

You are also protected under the Ralph Act and the Bane Act. Under these laws, a court may award money to you. The court may require the person who has violated your rights to pay a civil penalty (\$25,000) to you, money to compensate you for the actual harm you have suffered, and/or an additional amount of money designed to punish that person and to deter future violations of these laws.

The court also may issue a restraining order or other injunctive order to protect you from further harm, and may order the person who has harmed you to pay your attorney's fees if you have hired an attorney.

#### **What can you and your community do?**

Speak out against hate and intolerance:

Support the victim(s) by holding community rallies and offering support and assistance to the victim(s).

Encourage public officials to state their opposition to hate crimes.

Participate in an anti-hate crime network that includes law enforcement, local government, schools, local businesses, religious organizations, and community-based organizations. These networks can immediately respond to a hate crime/incident when they occur and promote prevention and awareness.

**IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE  
THE VICTIM  
OF A HATE CRIME,  
CONTACT YOUR  
LOCAL SHERIFF'S  
STATION OR  
POLICE DEPARTMENT  
IMMEDIATELY.**

If you want to remain anonymous, you can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) [www.lacrimestoppers.org](http://www.lacrimestoppers.org)



*Los Angeles County*  
**Sheriff's Department**

211 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 229-1700  
[www.lasd.org](http://www.lasd.org)



*Los Angeles County*  
**Sheriff's Department**

# A BRIEF GUIDE TO HATE CRIMES

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



[WWW.LASD.ORG](http://WWW.LASD.ORG)

## HATE CRIMES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

In California, you may be the victim of a hate crime if you are targeted because of your **race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability**, or if you are targeted because you are associated with a person or group with one or more of these “real” or “perceived” characteristics.

It is important to differentiate between hate crimes and hate incidents.

A **hate incident** is an action or behavior that is motivated by hate; but is protected by the First Amendment right of freedom of expression. The following are examples of hate incidents: name calling, use of epithets, distribution of hate material (leafletting) in public places, and display of offensive hate-motivated material on one's own property. The freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, such as the freedom of speech, allow hateful rhetoric as long as it does not interfere with the civil rights of others. If this type of behavior escalates to threats against a person, that activity would be classified as a hate crime.

A **hate crime** is an actual or attempted criminal act committed against a victim or the property of a victim because the victim is perceived to possess a protected characteristic.

Hate crimes should be immediately reported to your local law enforcement agency. Hate crimes and hate incidents **MUST** be reported in order to ensure proper documentation, investigation, and prosecution. Not reporting these incidents to law enforcement only encourages perpetrators to continue to act on their beliefs and they will continue to pose a threat to our communities.

### Hate Crime Victims

If you suspect you are a victim of a hate crime, you should:

- Call your local law enforcement agency immediately.
- Obtain medical attention (if needed).
- Document the exact words that were spoken and any other details about the incident that may be of value.
- Save any evidence (e.g. graffiti, egg shells, photographs, writings, victim's description). Do not remove any evidence. Wait until law enforcement officers arrive.
- Obtain the name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of other victims and/or witnesses.
- If possible, get a description of the perpetrator's vehicle and last direction of travel.
- Call a community-based organization in your area that responds to hate crimes.

### Basic Indicators

The following are signs that a hate crime may have been committed:

- Perception of the victim or witness or prior statement(s) by the perpetrator indicating that the perpetrator selected the victim because of his or her protected characteristic.
- Written or oral comments from the perpetrator that may indicate a bias.
- Date of incident coincides with a day that has significance for the victim's protected characteristic.
- Differences of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability between the victim and the perpetrator.
- Organized hate-group activity in the area at the time of the incident/crime.

### Services Available to Hate Crime Victims

- You have certain rights under the California Constitution's Victim's Bill of Rights. You may be entitled to information about the prosecution of the perpetrator, and you have the right to present a victim-impact statement at the time of sentencing.
- You may be entitled to restitution for any loss, damage, or injury that you may incur. Note: immigration status is **NOT** a determining factor for assistance.

