalkers may violently plan to assault, sexually assault, hold hostage, or attempt to kill their targets. But on the day of the planned high-risk exercise, things may not pan out as expected. Third parties may get in the way, blocking access to the targets. If such is the case, the stalkers may reason that the blockers have to be removed. At this point, the violence is transferred to the perceived blockers. The latter may be assaulted or killed—all in the hopes of getting short-term contact with and (the stalker hopes) long-term control over the desired target.¹⁸

Agency and organizational workplaces should seek advice from mental health experts on stalker case management. If mental health professionals or law

¹⁷ Wright, J.A., Burgess, A.G., Burgess, A.W., Laszlo, A.T., McCrary, G.O., and Douglas, J.E. (1996). A typology of interpersonal stalking. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 11, p. 487-502.

¹⁸ Proctor, M. (1998). Stalking: A behavioral overview with case management suggestions. *Journal of California Law Enforcement*, 33, p. 63-69.

enforcement agencies warn of a risk of violence, management must take prompt steps to effectively intervene in the process.

Stalking red flags are often present, and workplace personnel should be trained to recognize them. (See Section 7: Guidelines for Supervisors, Managers and Agency Heads.) The most dangerous strategy by agency or organizational employees, managers, supervisors, and union leaders for coping with the stalking problem is to minimize the stalking red flags or to ignore them altogether. According to stalking experts John Douglas and Mark Olshaker:

While it is predictable that a certain number of stalkers will follow the pattern to a violent end, nobody can say exactly what a given offender will do or when he [or she] will do it.... For some, it could take years before they grow violent. Still others may make threats, even confront their [target], then back off and stop their disturbing behavior for years, only to return when the [target] least expects it. **Experts may differ on their advice about how to treat stalkers, but the one thing upon which everyone agrees is that the unpredictability and the individuality of each case means that every one must be taken seriously.** [Emphasis added.]¹⁹

Without proaction, workplaces are left holding the “reaction bag.” Those workplaces that are hit by violence often quickly become motivated to take action against the problem of violence. Human resource professionals often quickly learn later rather than sooner that there is a better and safer way to do business. Far too many workplaces still do not have adequate violence prevention policies and plans in place.

Employers’ Legal Obligation to Provide a Safe Workplace

The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (Fed-OSHA) requires employers to provide employees with a place of employment which is “free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm ... to employees” [29 U.S.C. § 654 (a)(1)]. This includes the obligation to do everything reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety, and health of employees. Employers must take affirmative steps to prevent employee injuries. Employees may not sue their employers based solely on OSHA violations. Nonetheless, employers who fail to comply with OSHA may be fined by the government anywhere from \$25,00 to \$70,000 [29 U.S.C. § 666 (a)-(e)]. Criminal penalties may also be imposed [29 U.S.C. § 666 (e)].

An employer’s failure to eliminate serious hazards from its workplace has been recognized as a violation of OSHA’s General Duty Clause. For example, OSHA cited the employer for failing to furnish a workplace free from violence where

¹⁹ Douglas, J., and Olshaker, M. (1998). *Obsession*. New York: Scribner Books.

security measures were not taken to minimize or eliminate employee exposure to assault and battery by tenants of the apartment complex where they worked (*Secretary of Labor v. Megawest Financial, Inc.*, 1995). The Occupational Safety and Health Review commission found that workplace violence may constitute a General Duty Clause violation if four elements are established:

1. The existence of a hazard that poses a “significant risk” to employees.
2. Recognition of that hazard by the employer;
3. The hazard was likely to cause death or serious harm.
4. Feasible means existed to eliminate or materially reduce the hazard.

The duty to recognize an existent hazard may in part depend on the type of workplace and any historical association it may have with a risk of violence.

Premise Liability: Another Reason to Take Action Against Violence

Harvey and Cosier (1995) note that organizational leaders are motivated to take preventative action against workplace violence because they recognize the extreme costs associated with premise liability claims.²⁰ Briefly, premise liability risk is calculated on the likelihood that a workplace homicide could occur on site, based on past experience and workplace environmental conditions. Rather than face hefty claims, businesses and organizations need to protect their workplace personnel and visitors from harm.

The key aspect to premise liability centers on the employers’ taking reasonable measures to prevent workplace crime.²¹ One such measure is to train organizational personnel to recognize and safely avert workplace violence. Another is to encourage hiring and selection agents to employ legally and union-acceptable violence-propensity screening measures. The bottom line is that the U.S. courts hold workplaces liable for the injurious acts of its members if the employer has been derelict in using reasonable care to select its employees. The courts have determined that part of the employer’s overall duty is to maintain a safe workplace for its own employees and for members of the public.

Judicial Developments

There is a small but growing body of case law that addresses employer liability for workplace violence. Cases often turn on their specific facts. This is a developing area of the law, and there are few hard and fast rules. For the most part, however, injured employees and heirs of employees killed by workplace violence will be restricted to recovery through the workers’ compensation system.

²⁰ Harvey, M.G., and Cosier, R.A. (March 1995). Homicides in the workplace: Crisis or false alarm? *Business Horizons*, 38, p. 11-21.

