

Stalking: How Netsafe can help

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Kia Noho Haumaru i te Ao Matihiko: Te Whaiwhai Ipurangi

He taonga te tangata - me tiaki i roto i te ao katoa.
People are precious - and must be protected in all spaces.

What is Stalking?

Stalking is a pattern of repeated and unwanted behaviour directed at a person that causes fear or distress. This can include both online and offline behaviour including contacting, monitoring, threatening, or harassing someone using technology or online platforms.

Netsafe may be able to offer advice and assistance in respect of stalking that takes place online or involves other digital technology.

From 26 May 2026
stalking is officially a
criminal offence and the
law will better protect
individuals.

Signs of Online Stalking

Online or digital stalking can be carried out by someone known to you (such as an ex-partner, family member, acquaintance, or hook-up) or someone you have only interacted with online. It often involves a pattern of behaviours such as:

-  Using messaging apps, social media, or email to send threatening, intimidating, or repeated unwanted messages.
-  Repeatedly contacting or following you across multiple online accounts or platforms.
-  Sending frequent unwanted friend requests or connection requests.
-  Repeatedly tagging or mentioning you online to pressure, monitor or intimidate you.
-  Posting or threatening to share private, harmful or humiliating information about you.
-  Creating fake accounts to contact you or impersonating you online to shame you and harm your relationships with others.
-  Using other people, including mutual contacts to monitor or access information about you.
-  Sending or sharing unwanted, abusive, or sexual content.
-  Sharing or threatening to share intimate images without consent ([refer to Netsafe's guide](#))
-  Using GPS, tracking devices, or spyware to monitor your location or activity.
-  Accessing or attempting to access your accounts without your permission.
-  Using technology to intentionally unsettle or confuse you or create a sense of being watched for example, controlling smart devices remotely.

A key feature of how stalking is defined in the new law is that it involves a pattern of behaviour on at least two occasions within two years rather than a one-off incident.

These behaviours are often used to maintain contact, exert control, or create fear, and may involve both online and offline stalking and other forms of violence.

Actions that might seem minor on their own can become intimidating, distressing, and harmful when they happen more than once. If someone's behaviour makes you feel unsafe, constantly watched, or on edge, that is important and should be taken seriously. Trust your instincts - the impact on you is what matters.

Impacts

Stalking can have serious and wide-ranging impacts. People may experience fear, confusion, hypervigilance, and anxiety. It can leave you constantly on edge, unsure of what might happen next, and can affect your sense of freedom, wellbeing, and ability to go about daily life.



Keeping Safe

Any form of stalking is not okay and is a crime. Responsibility sits entirely with the person doing the stalking. While it may feel unfair to have to protect yourself, there are steps that may help you feel more in control and support your mana whakahaere (authority and control over your environment), both online and offline. If the stalking is happening through digital technology, the following may help.

Keep a record of the stalking

Keep records of what's happening by saving screenshots, messages, or emails. This may help if you decide to report the behaviour to Netsafe or Police, now or later.



1. ADJUST YOUR DEVICE SETTINGS

- Consider muting, restricting, unfollowing, or blocking the person stalking you if it feels safe.
- Blocking may sometimes escalate behaviour, so it is okay to decide what feels safest for you.
- Review what you share publicly and which accounts you want to keep private, including limiting access to personal information.

Visit Netsafe for more information about [social media safety settings](#).



2. INCREASE YOUR SECURITY SETTINGS

If it is safe, consider increasing the digital security on your devices and accounts by:

- Using strong passwords or passphrases and changing them regularly.
- Turning on multi-factor authentication (MFA), **if the device receiving codes is secure**. MFA verifies identity using two or more factors, such as a password plus a phone approval, code, fingerprint, or face scan.

- Turning off location sharing where possible. This is when your device or app lets others see where you are in real time.

Increasing your safety settings can help give you more control.

Visit Netsafe or more information on:

- [keeping accounts safe](#)
- [securing home devices](#)



3. REPORT TO THE PLATFORM

Consider reporting harmful behaviour directly to the platforms where it is happening (e.g. Instagram or Facebook).

Visit Netsafe for more information on [reporting](#).



4. REACH OUT TO NETSAFE

Netsafe offers free, confidential help and advice for anyone experiencing online harm, including online stalking. We can:

- Listen to what is happening for you.
- Provide advice tailored to your situation.
- Work with platforms to help remove harmful or intimate content shared without consent.
- Help you understand your options under the Harmful Digital Communications Act (HDCA).

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We're here to help

If you or someone you know is being stalked online, contact us for advice and support:

☎ 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723)

💬 Text 4282

🌐 Visit netsafe.org.nz

The Law

The new law now recognises stalking as a serious criminal offence with stronger legal protections for victims. A person commits an offence when they carry out any specified act towards another person on at least two separate occasions within two years, knowing their behaviour is likely to cause fear or distress.

Protections and support:

- There is a maximum penalty of up to five years' imprisonment for someone who is found guilty of stalking.

You can apply for [restraining orders](#) or digital communications orders, even without a conviction.

- Evidence is treated carefully to support victims in court.

