

A photograph of a woman with dark hair hugging a young child with short blonde hair from behind. The woman is wearing a dark t-shirt and has a tattoo on her left forearm. The child is wearing a white t-shirt and khaki pants. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark purple filter.

Making a Safety Plan In Violent or Abusive Relationships



**Community Legal
Information**
Empowerment Through Knowledge

Contents



Introduction	3
Family Violence	5
Court Orders	6
My Safety Plan	8
Conflict and Support	8
Children and Safety	10
Leaving the House	13
Checklist	16
After You Leave	17
Parenting Arrangements	20
Work and Public Places	21
More Topics	23
Tips for Newcomers	24
Tips for Phone Safety	25
Tips for Computer and Internet Safety	26
Glossary	28
Support Services	29
More Resources	34

Introduction



This publication is designed to help you prepare in case you face intimate partner violence or family violence. **Intimate partner violence** is violence or abuse in a romantic relationship. **Family violence** is any violence or abuse by one family member against another.

A **safety plan** is a tool to help you prepare for a crisis and how you and your children will get to safety.

Safety plans help you:

- Think about what to do ahead of time.
- Prepare for how you will handle a dangerous situation.
- Protect you and your children from violence.

Read through this publication and think carefully about your answers.

It may not be safe to keep this booklet in your home. You may want to ask a trusted family member, friend, Victim Services worker, or PEI Family Violence Prevention Services staff member to keep it for you.



The information in this publication is not legal advice and does not replace guidance from a lawyer.




About Us



Community Legal Information is a registered charity. We provide plain-language legal information and low-cost lawyer referrals.

This resource was funded by Justice Canada.

Community Legal Information

-  www.legalinfopei.ca
-  info@legalinfopei.ca
-  902-892-0853; 1-800-240-9798 (toll-free)

Canada 

Getting Support



If you experience family violence or other forms of violence, you are not alone. There are services available for you. You can access services if you report family violence to the police or not. You can find more support in the "Support Services" section on page 29.

Family Violence



What is family violence?

Family violence is any violence or abuse by one family member against another family member. Family violence includes violence:

- By one partner against the other,
- By a parent against a child,
- By a child against a parent,
- Between siblings, or
- Involving grandparents.

You could experience violence from someone you are dating whom you do not live with.

In a violent relationship, there is a cycle of violence. A violent period follows a calm period. Violence usually increases over time. Even if you do not want to leave the relationship, it is important to create a safety plan for you and your children.

For more information on family violence, see our publication [*Family Violence and the Law*](#).

Court Orders



One of the most dangerous times for a victim of family violence can be after they leave. You might want to get a court order to have legal protections from the court. A **court order** is a document from the court that states a judge's decisions and rules that must be followed.

There are different court orders that can protect you. To get a court order, you might need the help of a lawyer, police, or Victim Services. These orders include:

- Emergency Protection Orders (EPO)
- Victim Assistance Orders (VAO)
- Restraining Orders
- Peace Bonds
- Undertakings
- Probation Orders



If violence is about to happen, Call 911. Police can help you and your children leave safely.

An EPO or a VAO can:

- Direct a police officer to remove the person who harmed you from the home.
- Order the person who harmed you not to contact you, your family, or another person.
- Order the person who harmed you to stay away from any place identified in the order.
- Give you exclusive access to the family home for a set period.
- Stop the person who harmed you from ending the basic services of utilities (heat, telephone, electrical, water and sewage).
- Require the person who harmed you to pay rent or mortgage on the home.

You can ask to include other terms in an EPO or VAO. Contact the police or Victim Services for help. For more information, see our publications [Court Orders for Your Protection](#) or [Family Violence and the Law](#).

Call Family Legal Aid. You might be eligible for their services. The RISE Program can also help you get up to four hours of free legal advice.

RISE Program

- 📍 www.risepei.com
- ✉ rise@legalinfopei.ca
- ☎ 902-218-6143

PEI Family Legal Aid

- ☎ Charlottetown: 902-368-6656
- ☎ Summerside: 902-888-8066

My Safety Plan



Conflict and Support

This section helps you plan for violent incidents and conflict. If your plan involves someone else, ask that person if they are willing to help you before counting on their support.

1. If an argument starts, I will go to larger rooms with more than one exit. I will avoid places in the house where I may be trapped or where there are possible weapons (kitchen, bathroom, etc.). The places where I will go are:

2. If I must leave, this is the path I will use (stairwell, elevator, etc.):

3. Another way I can leave is:

4. I can keep a bag of essentials (medications, medical cards, money, car or house keys) ready to grab and go quickly. A safe place I can hide it is:

5. I can tell someone else about the violence and ask that they call 911 if they think a violent incident is happening. This could be a neighbour, friend, or family member. The person I will tell is:

6. I can use a code word with my older children, family, or trusted friends so they call for help. My code word is:



You can talk to the police about the violence and ask that they open a file in your name.

