

Safety Planning Post Separation

Leaving the relationship does not mean an end to the violence and abuse. For many women the violence escalates after this time and takes on different forms. In particular, the respondent may use your children to abuse you.

It is important to remember that while the challenges can feel overwhelming, many women have gone on to have safe and happy lives after leaving a violent relationship.

Here are some suggestions that may help you in keeping safe after separation:

- Consider taking out a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) – for support contact your Community Action or one of the legal support services listed at the back of this book. Keep copies of any current or new DVPO on you, and make copies of any DV Protection Orders and provide them to:
 - o Family, friends and or neighbours
 - o Children’s day care or school
- If the Respondent breaches the DVPO ring the police. Ask to speak to the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer. Stay in touch with Police for information and advice on DVPO breaches
- Discuss your safety concerns with family, friends and neighbours and encourage them to phone the Police on your behalf if needed
- Stay in touch with your Regional Domestic and Family Violence Service
- Arrange for your mail to be redirected to a post office box instead of your new address if you have moved. Arrange for caller ID on your home phone
- Change all your bank accounts, pin numbers and internet banking access codes.
- Consider changing your mobile and/or landline phone numbers. Arrange for your phone line to have calling number display/caller ID and arrange for a private unlisted number for yourself.
- Set your mobile with a PIN. Set it to lock after one or two minutes without use. Don’t use mobile phone apps that tell your friends where you are or ‘check you in’. Disable Geo-location services in any camera apps and your mobile phone settings. Turn off blue tooth visibility to prevent your device being located and protect your data. Get a cheap mobile to make sensitive calls or when you are going to a sensitive location. Pre-program any numbers you might need in an emergency including the Police and DV Connect (24 Hour Refuge Referral Line). Make sure that your phone is set to hide your number through caller ID.
- Delete all online accounts and create new anonymous ones, including eBay. Delete your internet history to prevent others from discovering your internet activities. Recognise that social networking sites are not secure and can be a way for an abuser to find out information about you.
- Where possible, vary your routine i.e. change the day you shop and the supermarket you use, change your route to and from work or the children’s school etc. If possible

try not to visit places where you used to go. Use different shops and banks to those you used previously.

- Consider seeking legal advice for all family and property matters
- Make certified copies of all important documents
- Increase your security at home. This can involve changing the locks, installing sensor lighting, using dowel rods in your window tracks etc. Look at ways you can increase safety when you park your car and enter your home e.g. an automatic garage door opener, safety lighting or removal of shrubs or trees in the area. Have security chains fitted to all entry doors and make sure they are used at all times when the door is answered by you or your children. Tell neighbours that your partner does not live with you and ask them to call the police if he is seen near your house or if they hear an assault occurring.

Talk to Community Action about getting a Home Safety Upgrade to keep you safer at home.

- Contact the Australian Electoral Commission and request your name and address be suppressed on the electoral role
- Vary your travel routes to and from work. Keep a map handy and pre-plan routes in unknown areas to prevent you from having to leave your vehicle. Tell your employer that you have a protection order or that you are afraid of your ex-partner. Ask for your telephone calls at work to be screened.
- Consider your internet safety i.e. information you share on social networks e.g. Facebook
- Carefully consider deactivating GPS devices on your mobile phone, computer programs or internet