In 2016, an estimated 1.5% of all U.S. residents age 16 or older (3.8 million persons) were victims of stalking. Stalking is repeated unwanted contacts or behaviors that either cause the victim to experience fear or substantial emotional distress or that would cause a reasonable person to experience fear or substantial emotional distress.

Types of stalking
An estimated 703,000 persons (0.3%) experienced traditional stalking only, and 1.3 million (0.5%) experienced stalking with technology only. About 1.8 million persons (0.7%) experienced both types of stalking.

The most frequently reported traditional stalking behaviors included the offender following and watching the victim (59%) or showing up at, riding by, or driving by places where the offender had no business being (52%). Sixty-seven percent of victims of stalking with technology received unwanted phone calls, voice messages, or text messages (67%), while 50% received unwanted emails or messages via the internet.

Characteristics of victims
Females were stalked more than twice as often (2.0%) as males (0.9%). The overall prevalence of stalking did not vary significantly by race or ethnicity. Persons ages 20 to 24 (2.3%) were stalked more often than persons age 35 or older. Divorced (2.8%) or separated (3.7%) persons were stalked more often than persons of all other marital statuses. Persons in households with annual incomes of less than $10,000 (2.8%) were stalked more often than persons in households with annual incomes of $10,000 or more.

Most victims of stalking (69%) knew their offender in some capacity. Victims were three times as likely to be stalked by ex-intimate partners (21%) as by current intimate partners (7%).

Stalking duration and frequency
Twenty-four percent of stalking victims said the stalking behaviors lasted 2 years or more. Stalking behaviors were still ongoing at the time of the interview for more than a quarter all interviewed victims. About 1 in 10 victims said it happened too many times to count.