

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions):

Why do hate crimes occur?

Hate crimes often occur as a result of prejudice and ignorance. A lack of understanding about differences among people and their traditions contributes to fear and intolerance. Left unaddressed, these sentiments may often lead to acts of intimidation and ultimately hate-motivated violence.

Hate crime vs. hate incidents, what's the difference?

The use of bigoted and prejudiced language does not in and of itself violate hate crime laws. This type of offense is frequently classified as a bias incident. However, when words threaten violence, or when bias-motivated graffiti damages or destroys property, hate crime laws may apply.

A **hate incident** is an act directed against a person(s) based on their actual or perceived race, nationality, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. The difference between a hate incident and a hate crime is that a hate incident is a non-criminal act.

HATE INCIDENTS INCLUDE:

- 1. Circulating offensive materials such as a hate e-mail or hate flyers without damaging property or threatening violence**
 - **Example:** Hate mail, Los Angeles, CA: February 2005
 - An elderly white male sent hate mail to numerous Asian and Muslim businesses and organizations that threatened to "Kill Chinese!" and "Kill Iranian Terrorists!" One storeowner received a threatening document with the picture of a neighboring Iranian travel agent, and the words, "Iranian (Persian) Lawyers bring Muslim Terrorists to L.A. / U.S.A!"
- 2. Posting hate materials that do not result in property such as caricatures depicting a racial, ethnic or religious group**
 - **Example:** Santa Monica, CA: September 28, 2004
 - A store in Santa Monica displayed highly offensive signs with statements such as "Palestinians are God-less freaks whose only religion is violence and hatred and they are truly a cursed, diseased herd of freaks."
- 3. Displaying hate graffiti in public places, which is NOT directed at a specific individual or group, such as an epithet on a vacant building**
 - **Example:** Santa Monica, CA: May 24, 2005
 - Graffiti was found scrawled over a mural, owned by the city of Santa Monica that said "Kill all the Muslims."
- 4. Making derogatory comments that lack the threat of violence**
 - **Example:** Alhambra, CA: June 2003
 - Following the invasion of Iraq, a twelve year old (half Iranian, half Assyrian) girl was interrogated by a few female classmates. Once she answered Iran, and explained that it was close to Afghanistan, the classmates made derogatory comments, such as, "I hate those places ... they're full of towel heads."

How do I report a hate crime?

San Diego County District Attorney's Office

If you have been a victim of a hate crime:

- If you are seriously injured, call 911 or get to the hospital immediately.
- Whether or not you are injured, report the crime.
- To help yourself, it is important to do at least some of these things:
 - See a doctor to treat and document even minor physical injuries.
 - Take pictures of any physical injuries or damages to property, even if police already did so.
 - If the crime is vandalism, let the police see and photograph the damage before you clean and/or repair.
 - If possible, get witnesses' names, addresses and telephone numbers.
 - Write down as many facts about the incident as you can remember.
 - Seek a therapist to assist with the emotional aspects of the attack.
 - Learn the names of the police officers and prosecutors working on the case, and keep in touch with them.
 - Get copies of police reports and check them for accuracy.
 - Attend necessary court hearings, whether you are subpoenaed, including arraignment, bail review and sentencing.
 - If possible, make a statement in court to the judge about threats, direct or indirect, and possible fears.

The San Diego County District Attorney's Office also has links and resources for victims of all crimes:
<http://www.sdcda.org/helping/victims/victim-services.html>

Should I report a hate incident?

When you speak to the police they will define it as either an incident or a crime **BUT** they are required to treat **ALL** incidents as crimes. By reporting a hate crime or incident, you can help ensure that offenders are brought to justice and other people won't get hurt.

Why should I report hate crime?

Hate crimes and incidents can be confusing and frightening.

By reporting them when they happen to you, you may be able to prevent these incidents from happening to someone else. You will also help the police understand the extent of hate crime in our local area so they can better respond to it. Reporting can make a difference – to you, your friends, and your life.

What should I avoid doing when helping victims of hate crimes?

Avoid the following:

- Being abrupt or rushing a victim
- Making assumptions or jumping to conclusions – particularly about the victim's culture, religion, or lifestyle choices
- Allowing personal value judgements about the victim's behavior, lifestyle or culture to affect your objectivity
- Using stereotyped or biased terms
- Telling victim(s) that you know how they feel
- Minimizing the victim's feelings or the seriousness of the incident, particularly if the perpetrator was a juvenile
- Asking them whether they think this was a bias or hate crime – Rather, ask them if they have any idea why this happened to them
- Criticizing the victim's behavior

How can I help stop hate crimes in my community?

There are resources available on this webpage and other sites to help in combatting hate in your community.

On this web page there are also infographics that were created to show how to organize community building activities such as a paint out day to get rid of graffiti and a walk/run against hate to fundraise donations for non-profit civic organizations who help cultural diversity. There is also an advocacy kit that was create for this webpage to help those who are interested in becoming anti-hate activists in their community.

Other suggested resources are the Southern Law Poverty Center (SLPC) which has their 10 principles of fighting hate which are available in this link and posters on this site.

https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/publication/ten_ways_to_fight_hate_2010.pdf

Additionally the SLPC organization has a newsletter on teaching tolerance for all audiences.

<https://www.splcenter.org/teaching-tolerance>

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