Children and Safety


A violent incident is very scary for a child. During a violent incident, you may not be able to protect your children. It is important that you talk to them about what they should do if there is a violent incident and make a safety plan with them.


If you fear that someone may take your children out of the country, ask Passport Canada to put them on the passport system lookout. It is illegal to remove a child from Canada without a court order or consent letter if this removal denies another parent their parenting time. Canada signed an international agreement with many countries that arranges the quick return of the child to the other parent.

If your child is not a Canadian citizen, contact:

- Canadian Border Services at 1-800-461-9999.
- The embassy of your country.
- The agency that issued your child's passport.

Passport Canada

 1-800-567-6868; 1-819-997-8338

 www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/child-passport/child-safety-list.html

7. In a violent incident, children should get away and protect themselves. For example, go to a safe room with a lock on the door. If violence is about to happen, I can tell them to get out of the house, hide, or:

“Call the police, mom/dad is being hurt.”

8. I can teach my children how and when to call 911 and what to say. In most areas of PEI, the police will call back and respond in person. The things the children need to say when they call 911 are:

Full Name:

Civic Address:

9. If my children cannot get to a phone in my house, they can go somewhere else to get help. Other places to go for help are:
-
-



You must contact Child Protection Services if you think a child is being abused or neglected.

10. If the children must leave the house, we can plan to meet at a safe place. Our safe meeting place will be:

11. If I leave, I can ask someone to pick my children up from daycares, sitters, and schools. I have informed the daycares, sitters, and schools that these people are permitted to pick up my children and they have documented it. The people who have my permission to pick up my children are:

Name	Phone Number	Relationship



Leaving your children behind during a violent incident may affect parenting arrangements later.

Leaving the House

It may not be safe to tell the person harming you that you are leaving. The period after you leave may be the most dangerous time. The risk may be higher if they have access to weapons. You may be planning to leave your abusive partner in a calm period. This section includes things you might want to consider.

After leaving, you may want to use community and government services or talk to a lawyer. See "Support Services" on page 29 for more information.

12. If I must leave home quickly, I can go to a shelter, a hotel, friends, or family. If I plan to stay with friends or family, I will ask them if it is okay. My options are:

Where	Phone Number	Planned Route
Shelter(s)		
Friend(s)		
Family		
Motel/Hotel		
Other		

13. If I leave the house during a calm period, I can get copies of important documents (birth certificates, health cards, passports, and my spouse's social insurance number). Social insurance numbers can be used to help locate people for child support or serving court documents. I will ask this person to keep these documents safe:

14. I can take out half the funds from any joint bank account and deposit it in an account in my name. I know that the money can be considered when we divide property later. I may be able to save some money from the Child Tax Credit, grocery money, or:

15. If I do not have transportation, I can ask these people for a ride. I can also call Anderson House to help me make transportation arrangements.

Name	Phone Number

16. Anderson House works with the PEI Humane Society to help provide foster care for some pets or larger animals. I can call Anderson House or ask a friend or neighbour to look after my animals. Plans for my animals are:

Pet Name	Foster Caretaker	Phone Number

17. I can tell service providers not to give out my phone number, address, and appointment times or send mail to my home address. The places I will contact are:

Service Name	Phone Number	Contacted
Bank		
Doctor		
Dentist		

Checklist

You might want to take important items with you when you leave your house. The list below covers some important items.

- Medication
- Hearing or mobility aids and eyeglasses
- Keys for the house, car, and office
- Money and credit cards
- Health cards and vaccination records
- Cheque books, bank books, and debit cards
- Children's toys, blankets, and books
- Marriage, divorce, or separation papers
- Work permit, Permanent Resident Card, or other legal documents
- Passport or immigration papers
- First Nation Status Cards
- Social insurance card and your spouse's social insurance number
- Driver's license and registration
- Address book
- Photos
- Court Orders (EPO, VAO, etc.)
- Lease, mortgage, insurance papers
- Clothes
- Charged cell phone
- Phone charger
- Other important items

After You Leave

You might want to get a court order to have legal protections from the court. It is important to have a copy of your court order. You can ask the court or police for a copy. Contact the police when the court order is violated.

If the court order conditions include no contact, you must not contact the accused. You may be charged with a criminal offence if you do.



Leaving your children behind during a violent incident may affect parenting arrangements later.

18. These conditions are important to me in a court order:

19. I should call the police any time my spouse breaches the order. I will keep a record of the incidents. I can use this chart to record any breaches.

