



Family Survivor Network Inc (FSN)

Creating a Safety Plan - Tech Tips

You have a right to be safe and crimes (e.g. threats, stalking, intimidation etc...) against victims or witnesses is illegal, any may be hard to prove. Though Law Enforcement exists for emergency situations (CALL 911), Safety Plans contain strategies specific to your safety concerns, and help protect you and your family. As a result, the plans may change as your concerns and experiences changes.

Family Survivor Network Inc will help you keep a documented record of experiences and assist with creating your safety plan. When developing your safety plan, we encourage you to:

Online Safety →

Did you know

- Information that is posted online is never private.
- Your computer can be monitored by someone else without your knowledge or consent.
- Your computer's online browser history can never be completely removed.
 - Clearing or changing the browser history on your personal computer may also create a safety risk.
- Your emails and instant messages can be monitored, intercepted, and retrieved by someone else.
- Your computer's webcam can be turned on remotely and used by others to spy on you without your consent.
- Spyware, is a type of software that can track and monitor your information and activity through your computer or phone, and be installed onto your device from the outside (without your knowledge or consent), through email attachments, links, and other means.

Consider Ways to Stay Safer

- Using safer computers or devices
 - If you believe someone has access to your computer or may be monitoring your use, consider using another computer or device that the person does not have access to. Safer computers may be at libraries, shelters, internet cafes, work, or a computer technology center.
- Limiting the personal information that you share about yourself online
 - There is no way to be sure your information is completely private. Be conscious of what you are sharing online and who may be able to see it or share it with others.
 - If there is information about you on the internet that you are uncomfortable with, consider taking steps to remove the information by contacting the websites directly.
- Creating alternative email accounts using a safer computer
 - Someone monitoring your activity may have access to your email account. Consider setting up an entirely new email account that is not connected to the one you currently use. You can use this new account for communications about your safety and sensitive matters. Keep your previous account in order to maintain the appearance that nothing has changed, and use it for other kinds of communication.
- Changing your passwords and usernames
 - Using a safe computer, consider changing the usernames and passwords of your online accounts.
 - It may be safer to create a new username that is different from your name so you cannot be easily identified.
 - You may want to create different passwords for every account using letters, numbers, characters, and words or dates that others would not associate with you. A more secure password may look something like: Comp\$t3r!.
 - It may be more secure to only use these new usernames and passwords on safe computers or devices that cannot be monitored.
- Setting up 2-step verification on all of your online accounts can help prevent unauthorized access by adding an extra level of security to logging in.
- Keeping computers with webcams out of the personal spaces of your home or workplace, covering the lens of the camera, pointing it towards a wall, and making sure that your webcam is off when you are not using it.
- Being cautious when clicking on unknown links and opening emails from someone you feel may be monitoring you (or from unknown addresses) even if the messages look legitimate.
- Installing a firewall on your computer, as well as anti-virus software.

Phone Safety →

Did You Know

- Once something is posted on social media, it is no longer under your control.
- Posts on social media, including personal information and photos, can potentially be viewed by anyone, even those who are not directly connected (or "friends") with you.
- Personal information that is commonly shared on social media may allow someone else to know your activity and movement both online and offline.

Consider Ways to Stay Safer

- Only posting things that you would like the public to see.
- Protecting your personal information such as pictures, videos, phone numbers, email addresses, birth dates, the schools you have attended, places you have worked, and current locations where you hang out.
- Keeping your social media passwords private and not sharing them with others.
- Logging off when you are not actively using your account to prevent unauthorized access.
- Asking your friends, family, and acquaintances not to share any personal information about you, tag you in photos, or share your location on social media.
- Being aware of, and understanding privacy settings. Setting your profile to private does not necessarily mean that all of your information is truly private. Checking these settings frequently could also be helpful, as sites often change their policies.
- Turning off and disabling location services such as location tracking, tagging, and checking-in features.

Social Networking and Media →

Did You Know

- Your cell phone use can be monitored by someone else without your knowledge or consent.
- Your call and text message history can be recovered and viewed by someone else.
- Cell phones have the ability to track and monitor your exact location in real time.

