

Stop Street Harassment

Utah

A variety of forms of street harassment are illegal in Utah, 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 two laws that you can use to report verbal harassment in public places in Utah.

Disorderly Conduct

[Utah Code §76-9-102](#)

It is illegal for anyone to intentionally or recklessly cause members of the public inconvenience, annoyance, or alarm through violent or threatening behavior or unreasonable noises.

It is also illegal for anyone to refuse to move from a public place after being ordered to do so by police, or to knowingly create a hazardous or physically offensive condition for others for no legitimate purpose.

If a harasser's comments or behavior are annoying or scaring you, or if the harasser is making an excessive amount of noise by yelling at you or others, you can report him/her. You also have the right to ask the person to stop his or her disorderly behavior (if you feel safe to do so).

Penalty: Disorderly conduct is an infraction and the penalty is a fine of up to \$750. If the conduct continues after a request by a person to desist, it is a Class C misdemeanor and the penalty is up to 90 days in jail or a fine of up to \$750.

Threats of Violence

[Utah Code §76-5-107](#)

It is illegal in Utah for anyone to threaten to physically hurt or assault you, even if the person does not act on his/her threat or claims s/he was incapable of carrying out the threat.

If a street harasser threatens to hurt you, you can report that person for threats of violence.

Penalty: A threat of violence is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine.

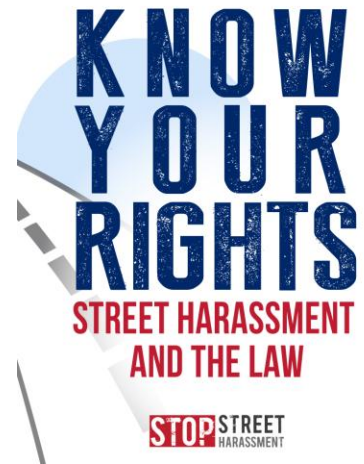
Unlawful Filming/Photographing

Voyeurism

[Utah Code §76-9-702.2](#)

In Utah, it is illegal for anyone to intentionally photograph and record a non-consenting person:

- In a place where that person should expect to have privacy.



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If a harasser films or photographs you someplace like public restrooms, dressing rooms, locker rooms, and hotel rooms, you can report him/her.

- When s/he should expect to have privacy to not have their intimate body parts seen.

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: Illegally taking photographs or recording someone without their consent while s/he are in a place where s/he would expect privacy is a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine. If the person being harassed is under 14 years old, the penalty rises to a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$2,500.

Indecent Exposure

Lewdness

[Utah Code §76-1-702](#)

It is illegal in Utah for anyone to expose his or her genitals, buttocks or breasts (if female), masturbate, or engage in any sex act while in a public place in circumstances in which the person should know the actions will alarm others.

If you see anyone flashing or exposing her or himself in public, such as in a park, on a bus, or on the street, you can report that person.

Penalty: Lewdness is typically a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine. If the harasser exposes himself or herself to someone under the age of 14 years old, lewdness is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,500. Penalties often increase for repeat convictions or if the act is done in conjuncture with another crime – such as sexual battery or assault.

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.

Stalking

[Utah Code §76-5-106.5](#)

Stalking is illegal in Utah. It is illegal for anyone to follow, observe, or threaten someone at least twice in a way that causes him/her to fear for his/her safety or suffer emotional distress. It must be the type of behavior that a person knows or should know would make a [reasonable person](#) afraid or distressed.

If the same person, on more than one occasion, follows you or harasses you and you feel threatened and unsafe or emotionally distressed, you can report that person.

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Penalty: Stalking is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$2,500. It can rise to the level of a felony for several reasons, including if the person has been previously convicted of stalking or a similar crime or if the person used a dangerous weapon.

Groping

Sexual Battery

[Utah Code §76-9-702](#)

It is illegal to intentionally touch (under or through clothing) the anus, butt, or any part of the genitals of another person, or the breast of a female, when the person's conduct is under circumstances the person knows or should know will likely cause affront or alarm to the person touched.

If anyone purposely touches the private areas of your body with no regard for your feelings in a public place like the street, bus stop, or in a bar, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Sexual battery is a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,500.

Forcible Sexual Abuse

[Utah Code §76-5-404](#)

Similarly, it is illegal and classified as forcible sexual abuse if a person touches a non-consenting person's crotch, buttocks, or breasts or causes someone else to do this to him/her without consent, and s/he intend to cause you emotional or physical pain or to gratify his or her own sexual desire.

If anyone touches the private areas of your body or otherwise touches you in a sexual way against your will in a public place like the street, bus stop, or in a bar, you can report him/her.

Penalty: Forcible sexual abuse is a felony in the second degree, punishable by 1 to 15 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, this number is (801) 799-3000 in Salt Lake City, (801) 256-2000 in West Jordan, and (435) 716-9300 in Logan. 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).
 - Who is reporting (your name, contact information).
 - A description of what happened.
 - It can be helpful to include the law the crime falls under, such as Voyeurism, Utah Code 76-9- 702.2. If you're not sure which law you should use to report an incident of street

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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, the Salt Lake City Police Department has a [Citizens Online Police Reporting form](#) as does the [West Valley City Police Department](#).
- 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. Visit your local police department website for information.
 - In Salt Lake City, you can send a secure and anonymous tip by using the keyword "TIPSLCPD" to "CRIMES" (274637) and in Provo you can send it to 27467 with the keyword "PROVOTIP."
 - In St. George, you can [submit a tip online](#).
- 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.