

Kentucky

A variety of forms of street harassment are illegal in Kentucky, including verbal harassment, up-skirt photos, indecent exposure, following, and groping. Here are the laws and reporting procedures you need to know.

Verbal Harassment

There are three laws that can apply to various types of verbal harassment in Kentucky.

Disorderly Conduct in the Second Degree

[KRS Chapter 525, §60](#)

Kentucky's disorderly conduct law prohibits a person from being in a public place and engaging in threatening behavior or making unreasonable noise with the intent to cause a public inconvenience, annoyance, or alarm.

If a harasser is saying anything that makes you fear s/he will follow or harm you, or if the harasser is shouting and otherwise making loud noises, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Disorderly conduct is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, imprisonment for up to 90 days, or both.

Harassment

[KRS Chapter 525, §70](#)

Under Kentucky's harassment law, it is illegal for anyone to threaten or intimidate, harass, annoy, or alarm someone in a public place by making an offensively "coarse" statement, gesture, or display or by using abusive language.

If you're on the street, in a park, on a bus, or in another public place and someone makes a sexually explicit or inappropriate comment, vulgar gesture, or uses abusive language, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Harassment is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, imprisonment for up to 90 days, or both.

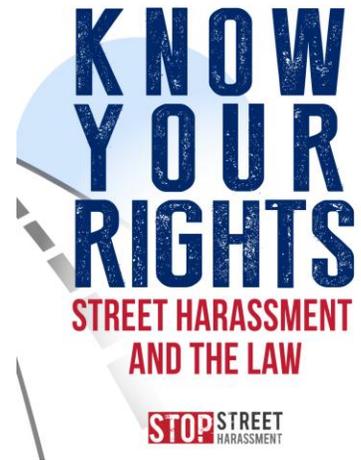
Loitering

[KRS Chapter 525, §90](#)

It is illegal for anyone to loiter in or around school, college, or university buildings or grounds without having a legitimate reason to be there and without having responsibility for a student at the institution.

If you see an adult hanging around school grounds, harassing students or others, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Loitering is a violation, punishable by a fine.



Stop Street Harassment

Unlawful Filming/Photographing

Voyeurism

[KRS Chapter 531 §90](#)

In Kentucky, it is illegal for a person to photograph or record a non-consenting person's genitals or breasts if that person is in a place where s/he should reasonably expect that those body parts won't be recorded.

While the law does not specify examples of places, it seems broad enough to incorporate public places. So, for example, if a street harasser takes an up-skirt or down-blouse photo of you, or otherwise observes or photographs you in an inappropriate way, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Voyeurism is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$500, imprisonment for up to a year, or both.

Indecent Exposure

Indecent Exposure in the First Degree

[KRS Chapter 510 §148](#)

In Kentucky, it is illegal for a harasser to intentionally expose his or her genitals when s/he should know that doing so is likely to alarm a person who is younger than 18 years old.

If a harasser flashes you or exposes her or himself to you in a public place and you are younger than 18, or someone you care for or know is, you can report that person.

Penalty: Indecent exposure in the first degree is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250 and/or up to 90 days in jail.

Indecent Exposure in the Second Degree

[KRS Chapter 510, §150](#)

In Kentucky, it is illegal for a harasser to intentionally expose his or her genitals when s/he should know that doing so is likely to alarm a person who is 18 years old or older.

If a harasser flashes you or exposes her or himself to you in a public place and you are at least 18 years old, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Indecent exposure in the second degree is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250 and/or up to 90 days in jail.

Stop Street Harassment

Following

If you think someone is following you, you can call 911 right away, the first time it happens. You do not have to wait for that person to commit a crime.

Harassment

[KRS Chapter 525, §70](#)

Under Kentucky's harassment law, it is illegal for someone to follow another person around in a public place with the intent to intimidate, harass, annoy, or alarm that person. Unlike nearly every other state, this only has to happen once before it is a crime.

The first time a street harasser follows you and you feel harassed, annoyed or alarmed, you can report that person using this law.

Penalty: Harassment is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$250, imprisonment for up to 90 days, or both.

Groping

Sexual Abuse in the First Degree

[KRS Chapter 510 §110](#)

In Kentucky, groping is considered sexual abuse in the first degree. This law prohibits anyone from subjecting another person to sexual contact by force without that person's consent. The law also prohibits sexual contact with a person who is unable to give consent due to their young age or a disability.

If a harasser touches or grabs you on an intimate or private part of your body using physical force, or physically forces you to touch him or her on a private part of his or her body, you can report him or her for sexual abuse in the first degree.

Penalty: Sexual abuse in the first degree is a Class D felony, punishable by between 1 and 5 years in prison. If the person assaulted is younger than 12 years old, sexual abuse in the first degree is a Class C Felony, punishable by between 5 and 10 years in prison.

Reporting Crimes to the Police

- Call 911 for help if:
 - The crime is in progress
 - You or someone else is physically hurt or have been threatened with physical violence
 - You can provide information about who may have committed a crime.

- Call the local police office's non-emergency number to submit a report afterward. For example, in Louisville, this number is (502) 574-7111 and in Lexington it's (859) 258-3600. In Bowling Green, it is (270) 393-4000 and in Owensboro, it is (270) 687-8888. Be prepared to provide them with:
 - When it happened (date and time).
 - Where it happened (street location, store location, bus line or bus stop, park name, etc).

Stop Street Harassment

- Who is reporting (your name and contact information).
 - A description of what happened.
 - The name and contact information of witnesses, if you spoke to any.
 - It can be helpful to include the law the crime falls under, such as Harassment, [KRS § 525.070](#). If you're not sure which law you should use to report an incident of street harassment, just tell the police what happened and s/he or the district attorney's office can determine the appropriate charges.
 - A description of the harasser/s.
- Many police departments also have online reporting forms, for example, in Lexington, you can report things such as harassing communications via [webform](#).
 - Some police departments also allow you to anonymously send a tip about a non-emergency incident, for example if you see a group of people routinely harassing passersby at the same location.
 - In Louisville, you can do this by calling 502-574-5673, by texting the number 274637 and beginning the message with LMPD, or by submitting via [webform](#).
 - In Lexington, you can do this 877-970-2020, by texting the number 274637 and beginning the message with Tips2020, or by submitting via [webform](#).
 - In South Central Kentucky, you can do this by calling either 781-CLUE or 866-842-CLUE. You can also submit a tip via [webform](#).
 - In Owensboro, you can call 270-687-8484.
 - Once you've reported a crime, if you've provided your contact information, within a few days, you will receive a call with a police report case number and may have to answer follow-up questions. Save a copy of the police report for your records.

If someone tries to tell you that street harassment "isn't a big deal," or isn't illegal, don't buy it. You always have the right to be free from sexual harassment and assault in public.