

Staying safe: After you leave

This is a practical guide for safety planning if you have left an abusive or controlling relationship. It provides information about steps you can take to help you stay safe. It also provides a list of family violence services that can help and resources which can provide more information.



Stay somewhere you feel safe

After you leave the relationship, you may want to stay in your home or move to a new home in a location your ex-partner doesn't know about.

If you are leaving your home and you have children, if you can, it is best to take your children with you. If you cannot take your children with you seek urgent legal advice after you leave (there is information about legal services at the end of this Infosheet sheet).

If you are staying in the same home, think about if you might be safer staying somewhere else for a few days or have someone stay with you. You may want to stay with family, a trusted friend, or in refuge accommodation until you have changed the locks and checked your home security.

What can I do if I am renting?

If you are renting, there are special laws to help if you or your children are affected by family violence. These special laws can help if both you and your ex-partner's names are on the tenancy agreement, or the tenancy agreement is in your name only.

If you stay in your rental property, you can apply to court to have your ex-partner's name removed from the tenancy agreement. The law also says you can change the locks without getting your landlords permission. You must provide the landlord with a copy of the key within 7 days.

If you decide to leave your rental property

If you decide to leave your rental property, the special family violence laws make it easier for you to leave the tenancy agreement.

You can use a **Family Violence Termination Notice** to leave a tenancy agreement quickly – with as little as 7 days-notice. This process is free, and, in most cases, you don't have to go to court.

You will need to provide paperwork confirming there is risk of family violence such as:

- copy of a Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO), police order, Family Court injunction or application for a Family Court injunction,
- copy of a prosecution notice or indictment for a charge relating to violence against you or your children, or
- court record of a conviction for violence against you or your children.

If you don't have any of the paperwork listed above, you can provide a **Consumer Protection Family violence report – Evidence form** signed by one of the following professionals:

- doctor,
- psychologist,
- social worker,
- person in charge of a women's refuge,
- police officer,
- child protection worker,
- family support person, or
- person in charge of an Aboriginal health, welfare or legal organization.

You can find more information from Circle Green Community Legal by calling **(08) 6148 3636** or visiting www.circlegreen.org.au/tenancy.



Consider applying for an FVRO

Consider applying for a Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO). An FVRO is a court order which aims to keep you or other family members safe, by stopping your ex-partner (or a former intimate partner) from doing things that would make you feel or be unsafe.

The conditions of an FVRO can be made to suit your situation and can stop your ex-partner from doing things like:

- being near you, your home or work, or your children,
- contacting you,
- making threats,
- sharing intimate images of you, or
- keeping track of you or following you.

Where can I get help with an FVRO?

Legal Aid WA's Domestic Violence Legal Unit (DVLU) is a free specialist unit which can provide advice about FVRO's to help you decide whether an FVRO may improve your safety.

You can call DVLU on 1300 650 579 (Mon to Fri, 8:30am to 4:30pm). DVLU has a duty lawyer service at Perth Magistrates Court (Mon to Fri, 9am to 1pm) which can help with applying for a Family Violence Restraining order.

The DVLU duty service is a free drop-in service, you don't need a scheduled appointment to ask for help.

DVLU can also provide social support services including:

- counselling,
- risk assessments,
- safety planning, and
- identify non-legal issues and making referrals to help with these (such as tenancy, housing, immigration and financial issues).



Report breaches

If you are protected by a FVRO, Conduct Agreement Order or protective bail conditions, report all breaches to the police and ask to make a statement.



Keep records

Keep a record of any events or incidents after you leave. Record the date, time and details of what happened.

Do not delete threatening or abusive messages you have received from your ex-partner. Keep these as evidence of their abusive behaviour towards you.



Check home security

Check the security of your home and whether you need to upgrade security.

Some things to check at home include:

- Can you lock all your doors, windows, gates, garage and roof access?
- Can you lock your letter box?
- Can you see around the outside of your house at night - does the lighting around the outside of your house need to be improved?

The **Safe at Home program** is a free program run through women's refuges designed to help women and children experiencing domestic violence to stay safely in their homes after separation.

Assistance through the program can include a risk assessment and safety audit of your home and upgrading home security.

To be eligible for assistance through the program you must have a FVRO in place. You can ask your refuge worker, support worker, DVLU or Centrelink Social Worker for a referral to the program.

Improving security of a rental property

If you are renting and are at risk of family violence, the law allows you to make some changes to your rental property to prevent entry to the property (for example, installing security alarms and security screens). There are special rules about this, so it is important to get legal advice before making changes.

You can get information and advice from Circle Green Community Legal by calling **(08) 6148 3636** (Mon to Fri, 9:30am to 3:30pm) or visiting www.circlegreen.org.au/tenancy.



Keep your location safe

The following are some things you can do, and some things to be aware of, to help keep your location safe:

- turn off location services on all of your own devices and your children's devices,
- if your partner set up your device or you share an account (for example, an Apple ID) they may be able to access information about your location remotely - in this case, it is safest to restore the device to factory settings,
- don't check in to places on social media and be careful that your post does not give away information about your location,
- don't use joint accounts or credit cards to make purchases or withdraw money from an ATM as payments and withdrawals will show your location, and
- check your electronic calendar settings to make sure your ex-partner does not have access to your calendar.