Date	Witness	Reported

Incident

Date	Witness	Reported

Incident

Date	Witness	Reported

Incident

Date	Witness	Reported

Incident

If I move to a new place, I will check to see that it has:

- A well-lit entrance
- Locks on all doors and windows
- Deadbolts on the doors
 - I can ask the landlord if they can install deadbolts.

If I move, I will:

- Notify the local police.
- Give them my new address.
- Tell them of the court order and my ex-spouse's history of violence towards me.

I can tell my children to call 911 if my ex-spouse shows up.

I can show trusted neighbours a photo of my ex-spouse and let them know the vehicle they drive. I can ask trusted neighbours to call 911 if they:

- Think I am in danger, or
- See my ex-spouse around my home.

20. My trusted neighbours are:

Name	Phone Number

Parenting Arrangements

Parenting time is the time a child spends in the care of a parent. For more information about parenting, see our publication *Parenting and the Law*.

If my ex-spouse has parenting time, I can ask for it to be supervised.

21. For safety reasons, I can drop my children off with my ex-spouse and pick them up in a public place. This public place will be:

22. My ex and I will agree on trusted people to drop off and pick up the children. We will ask:

Name	Phone Number

Work and Public Places

It is important to take steps to ensure your safety at work and in public.

Here are some things you can do to stay safe:

- Drive to the nearest police station if your ex-spouse follows you while driving.
- Go into a store and call 911 if your ex-spouse follows you on foot.
- Check that your car is empty before getting into it.
- Buy a whistle or a personal alarm to use if you are harassed in public.
- Make a safety plan and inform your friends, family, and co-workers about it.

At work, I will tell a trusted person about my situation.

23. I will tell:

I will say:

24. If my ex-spouse shows up at my workplace, I will ask someone to call 911:

25. If it is possible for someone at work to screen my calls, I will ask:

26. When I go out, I will go with friends I feel safe with. Some people I feel safe with are:

Name	Phone Number

More Topics

You may have safety concerns that are not covered in this publication. In this space, you can include other safety concerns and plans.

27.

Safety Concern	My Safety Plan



Victim Services or Family Violence Prevention Services can help you.

Tips for Newcomers



If you are not fluent in English, ask someone you know to help translate for you. Immigrant and Refugee Services Association (IRSA) may help you find an interpreter. Ask them about confidentiality.



Anderson House may help you access Multicultural Interpretation Services. This service provides translation over the phone in many languages.

28. The person I will ask for help is:

Immigrant and Refugee Services Association

-  www.irsapei.ca
-  info@irsapei.ca
-  902-628-6009

Anderson House

-  www.fvps.ca/anderson-house
-  902-892-0960; 1-800-240-9894

Tips for Phone Safety



To help keep you safe, you might want to:

- Tell anyone calling you to block their Caller ID or use Call Block (*67).
- Keep your cell phone charged.
- Clear your phone of the last number you called so it cannot be re-dialled.
- Change your phone passcode regularly.

If you are talking to a lawyer, you might want to ask them to:

- Not contact you at your home address.
- Call a friend or family member and leave a message for you to call back.
- Block their Caller ID or use Call Block (*67) when calling you.

You may be able to get a cell phone from Victim Services that can be used to call 911 only.

Tips for Computer and Internet Safety



The person who is harming you could be tracking your online activity.

Internet browsers record a history of recently visited websites. It may be safer to get information on the internet from a computer your spouse or ex-spouse cannot access. You might also want to delete your browsing history by pressing (Ctrl + H) or (Command + H) and then “clear browsing history.”

You can also use passwords that are not easy to guess. Passwords that are easy to guess include:

- Your birthday
- Your child’s birthday
- Your maiden name
- Your nickname



When you use email:

- Make sure to not allow your computer to remember your username and password.
- Delete emails from your sent and deleted emails. There is a chance messages can still be recovered from your internet service provider.
- Save any harassing messages or emails from the person harming you. You can use them as evidence if you report the harassment to police.
- Do not email any information that could be used against you.

When you use your computer:

- Save important files on a memory stick and keep it in a safe place.
- Disable your webcam or cover your built-in computer camera.
- Empty deleted files from your trash bin.
- Use a firewall, anti-virus, or a Virtual Private Network (VPN).
- Keep your operating system and internet browser updated.

Glossary



Court order

A document from the court that states a judge's decisions and rules that must be followed.

Family violence

Any violence or abuse by one family member against another.

Intimate partner violence

Violence or abuse in a romantic relationship.

Parenting time

The time a child spends in the care of a parent.

Safety plan




A tool to help you prepare for a crisis and how you and your children will get to safety.

Support Services



If you are in an emergency, call 911.

