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Stop Street Harassment Releases a Know Your Rights Toolkit
A State-by-State Guide Details How to Use Laws to Report Street Harassment

WASHINGTON, DC – To mark the U.N.'s Human Rights Day, Stop Street Harassment (SSH) released a comprehensive Know Your Rights Toolkit detailing the laws in each state that regulate unwanted sexual behaviors in public spaces, including, but not limited to, obscene comments, flashing, up-skirt photos, following, and groping. It also covers how to report these crimes to the police.

Sexual harassment in public spaces, or street harassment, is a human rights concern. This harassment is not specifically criminalized, despite negatively [impacting](#) at least 80 percent of women and countless men, especially in the LGBTQ community.

Many common street harassment behaviors are already illegal under state laws such as Disorderly Conduct, Invasion of Privacy, and Sexual Misconduct. The Know Your Rights Toolkit details what those laws are in each state and how people can report street harassment using them.

"As a woman who regularly deals with street harassment, I find this information incredibly valuable," said Talia Hagerty, SSH staff member and lead author of the toolkit. "Last summer if I had known the police could help when a man followed me after dark in a New York City subway station, I would have looked for an officer. If he or she were reluctant to get involved, I could have spoken up for my rights. This toolkit helps citizens know when street harassment constitutes a crime and gives us additional power to say 'this is not ok.'"

SSH takes a multi-prong approach to addressing street harassment, including educating people about the issue through resources on the website and organizing community-based campaigns, such as International Anti-Street Harassment Week each spring. SSH also believes that the legal system can play a role.

"While laws will never be THE answer—and in some cases they can be problematic when they are applied disproportionately to low-income people and persons of color—they can influence societal attitudes about what is and is not okay. Additionally, laws can create consequences to deter harassment and, as many harassers are repeat offenders, reporting incidents may prevent future crimes," said Holly Kearl, SSH founder and Executive Director.

The toolkit is available as a web feature on the SSH website, allowing people to easily find the laws and reporting information for their state. It is also available for download as a PDF document.

SSH is holding an online Tweet chat at 1 p.m. EST today to discuss the toolkit and how to use laws to report street harassment. SSH is also hosting a release event in Washington, D.C. on December 11 at the Alliance for Justice, 6 p.m. EST. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority will join SSH staff as presenters to discuss how to report sexual harassment on the Metro system.

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Stop Street Harassment is a nonprofit organization dedicated to documenting and ending gender-based street harassment worldwide through public education and community mobilization. SSH organizes [International Anti-Street Harassment Week](#) annually and helps activists with local campaigns through the [Safe Public Spaces Mentoring Program](#). SSH is [fundraising](#) to conduct the [first-ever national study](#) on street harassment in the USA.