²¹ Kahn, J. (1994). The premise behind liability. *Security Management*, 61-63.

Employees may succeed in avoiding workers' compensation preemption by alleging that the employer ratified its employee's violent behavior or that the violence resulted from the employer's intentional act.²²

²² Petty, R.A., and Kosch, L.M. (2001). Workplace Violence and Unwanted Pursuit: From and Employer's Perspective. *Stalking Crimes and Victim Protection*, ed. by J.A. Davis. New York: CRC Press, p. 462.

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South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy**

UNIT VII. STALKING AND LETHALITY / VICTIM AND OFFICER SAFETY

OFFENDER LETHALITY

Indicators that a batterer may use lethal violence against a partner:

- An offender who has threatened to kill himself, his partner, the children, or the victim's relatives must be considered extremely dangerous.
- Obsessive/Possessive beliefs. An offender, who is obsessive about his partner, idolizes them and feels he cannot live without them, or believes he is entitled to them no matter what, is more likely to perpetrate a lethal assault.
- Offenders who assault, mutilate, and/or kill pets are more likely to kill people.
- Violence towards children.
- Escalation of risky activities – When the offender begins to act without regard to the legal or social consequences that previously constrained his violence; chances of lethal assault increase significantly.
- Flagrant public violations of restraining orders, bond conditions, orders of protection, leaving recorded threats on answering machines, threats or violence made in public are all red flags.
- Flagrant disregard for religious sanctity. Appearing at her church in violation of an order to stay away. (Some victims have been killed in church.)
- Domestic violence history; Continuum of Violence Theory [A relationship that contains violence will increase in the severity and unless there is early intervention, the violence moves up a continuum until death occurs and removes either the victim or the perpetrator from the relationship. As time increases, violence also increases.]
- Expressed fantasies about how they are going to kill their victim or others.
- Openly discussing their domestic problems and what they think should happen to the victim for what they have caused (blaming victim) or speaking about what they are planning to do to the victim.
- Domestic violence that spills into the victims work. Suspect appears at work and acts out without regard for himself, the public or victims employment.

- A suspect who feels “betrayed” and has come to the conclusion that “its time to let go” because he/she has been betrayed may want to exact punishment for the betrayal.
- Expressed religious belief to justify their actions. (i.e. “It’s Gods will, etc.).
- Offender exhibits significant changes
 - Giving away property
 - Reviewing wills and last testaments
 - Statements of “End of days” coming

A TRUE PREDICTOR OF FUTURE VIOLENCE IS PAST VIOLENCE

Triggers for violence:

- Being served with divorce and/or restraining order papers or notice of hearings on these issues can act as a trigger for extreme violence. The victim and police should use extra safety precautions when papers are served or hearings are held.
- Being found to be a threat to the victim by a judge in a hearing for Restraining Orders or Orders of Protection.
- Consumption of drugs or alcohol when in a state of despair or fury can elevate the risk of lethality. They reduce inhibitions.
- Discovering or thinking that they have discovered that their ex-partner has a new relationship.

"If someone calls you 40 times and you relent and talk to him on the 41st call, if only to "clear the air" or "let him down gently", all you have told him is that 41 phone calls is the price of one conversation with you, and the obsessed individual will gladly pay that price."

---John Douglas, former head of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit

Section 7: Guidelines for Employees

The best way to avoid becoming a target is to think seriously about how easily you can become one. Don't wait until a situation gets out of hand to start planning for violence. That would be like searching for the water main in your house after a pipe breaks. Instead, recognize that the threat of violence always exists in the workplace.²³

As soon as a target of a stalker realizes that what is occurring is not normal, but is indeed stalking, he/she should seek early third-party assistance from professionals, law enforcement agents, employers, managers, supervisors, union leaders, or some other appropriate agent within the workplace for dealing effectively and judiciously with the problem and thwarting the stalker's efforts to make contact. Stalking targets are also encouraged to learn the red flags of violence-proneness.

Stalking Target Survival Tips

If any agency or organizational personnel thinks he/she could be a stalking target by an identifiable individual, here are four critical suggestions:

1. Act on instincts.
2. Identify the early subtle signs of privacy intrusion and stalking.
3. Vocalize clearly to the stalker early on in the stalking behaviors: "I want to be left alone. I want no contact with you whatsoever."
4. Educate others at work and at home about the stalking crime that is occurring.

Act on Instincts

Stalking targets must listen to their survival instincts. As Gavin de Becker, a leading violence assessment and violence prevention expert, says in his book, *The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals that Protect Us from Violence* (1997), fear can help break the obsession cycle early on. If the target has a hard time swallowing, feels anxious, or gets a sick feeling in his/her stomach when the obsessional follower appears on the scene, the fear instinct is kicking in. Often, compassionate, charismatic administrators and agency or organizational personnel are the first to deny such gut reactions. Stalking targets should listen

²³ Caudrom, S. (1998). Target: Human Resources. *Workforce*, 77, p. 44-52.

to the observations of onlookers, who can often identify an obsession far sooner than the target can.

