

Safety Planning

A number of family violence services can help you with Safety Planning. Our lawyers can assist you to access these services. Call us on 1800 682 468 for free and confidential advice and referral.

If you are planning to leave an abusive relationship it is important to plan ahead to make leaving easier and safer. A person who uses violence, controlling behaviours or physical abuse may become more controlling, dangerous or abusive when they think you might be planning to leave. Leaving a relationship threatens the abuser's sense of power and control.

If you have made the decision to leave, we encourage you to make a safety plan. There are a number of things to consider when thinking about your safety plan.

Things to Consider

- Decide how you will leave – by foot, car or will you call a friend?
- Decide where you will go – friend or family, hotel, neighbour or Police?
- What will you take – consider packing an overnight bag and leave it in your car, or give it to a friend to look after for you.
- Pack your important documents like your birth certificate and passport, or email copies to a friend or family member.
- Purchase a mobile phone and make sure your mobile phone is charged and has credit.
- Consider varying the way you get to work or to visit family. Consider changing or varying your regular activities like going to the gym or the supermarket.
- Discuss what you are doing with a trusted friend, family member or work colleague – think about creating a safe word with them (don't write down your safe word).
- Do you have access to money? Consider giving some to a family member or a friend to hold. If possible, open a new bank account and select that the statements be emailed to a secure email address.
- Decide where you will stay – friend or family, hotel or refuge and how long are you able to stay there.
- If you are staying at home, think about if you need to change the locks on windows and doors, or if you should have deadbolts installed.
- If you can afford to, consider sensor lights, window bars, additional locks, an electronic alarm or a chain on your front door.
- Ensure you have working fire alarms installed, and have a fire extinguisher.
- Put wood dowel in sliding windows to stop them being slid open.
- Place padlocks and chains on gates.
- Place sliding bolts on manholes so your house can't be accessed through the roof.
- Get an answering machine or voicemail, and screen your calls. This also allows you to record any abusive messages.
- Teach your children how to use the telephone and call Police. Teach them a safe word that you can use if you need them to call Police for you.
- Talk to all people who care for your children about who has permission to collect them from their care.
- Consider if you need to arrange for your pets to come with you, or if someone else can look after them.
- Ensure the webcam on your computer is turned off, or use tape to cover the lens when you aren't using it.
- Set up a secure email address that you can give to Police, lawyers, or community services to use. For

everyday emails, keep using the email address that the person using violence is aware of.

- Change all your passwords and login details. Consider using strong passwords that are not words or your birthdate. Try to have a different password for different accounts.
- Ensure your mobile phone is set to auto lock after a short period of time, and that a pin code is required to unlock it.
- Turn off the “location” function on your phone so that you can’t be tracked or traced.
- Turn off the Bluetooth function on your phone, and set your phone to “hidden” if you can.
- Program emergency numbers into your phone, using code names if necessary.
- Ensure you have engaged all the privacy settings on social media, and on each device that you use.
- Don’t allow other people to tag you in photos or locations.
- Consider using non-identifying profile and cover photos on your social media accounts, such as flowers or landscapes.
- Consider using a different city as your location and not including your place of work or education.

Contacts

- **In an emergency situation or if you are in immediate danger, call 000.**
- Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, phone 1800 608 122.
- Engender Equality, phone 03 6278 9090.
- Call Women’s Legal Service Tasmania telephone advice line for free and confidential assistance, on **1800 682 468**.

This publication is intended to give general information. Whilst we have made every effort to ensure the contents of this publication are accurate at the time of writing, the law and services can change. Legal and service exactness is not possible in a publication of this nature, and this publication should not be used as a substitute for legal advice.

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