Need Some Support?

- **If someone is stalking you**, it's important to know you are not alone, and there's a range of support for you.
- **If you feel unsafe online or offline or are in immediate danger**, call Police on 111 (if you need Police but can't speak for fear of harm, you will be asked to press keys for emergency assistance). For non-emergencies, contact Police on 105 to report stalking or other concerns and get advice.



For information on stalking: [The Stalking Response Guide](#) (created by Aotearoa Free from Stalking) provides practical advice for people experiencing stalking, including online and offline behaviours. It includes how to recognise stalking, understand your rights, keep yourself safe, gather evidence, and access support services.



For support with online safety: including any of the steps in this guide – you can contact Netsafe for advice between 9am-6pm on weekdays.

Call 0508 638 723, text 4282, or visit netsafe.org.nz



If you are experiencing stalking within a family violence context, support is available.

Contact womensrefuge.org.nz 0800 733 843 and 2shine.org.nz 0508 744 633 are here to help you.



If you would like support from a takatāpui or rainbow support service, you can contact Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence

Visit: <https://kahukura.co.nz/>

If you would like support from an ethnic service provider, you can contact Shama Ethnic Women's Trust. Call 07 843 3810 or visit shama.org.nz

If you are a young person and want someone to talk to, you can contact Youthline.

Call 0800 376 633, free text 234, email talk@youthline.co.nz, or visit youthline.co.nz

**Kia noho
haumaru,
kia kaha.**

Stay safe, stay strong.



Keeping Safe

Any form of stalking is not okay, is a crime and the responsibility for it sits entirely with the person doing the stalking. It can feel unfair to have to protect yourself from someone else's harmful behaviour. However, if it is safe to do so, there are options which may help you feel more in control and support your mana whakahaere (authority, control over your own environment) in both physical and digital spaces. In respect of stalking which takes place online or by other digital means the following may be helpful.

1. Keep a record of the stalking

Keep a record of what's happening e.g. by saving screenshots or messages. This can be helpful if you choose to report it to Netsafe or the Police. Even if you're not ready to report now, having this information may support you if you decide to take action later.

2. Adjust your device settings

- Consider muting, restricting, or unfollowing the person stalking you.
- If it feels safe consider blocking them. In some situations blocking may escalate behaviour - it is ok to decide what feels safest to you.
- Consider what you share publicly and which accounts you'd prefer to keep private, including limiting who can view your personal information.

For more information on social media safety settings netsafe.org.nz/social-media-safety

3. Increase your security settings

If it is safe, consider increasing the digital security on your devices and accounts by:

- Using strong passwords or passphrases, and changing them often.
- Turning on two-factor authentication (2FA). 2FA is an extra layer of security for your online accounts. Instead of just entering a password, 2FA requires two types of confirmation to prove it's really you, for example a code sent to

your phone or face recognition. Only do this if you are certain the device receiving the code is secure and cannot be accessed by anyone else.

- Consider turning off location sharing (this is when your device or an app lets others see where you are in real time).

Increasing your safety settings can help give you some more control.

For more information on security settings see below.

netsafe.org.nz/online-safety-at-home/keeping-accounts-safe-with-online-security

netsafe.org.nz/online-safety-at-home/securing-devices

4. Report to the platform

- Consider reporting unwanted online behaviour directly to the platforms you are being stalked on (e.g. Instagram, Facebook). For more information on how to report to platforms refer to our social media safety guide: netsafe.org.nz/social-media-safety

5. Reach out to Netsafe

Netsafe offers free, confidential help and advice for anyone experiencing online harm – including online stalking.

We can:

- Listen to what is happening for you.
- Provide advice and support which is tailored to your situation.
- Work with platforms to try and help remove any personal or harmful content that has been posted in breach of a platform's terms and conditions. If non-consensual intimate content has been shared, this is often something we can assist with getting removed.
- Help you understand your options under the Harmful Digital Communications Act (HDCA). Once you make a report to Netsafe, we will do what we can to help resolve the issue.

If you or someone you know is being stalked online, contact us for advice and support:

0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723), text 4282 or visit netsafe.org.nz

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Posting or threatening to share private, harmful or humiliating information about you.



Creating fake accounts to contact you or impersonating you online to shame you and harm your relationships with others.



Using other people, including mutual contacts to monitor or access information about you.



Sending or sharing unwanted, abusive, or sexual content.



Sharing or threatening to share intimate images without consent ([refer to Netsafe's guide](#))



Using GPS, tracking devices, or spyware to monitor your location or activity.



Accessing or attempting to access your accounts without your permission.



Using technology to intentionally unsettle or confuse you or create a sense of being watched for example, controlling smart devices remotely.

These behaviours are often used to maintain contact, exert control, or create fear, and may involve both online and offline stalking and other forms of violence. Under the new law stalking is defined when the behaviours occur on at least two occasions within two years.

Actions that might seem minor on their own can become intimidating, distressing, and harmful when they happen more than once. If someone's behaviour makes you feel unsafe, constantly watched, or on edge, that is important and should be taken seriously. Trust your instincts - the impact on you is what matters.

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