



# PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

## HATE CRIME THREAT RESPONSE GUIDE

At the federal level, a hate crime is defined as a criminal offense motivated in whole or in part by the offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity.

If you receive a threat, **immediately call 911.**

### Written or Visual Threat

When a threat is received in a written or graphic format, such as a handwritten note or graffiti:

- DO NOT touch or alter the item. DO NOT throw it away.
- Photograph or precisely rewrite the threat on another sheet of paper. Make note of:
  - The date, time, and location the threat was identified.
  - Any details about how the threat was delivered or discovered.
  - Anyone else who saw the threat.

### Phoned Threat

When a threat is received by phone:

- Remain calm. If not in immediate danger, do not hang up.
- Record the call if legal to do so. *(Some states require both parties to consent to a recording.)*
- Try to obtain as much information as possible about the caller and the threat.
- Write down any numbers or letters on the phone display.
- Write down the exact wording of the threat.

### Electronic Threat

When a threat is received over the internet, such as through email or social media:

- DO NOT delete the electronic threat.
- Leave the message open on the device or computer.
- Print, photograph, or copy the message. Note the date and time the threat was received.

### Verbal Threat

When a threat is received verbally:

- Stay calm and attempt to de-escalate the situation.
- If the perpetrator leaves, note their description and direction of travel.
- Write down the threat exactly as it was communicated.

### Physical Threat

A physical threat is an in-person threat that places the victim or others in immediate danger. It is important to keep in mind that all threat types have the potential to escalate into a physical threat.

When confronted with an immediate threat of physical harm, there are three options:

- **Run:** Identify an escape route. Leave behind any belongings and if possible, help others escape.
- **Hide:** Find a safe place to hide from the threat. Lock doors and block entrances. Silence cell phones (including vibrate mode) and remain silent.
- **Fight:** Fighting should be a last resort. Act with as much physical aggression as possible and attempt to incapacitate the threat.



**FBI** FEDERAL BUREAU  
OF INVESTIGATION

If you or someone you know may have been the victim of a Hate Crime, please call the FBI at **1-800-CALL-FBI**, or report threats electronically at **tips.fbi.gov**.