



## News Release

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# 1 in 3 Utah Women Experience Sexual Assault

*April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Rape is the only violent crime in Utah that occurs at a higher rate than the rest of the nation. One in three Utah women will experience some type of sexual assault in their lifetime and one in eight will be raped. In 2008, Utah’s reported rape rate was 63.7 per 100,000 females compared to the U.S. rate of 57.4 per 100,000 females. However, the majority of rapes (88.2%) are never reported to law enforcement, indicating that sexual violence in Utah is grossly underestimated.

“Rape is a devastating violation of body, mind, and spirit,” said Teresa Brechlin, Violence Prevention Coordinator at the Utah Department of Health (UDOH).

“Regardless of who you are or who the perpetrator is, sexual assault takes your feeling of control and safety away.”

Sexual violence can take many forms, including rape or attempted rape, domestic and dating violence, and child sexual abuse. Sexual violence can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender, class, race, occupation, religion, sexual orientation, or physical appearance.

“Sexual violence is a crime of power and control. It has nothing to do with how someone dresses or acts. No one asks or deserves to be sexually assaulted,” said Alana Kindness, Executive Director of the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA).

The UDOH established a toll-free sexual assault hotline in 1998, the first crisis line of its kind in the Intermountain West. Open 24/7, attendants route calls from all over the state

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to one of 12 rape crisis programs. From 2003-2008, the hotline received more than 2,800 calls – an average of 467 – each year. Salt Lake, Utah, and Davis counties received the highest number of calls. The numbers do not include calls made directly to the rape crisis programs.

Data from the UDOH and Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice indicate that sexual assaults are rarely committed by strangers. Only 13.3% of victims report being victimized by a stranger. Most often, the assault is committed by a family member (30.9%), intimate partner such as a spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend (20.8%), friend (14.3%), neighbor (9.9%), babysitter (2.2%), or coworker (1.8%).

Other Utah data show:

- In 2006, one in eight women (12.4%) and one in 50 men (2%) reported they had experienced rape or attempted rape in their lifetime.
- In 2009, 8.2% of female high school students and 5.8% of male high school students in Utah reported they were physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to.
- Carbon, Salt Lake, Tooele, Uintah, and Weber counties had higher reported rates of rape than the state rate from 2002-2008.
- 78.7% of females who had been sexually assaulted reported that their first sexual assault occurred before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Only 12.7% of sexual assault victims visit a doctor or medical center for an exam after the incident.
- Rape victims report a higher prevalence of major depression and dissatisfaction with life compared to non-victims.

Help is available for victims of sexual assault by calling the crisis's toll-free 24-hour Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis and Information Hotline at 1-888-421-1100.

To learn how to help prevent sexual violence in a community, contact UCASA at 801-746-0404 or visit [www.ucasa.org](http://www.ucasa.org). For data and resources on sexual assault, domestic violence, or dating violence visit <http://health.utah.gov/vipp>.

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