



# Know how to **stay safe** when leaving or continuing an abusive relationship.

## IF YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE

Ending an abusive relationship may be dangerous whether you live with the person or not. You can create a safety plan that prepares you to end or leave. Take these actions to make your safety plan:

### Talk to someone you trust

- + Tell them you are being abused.
- + Discuss how they can help you stay safe.
- + You may want to keep the abuse private. But when people outside your home know about the abuse they can help keep you, your children and your pets safe.
- + The Family Violence Information Line can help with your safety plan and other supports to leave an abusive situation. Call them 24/7 at 310-1818 to get help anonymously in more than 170 languages. Or, find other supports and resources to meet your needs.

### Plan your exit strategy

- + Decide where you and your children can go if you need to leave in a hurry. Be careful about going to the home of a friend or relative where your abuser will think to look. That could be dangerous for everyone involved. Consider an emergency shelter near you.
- + If you do plan to go to someone's home, arrange this ahead of time. That way if you arrive with no notice, they will know to let you in, lock the doors and ask questions later.
- + Figure out where pets will stay. Alberta SPCA's pet safekeeping program can help.
- + Look for safe places that are open 24 hours where you can be safe while you call for help.
- + Decide when to talk to your children about leaving.
- + Hide money and spare change to take with you. Open your own bank account, if you can.
- + If you need to break your rental lease, get a Safer Spaces Certificate to avoid paying a penalty.
- + Get help with costs to leave an abusive situation and get to safety, set up a household or start a new life.

### Pack your bag

- + Pack an emergency bag with identification, important documents and other things you will need when you leave.

- + Hide the bag where you can grab it quickly, or ask a trusted friend or a shelter to keep it for you.

- + Pack things for yourself and your children:

- cash, debit or credit cards
- health care cards
- driver's licence and passports
- birth certificates
- social insurance cards
- status cards

- copies of custody orders, restraining orders, emergency protection orders, court orders
- immigration or work permit papers and visa
- marriage licence or divorce decree
- recent picture of you, your kids and your abuser
- prescription drugs or medications
- keys (house, car, work, safety deposit box)
- extra sets of clothing
- baby formula, food and diapers
- contact information for people you trust

### Have transportation ready

- + Make sure you have car keys and gas in the car, bus tickets, or another means of transportation such as help from a friend.
- + Know exactly how to get to where you plan to go. Have a map, directions and phone numbers handy.

### Talk to your children

- + Talk to your children about what is going on. Do not try to pretend it is not happening.
- + Help them understand they are not to blame for the adults not getting along and that the abusive situation is not their fault.
- + Make sure your children know what they need to do when you decide to leave.

### Write down incidents

- + Keep a record of any violent, abusive, harassing and stalking activities that happen if you can.
- + Write down details about the incident as well as the time and date it happened.

### Stop contact

- + Give an abusive partner you do not live with or stalker one clear message that you want the relationship and all contact with you, your family and friends to end.
- + Do not contact the abusive partner or stalker after you give this message.
- + Do not contact an abuser you live with after you leave.
- + Consider contacting your local police service or victim services unit to find out about emergency restraining and protection orders.
- + Decide if you want to get legal advice about filing for custody if you have children.
- + Ask the police to take you back to your home if you are afraid to go alone after you leave.

Call **911**  
if you are in  
immediate  
danger.

IF YOU DECIDE TO STAY



## IF YOU DECIDE TO STAY

If you choose to continue the relationship with an abusive partner, follow these suggestions to stay safe:

- + Pay attention to changes in the person's mood and behaviours.
- + Move to a safe room with a window or door to outside when an abusive or violent situation happens.
- + Avoid conflict in the kitchen and garage which may have things that can be used as weapons.
- + Teach your children and others to leave the room or home where the abuse or violence is happening, and call 911 when they are out of the abuser's sight.
- + Have a packed bag hidden where the abuser will not find it but you can easily get it and go.
- + Ask the police to take you.

## COVER YOUR TRACKS ONLINE

Abusers, stalkers and other criminals can get information about you and make contact through your online activities. There are things you can do to stay safe when you visit websites, shop online, or use email or social media.

### Web browsing

There are ways to prevent information from being stored on your computer or mobile device when you search the internet for information. They include:

- + Activating private browsing mode
- + Clearing your history in any browser

### Email

Help stop unwanted emails from an abuser or anyone you do not trust by:

- + not using existing email accounts and saving any harassing emails from the abuser to give the police
- + creating a new email account with a user name that does not let others identify you – send a test email to yourself to make sure your real name does not show anywhere
- + changing your existing password and creating a new one that is difficult to figure out
- + using the new email only with people you trust and asking them not to share it or any information about you with the abuser

### Social media

Change how you use social media to stay safe by:

- + using your new email to create new accounts for social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc.
- + choosing a user name that does not let others identify you
- + not using photos of yourself or photos that would make it easy to identify you
- + setting your account to private so only friends can see you
- + being careful adding friends so the abusive family member will not get access to your account through a friend's login
- + turning off the location function that shows where you are when you post
- + shutting off the bluetooth function on mobile devices

### Online shopping

Help prevent an abuser from getting access to your payment and delivery information by:

- + closing all the accounts you use for online shopping
- + opening new accounts with your new email and a secure password

## 24 HOUR HELP

Call 911 if you or someone you know is in immediate danger.

Family Violence Information Line

Hours: 24/7 all year

Call: Toll Free 310-1818 (in Alberta) to get help anonymously in more than 170 languages or find other supports.

### Family violence is a crime.

Family violence includes physical, verbal, emotional, financial and sexual abuse, neglect, stalking or being kept from seeing other people or forced to stay in one place.

Source: [www.alberta.ca/family-violence-stay-safe.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-stay-safe.aspx)