Consider Ways to Stay Safer

- Reviewing your phone's settings
 - Making sure that your phone is not connected to other devices
 - Creating a passcode for accessing your phone
 - Disabling your phone's auto-answer option, if it has one
 - Disabling or turning off location and navigation services as well as Bluetooth, and using caution when using any mobile apps that utilize these features
- Deleting all apps that you are not familiar with, do not use, or do not understand
- Asking your phone service carrier for information about location services or apps
- Finding out if it is possible to take the batteries out of your phone to prevent your phone from transmitting signals and data
- Getting a new phone whose account information is not known to anyone; a donated or "pay as you go" cell phone may be a safer alternative



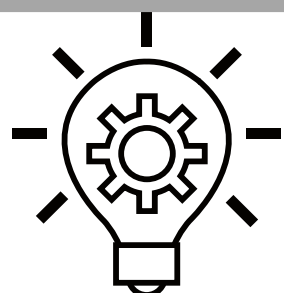
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Creating a Safety Plan

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Consider the following:



- Where could you go during an emergency?
 - Your safety plan should include a safe place in your neighborhood you could get to quickly during an emergency.
 - Minimize sharing your emergency gathering spot to sustain your safety.
- Are there phone numbers you need to memorize?
 - In case you do not have access to your phone, memorizing the phone numbers of those who can help will prove important and handy.
- Do you have children that need to be a part of your safety plan?
 - Does your child need to know how to call 911 in case of an emergency?
 - Does your child know where to go in case violence happens when they are around, such as a trusted relative or neighbor's house?

- Are there people in your life or in your community who can offer support?
- Support can take many forms—walking home with a friend or neighbor can be helpful if you have concerns about someone approaching, following, or harassing you on the street.
 - Talking with a trusted friend or family member can be helpful for emotional support.
- Are there ways to avoid areas or locations that make you feel unsafe?
 - Using different routes to go to work, school, or home can be helpful when trying to manage your safety.
 - If alternate routes aren't available, are there certain times of day that would be safer for you to travel? Traveling in groups or with a partner can be comforting.

- Do you need a safety plan for work or school?
 - Your employer may consider changing your work location or hours, or you could alert security or reception staff to your situation.
- Is your safety plan stored on a digital device?
 - Your cell phone may have GPS tracking features. Geocoding features can identify your location on your social media posts. You can disable these features.

Resources for Your Information

- Baltimore City Police Department 911 | 410-396-2100
- Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City 443-984-6000
- Baltimore Crisis Response 410-433-5175
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 410-585-3010
- Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center 877-842-8461

Do (Action Items) the following:



- NOT respond directly to threats. Responding to a threat could escalate the threat to a new level.
- NOT respond to threats or insults on social media.
- NOT speculate or assume who might have killed your loved one.
- Seek safety first if being threatened, then report the threat to authorities and FSN + review your safety plan.
- Make a plan immediately and increase your safety.

- Record each incident (e.g. Who, What, When [date and time], Where, How etc...).
- Report incidents to the Baltimore Police Department.
- Report threats to the State's Attorney's Office, if your case is in court.
- Contact FSN if you are **prevented** from making a report.
- Review and revise your safety plan relative to your experiences and as necessary.
- Preserve any evidence you have.
 - If you are threatened on social media, take a screen shot. If you have physical evidence, do not touch it.
 - Call 911 to have police collect the evidence.

- Celebrate the life of your loved one (e.g. info flyers, vigils, services, funerals etc...)
- Discuss whether you need an Order of Peace or Protection Order.
- Change your privacy settings on your digital devices and social platforms.
- Develop a Family Communication Plan to use in an urgent situation.
 - Make sure everyone has everyone's numbers.
 - Identify safe adults, safe locations.
 - A "safe word or question" with minor children.
 - Travel partners, routes, and times. Consider options for relocation if desired.
 - Arrange for family check-in times.
 - Let unknown callers go to voicemail.
 - Ask for support when you need and want.
- **WRITE down all of your responses to both the "considerations" and "action items" above. Share with whomever you desire, and store for your keeping. This is YOUR safety plan!**

Contact Us

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