

Read this fact sheet if:

- you're afraid for your safety because your partner is abusing or threatening you; and
- you need help to plan for your safety, whether you want to stay in the relationship or leave.



How can you plan for your safety?

One thing you can do to stay safer is make a **safety plan**. A safety plan is made up of the steps you can take to protect yourself and your children.

Having a safety plan means you know how to get help if your partner is abusing you. Your children will also feel safer when you help them make their own safety plan.

Ask a friend, advocate, or victim service worker to help you.

How do you start a safety plan?

- Get information about emergency services in your area (such as safe houses or transition houses) and how you can get help when you need it.
- Talk over your plan with people who can help.
- Talk to your children about how to keep safe.
- Keep a journal of the abuse and save evidence (pictures, emails, doctor visits, police reports). This needs to be kept in a safe place, outside your home. It's best if you can keep it with a friend, if possible.

Include in your plan how to protect yourself at home and after you leave the relationship.

This fact sheet just provides a few examples of what to do to protect yourself. You need to customize your safety plan to fit your situation.



How can you protect yourself at home?

Think about what you need to do to stay safe at home.

- Find the safest place in your home if you expect your partner to get violent. This is a place where you won't get trapped and there are no weapons, such as knives.
- Plan your emergency exits.
- Know your local emergency phone numbers and where you can get help.
- Ask neighbours and friends to call the police if they see or hear anything suspicious.
- Put away some money in a safe place.
- Keep your purse, wallet, identification, keys, medication, and cell phone in a safe, accessible place in case you need to leave suddenly.
- If you're using a computer or mobile device that your partner has access to, erase your browsing history. For more information, see [wikihow.com/Clear-Your-Browser's-Cache](http://www.wikihow.com/Clear-Your-Browser's-Cache).
- Find a safe place to store your important documents and personal papers for you and your children.
- If you decide to leave, don't tell your partner you're leaving until you're in a safe place with your children.



How can you protect yourself after you leave?

After you leave, you still need to protect yourself from abuse. This can be a dangerous time for you, as your safety may be at higher risk immediately after you leave. Your safety plan could include these actions:

- If you have a protection order or there's a no contact bail or probation order, keep a copy of it with you at all times.

- If you have a protection order, show your co-workers and neighbours a picture of your ex-partner, and ask them to call police if they see your ex-partner.
- Arrange to have your mail sent to friends or family.
- Let your family members, close friends, co-workers, and children's daycare or school know that you've left your abusive partner. Ask them not to provide information if your ex-partner contacts them.
- Contact all business and government offices that send you money with your change of address.
- Keep your cell phone charged and on you at all times.
- Screen your calls on all phones.
- Make sure your contact details aren't on public lists, like employee phone lists.
- Change your passwords on your social media accounts, and make sure that your social media information is only available to your friends and family.
- Make sure your home is secure and take different routes home.
- Switch banks, grocery stores, and other services you normally use.
- If you remain in the family home, change the locks, and if possible install an alarm system.
- Park in well lighted public areas close to the entrance, and have your keys ready on your way to your car. Have someone walk with you, if possible.

How can you protect your children?



Your children need a safety plan too. Plan this out by talking with them about safety. Consider this:

- Tell your children that their job is to protect themselves, not to protect you.
- Show them where they can go in the house that's safe if there's a violent situation.
- Set up a code word to use with your children during a violent situation in the home. If they hear you say it, they know to call for help.
- Teach them how to call 911, and what to say.

Who can help make a safety plan?

VictimLinkBC can help you get started on your safety plan. They offer confidential, multilingual support to people experiencing abuse.

1-800-563-0808 (24 hours)

The website mylawbc.com can help you make a safety plan. It has a guided pathway about abuse and family violence that can help you think about what you need to do to stay safe. It provides you with a safety planning checklist and a downloadable plan for your situation.

mylawbc.com/paths/abuse
(click "Make a safety plan")

Clear your browser

If you're using a computer or mobile device that your partner has access to, erase your browsing history. For more information, see wikihow.com/Clear-Your-Browser's-Cache. You could also consider using a computer at a library.