You can find more practical tips about keeping your location safe and information about a range of online safety issues on the eSafety Commissioner webpage www.esafety.gov.au



Ask for a privacy alert when updating your contact details

When you update your new address and, or telephone number with your workplace, the children's school, utility providers and so forth, tell the person you speak to that your contact details are confidential and ask for a 'Privacy Alert' to be placed on your record.



Change your passwords

Change the passwords of all your online accounts so your ex-partner cannot log into them.

Make a list of all your online accounts and work your way through the list to ensure you have changed each password to something your partner cannot easily guess (don't use names of children or pets).

For example:

- email accounts,
- Facebook,
- myGov,
- bank accounts, and
- credit card accounts.

Check each account is linked to an email address and mobile number only you can access to ensure your ex-partner cannot use the 'forgotten password' function to reset your password.



Consider applying to become a silent elector

If you have moved to a new home, you will need to update your details with the Australian Electoral Roll. Be aware that the name and address of every person registered to vote in Australia appears on the electoral roll and is available to the public.

You can apply to be registered as a silent elector if you believe having your address included on the public electoral roll could put you or your family's safety at risk.

You can apply to become a silent elector by lodging a form on the Australian Electoral Commission website www.aec.gov.au and providing a Statutory Declaration about your safety concerns.



Be mindful of personal safety

The following are some things you can do to help improve your personal safety:

- don't open your front door unless you can clearly see who is at your front door and it is a trusted person,
- turn on all the outside lights of your home at night to improve visibility,
- think about your day-to-day routines and consider changing your usual routines (for example, if you always do your grocery shop at the local shops on a Friday evening consider shopping somewhere else or shop on a different evening),
- keep your mobile phone with you, ensure it has credit and charged so you can call for help if needed,
- if possible, avoid public transport at night, and
- lock your car doors when sitting in your car or driving and try not to drive alone at night.



Contact Centrelink

Contact Centrelink to check if you can get financial assistance. You may be eligible for a crisis payment and, or ongoing financial support including parenting payments, family tax benefits and rent assistance. Call **132 850** and ask to speak to with social worker.

HELP AND SUPPORT

Police, ambulance and fire

131 444 if you are feeling unsafe
000 in an emergency
24 hours

Family Violence Law Help website

www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au

Information about family violence and the law including family law, child protection, child support and family violence protection orders. It also has a directory of services that can help with legal advice, emergency housing and money.

The Women's Domestic Violence Helpline

1800 007 339
(08) 9223 1188
24 hours

Counselling, information, advice, referrals to services, police liaison and help escaping family violence.

Men's Domestic Violence Helpline

1800 000 599
(08) 9223 1199
24 hours

Operated by the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support offering information and support to men who have experienced family violence. This service can also provide counselling for men who are concerned about their behaviours.

Crisis Care Helpline

1800 199 008
131 11 14 (24 hours)
Operated by the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support offering help in crisis situations.

Entrypoint Perth

1800 124 684
(08) 6496 0001
Mon to Fri 9am – 7pm
Sat 9am – 5pm
Accommodation and support options for victims of family violence that have left their homes due to family violence or are homeless due to family violence.

Ask Izzy

www.askizzy.org.au
A free and anonymous national website providing a list of services that offer help such as housing, meals, healthcare, counselling, legal advice and addiction treatment.

Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (DVAS)

(08) 6330 5400
info@whfs.org.au
A free service helping women to access support including discussing options, safety planning, applying for a family violence restraining order, obtaining advice from legal services and referrals to other services.

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service

1800 RESPECT
1800 737 732
24 hours

Your Toolkit

www.yourtoolkit.com.au

A web-based resource offering information to help women facing domestic violence and financial abuse.

Penda

Available from the App Store or Google Play.
A free financial app for mobile devices to help those experiencing family violence. It combines financial tips, safety and legal information and referrals.

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

131 450
Call this number to speak to an interpreter in your language who can help with contacting the services on this list.

Aboriginal Interpreting WA

1800 330 331
You can access an interpreter through this service who can help with contacting the services on this list.

National Relay Service

133 677
Call this number if you are deaf and/or find it hard hearing or speaking with people who use a phone.

LEGAL AID WA OFFICES



Infoline: 1300 650 579



Translating & Interpreting Service:
131 450



Website/InfoChat:
www.legalaid.wa.gov.au



National Relay Service: 133 677
(for hearing and speech impaired)

Perth Office

32 St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA
6000
1300 650 579
(08) 9261 6222

Midwest & Gascoyne Office

Unit 8, The Boardwalk, 273
Foreshore Drive,
Geraldton, WA 6530
(08) 9921 0200

West Kimberley Office

Upper Level, Woody's Arcade,
15-17 Dampier Terrace,
Broome, WA 6725
(08) 9195 5888

Great Southern Office

Unit 3, 43-47 Duke Street,
Albany, WA 6330
(08) 9892 9700

Goldfields Office

Suite 3, 120 Egan Street,
Kalgoorlie, WA 6430
(08) 9025 1300

East Kimberley Office

98 Konkerberry Drive,
Kununurra, WA 6743
(08) 9166 5800

Southwest Office

7th Floor, Bunbury Tower, 61
Victoria Street,
Bunbury, WA 6230
(08) 9721 2277

Pilbara Office

28 Throssell Road, South
Hedland,
WA 6722
(08) 9172 3733

Indian Ocean Office

Administration Building,
20 Jalan Pantai, Christmas Island,
Indian Ocean, WA 6798
(08) 9164 7529

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