

## Planning for your safety after you have left:

- Be vigilant. The time after leaving a family violence situation is also very dangerous.
- Consider getting an intervention order if you don't already have one.
- Try to change your routine. This could mean leaving home or work at different hours, shopping in different places, or driving instead of catching public transport.
- Let key people know about your situation, e.g. your boss, work colleagues or your children's teachers. Talk to them about what they should do if they are worried about your safety or the safety of your children.
- Look at ways to increase security in your home, like changing your locks or installing security measures like a property alarm, security lights and CCTV.
- Replace any technology that the person using violence has set up, registered or had access to, including smartphones, tablets and Ipads, computers, smart watches etc.
- Block the person using violence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp and any other forms of social media.
- Change the passwords of your online accounts including social media, email, banking accounts, MyGov and your e-tag account if you have a car.
- Redirect your mail and get a post office box.

## How a family violence crisis specialist can help you:

If you are experiencing family violence or domestic abuse, our specialists can:

- Help you understand your risk and make a plan for your safety
- Arrange safety measures that enable you to stay safe at home (if appropriate)
- Help you to access crisis accommodation in the case of imminent high risk
- Connect you with legal and counselling services
- Refer you to family violence outreach services for ongoing support
- Arrange for specialist disability support

## For non-English speakers

If you speak limited English, we can arrange a telephone interpreter. All you need to do is call us and tell us:

- Your phone number
- Your language
- When it is safe to call

If you know someone who doesn't speak English and you are concerned for their safety, you can call us with them. Or call us directly to find out how you can help them.



## Making a Family Violence Safety Plan

How to plan for your safety when someone in your family is using violent, abusive or controlling behaviour.



Available 24/7 | 1800 015 188  
safesteps@safesteps.org.au



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Safe Steps is Victoria's 24/7 family violence response centre

# Violence and abuse at home is never okay.

If your partner, or any other family member, is behaving in a way that makes you fear for your safety, or the safety of your children or pets, it is likely to be a form of family violence.

You are not alone. You can reach one of our family violence specialists any time of the day or night on:

**1800 015 188**  
or **safesteps@safesteps.org.au**

No matter your situation, we can help you explore safety options, create a safety plan, and put in place safety measures to help reduce risk - including access to aids and equipment.

Having a safety plan is important, whether you want to stay in your relationship or leave. You can use the advice in this brochure to start making your own safety plan.

## Safety tips if you are staying:

- Talk to neighbours that you know and trust and ask them to call 000 if they hear violence or abuse.
- Contact trusted family and friends and set up a code word that you can text them in case you need them to call 000 on your behalf.
- If your children are old enough, practice a 'safe word' or sentence with them, and let them know to get ready to leave the house if you say the safe word.
- Plan and practice (with your children) your escape route from the house.
- If you sense violence is escalating, avoid fleeing to rooms in your house where you may become trapped, or rooms with weapons, such as the bathroom, kitchen or garage.
- Teach your children that their job is to stay safe, not to rescue you. Teach them how to call 000 for the police, fire or ambulance.
- Find out the location of your nearest police station or hospital and plan how you would go there if you needed to.

## Safety tips if you are planning to leave:

- The time just before leaving a family violence situation can be very dangerous. Only tell trusted people that you are planning to leave, and where you are planning to go.
- Turn off location settings on your mobile phone and any other technology you are taking with you. If the person using violence had access to your technology, consider leaving these items behind.
- Hide a bag with clothes, medication, keys and other important items that you can grab easily, or else leave the bag with someone you trust.
- Make copies or take photos of important documents, e.g. your passport and driver's licence, medicare card, deeds to your house, and any other important financial records.
- If you have children, pack some clothes, their medical records and medication, bottles and nappies, and some of their favourite toys.
- If you have pets, pack food and any equipment you need to travel, such as a lead, cage, pet bed and vaccination records.
- When it is time to leave, make a plausible excuse to leave the house or leave while the person using violence is not at home.