Identify the Subtle Signs of Privacy Intrusion and Stalking

The obsession cycle is hard to identify for two reasons:

1. The stalker's behavior is often subtle early in the cycle of behaviors and goes unquestioned by the target.
2. The target tends to deny that this could be happening to him/her.

Targets and employers must stop minimizing stalking behaviors and recognize it as a power-and-control game. Stalking is not simply hero worship or puppy love, but a potentially dangerous game. These stalking red flags need attention:

- ✓ Chronic privacy intrusions at work and/or at home.
- ✓ A need for the stalker to be physically close and to frequently touch the target.
- ✓ Prolonged staring at the target without verbalization.
- ✓ Repeat and unwanted gift-giving.
- ✓ Ingratiation with the target's co-workers or family members.
- ✓ Chronic lying or excuse-making.
- ✓ Repeat questioning about how the target spends time and with whom.

(For more red flags, see Section 7: Guidelines for Supervisors, Managers and Agency Heads.)

Vocalize "No Contact" Early On

The target needs to vocalize to the stalker clearly and early on in the cycle, "I want to be left alone. I want no contact with you whatsoever." Actions must speak louder than words. Since interacting with the stalker only fuels the obsession, once an unequivocal message is delivered, the target should not meet the stalker, even for a few minutes. Agency and organizational personnel and family members need to understand the danger of allowing contact between the stalker and his/her target.

Educate Others About Stalking

Agency and organizational employees need to educate themselves, their family members and friends, their co-workers, and their workplace leaders about the signs, costs, and cycle of obsession, which begins with stalking—and can end in murder.

Self-Help for Stalking Targets

Legal, mental health, and law enforcement professionals have a number of pointers to help stalking targets escape from the web of stalking. Two main suggestions are:

1. Empowering oneself to proact against stalking by understanding the process and by intervening earlier rather than later to thwart violence-proneness by the stalker.
2. Seeking help from mental health experts and victim services professionals to start the healing process, should the stalking process be protracted.

Empower Yourself to Act Out Against Stalking

Those who feel that they may be the target of a stalker need to intervene in the process early. This intervention includes taking personal safety precautions; informing family and friends, and other workplace personnel about the stalking problem; and seeking assistance from law enforcement. These persons can form a support team to help the target develop a risk management plan.

Inform and Get Help from Third Parties

Although many targets feel awkward about informing others about their stalking problem, law enforcement experts consistently emphasize that the sooner that family members, employers, union leaders, and the police are told about the target's stalking incidents, the better it is—for everyone's safety.

Contact Law Enforcement for Assistance

Once the target informs the police about the stalking incidents, the police will likely open a file so that an ongoing record of the events can be kept and later used, if necessary, in legal proceedings.

The police caution targets not to destroy evidence left by their stalkers, such as notes, letters, photos, audiotapes, e-mail messages, and gifts. In all cases of relational and revenge stalking, the target should document and keep in a safe place a record of each incident—date, time, place, and event.

When the target approaches the police, he/she will likely be asked if the stalker has been clearly told that no further contact is wanted. Once the target has given

a clear and unequivocal message, should the stalker persist in trying to make contact (direct or indirect), the police need to be notified immediately. In no circumstances should the target meet with the stalker.

Develop a Personal Safety Plan

Stalking targets should give adequate attention to this option as soon as possible. Victim service professionals and law enforcement can provide assistance in safety planning. The plan should consider safety measures for home, work, school, shopping, exercising—whatever is a regular part of the target's life.

Safety plans should include such measures as:

- ✓ Giving a picture of the stalker (if available) to the police, work security, building superintendent, workplace personnel, family members, school officials, and neighbors, so they can recognize the stalker (should he/she appear in a restricted zone) and advise appropriate authorities of the stalker's presence.
- ✓ Varying one's schedule and routines to throw off the stalker and to make it more difficult for the stalker to make contact.
- ✓ Installing a telephone-screening device on work and home telephones to assist in identifying the stalker's calls.
- ✓ Carrying a cell phone at all times to place emergency calls.
- ✓ Installing security devices, alarms, and surveillance cameras at home and at work for additional protection.
- ✓ Planning and practicing office and home escape routes.
- ✓ Having extra cash on hand for emergencies and having a set of personal documents in a safe place.

Stalking Recovery Protocol

It is important that workplace stalking victims be reassured that they are not to blame for the problem. A stalking recovery protocol should be followed for every

workplace stalking victim. Consistent with the principles of crisis intervention, the stalking recovery protocol will often parallel that used by mental health professionals to help crisis survivors. The protocol in general terms will:

- Help the target define and address the problem situation.
- Help the target set limited, realistic action-oriented goals.
- Help the target develop a safety plan.
- Provide emotional support to the target. Refer the victim to a local domestic violence, rape crisis, or victim assistance program.
- Help the target increase self-image and control of the situation.
- Foster in the target as much independence and responsibility for personal actions as possible.
- Assist the victim in obtaining an order of protection, if necessary, and instruct her to carry it at all times, or refer the victim to a court advocate who can assist with protection order issues.