Municipal Police

-  Charlottetown: 902-629-4172
-  Summerside: 902-432-1201
-  Kensington: 902-836-4499

RCMP

-  Queens: 902-368-9300
-  East Prince: 902-463-9300
-  West Prince: 902-853-9300
-  Montague: 902-838-9300
-  Souris: 902-687-9300

PEI Family Legal Aid

-  www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/legal-aid
-  Charlottetown: 902-368-6656
-  Summerside: 902-888-8066

Provides free legal representation for some family law issues. There are criteria that you must meet to qualify for this service.

Victim Services

- 📞 902-368-4582 (Queens & Kings Counties)
- 📞 902-888-8218 (Prince County)
- ✉️ victimservicescharlottetown@gov.pe.ca
- ✉️ victimservicessummerside@gov.pe.ca

Helps victims of crime on PEI or those who have experienced a crime on PEI navigate the criminal justice system.

Family Violence Prevention Services (FVPS)

- 📄 www.fvps.ca (chat available)
- 📞 West Prince: 902-859-8849
- 📞 East Prince: 902-436-0517
- 📞 Eastern PEI: 902-838-4600 ext. 23
- 📞 Queens: 902-566-1480 ext. 24

Offers safety planning and emergency shelter (the Anderson House) for victims of family violence.


Anderson House

- 📄 www.fvps.ca/anderson-house
- 📞 902-892-0960 or 1-800-240-9894 (toll-free, text/call)

Emergency shelter for women, trans, and non-binary people and their children. Anderson House can be reached 24 hours a day.

Chief Mary Bernard Memorial Women's Shelter

 www.cmbmws.ca


 1-855-297-2332

Provides safe housing on Lennox Island to Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and their children who are experiencing family violence and/or homelessness.

PEI Rape and Sexual Assault Centre


 www.peirsac.org

 admin@peirsac.org

 1-866-566-1864; 902-566-1864 (counselling request)

Provides free and confidential client-led counselling to people who have experienced recent or past sexual assault or childhood sexual abuse.


Child Protection Services


 1-877-341-3101 (weekdays)

 1-800-341-6868 (evenings, weekends, and holidays)

General Inquiries

 Charlottetown: 902-368-5330

 Summerside: 902-888-8100

 Montague: 902-838-0703

Provides child protection services for children experiencing abuse. Abuse includes the child being exposed to family violence.

Immigrant and Refugee Services Association

-  www.irsapei.ca
-  info@irsapei.ca
-  902-628-6009



Provides short-term settlement services, and long-term inclusion and community integration programs for new immigrants in Prince Edward Island.

Adult Protection Program (Home Care)

-  Charlottetown: 902-368-4790
-  Montague: 902-838-0786
-  O'Leary: 902-859-8730
-  Souris: 902-687-7096
-  Summerside: 902-888-8440



Provides help or intervention to vulnerable adults who are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect. For more information, call Home Care and Support using the numbers above.

Passport Canada

-  1-800-567-6868; 1-819-997-8338
[www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/child-passport/child-safety-list.html)
-  [services/canadian-passports/child-passport/child-safety-list.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports/child-passport/child-safety-list.html)




The federal office responsible for issuing passports and travel documents.

Island Help Line

-  www.theislandhelpline.com
-  1-800-218-2885

Provides free, confidential emotional support and crisis intervention to Islanders of all ages.

Community Legal Information

-  www.legalinfopei.ca
-  info@legalinfopei.ca
-  902-892-0853; 1-800-240-9798 (toll-free)

We provide legal information, referrals, publications on legal topics in English and French, public speakers, and presentations on legal topics. This is a free, confidential service. We also offer the Lawyer Referral Service, which provides a short consultation with a lawyer for a modest fee.

RISE Program

-  www.risepei.com
-  rise@legalinfopei.ca
-  902-218-6143

Provides free legal resources and support to people who have experienced sexual violence, workplace sexual harassment, or intimate partner violence. This is a free, confidential service.

More Resources



Community Legal Information also offers these publications:


- *Family Violence and the Law*
- *Court Orders for Your Protection*
- *Health & Safety Plan for Indigenous Families*
- *Family Law Essentials*
- *Parenting and the Law*
- *A Parenting Plan for PEI Families*

We also have publications on other legal topics. All publications are free and are on our website. Contact us for paper copies.

Community Legal Information

 www.legalinfopei.ca

 info@legalinfopei.ca

 902-892-0853; 1-800-240-9798 (toll-free)



Community Legal Information is a charitable organization that receives funding from Justice Canada, the Law Foundation of PEI, the Law Society of PEI, PEI Department of Justice and Public Safety, and other sources. Community Legal Information provides understandable and useful information about the law and the justice system in Prince Edward Island.

For more information on other legal topics, visit www.legalinfopei.ca, email info@legalinfopei.ca, or call us at **902-892-0853** or **1-800-240-9798**. You can also find us on social media.

Donate to support our work at www.legalinfopei.ca/donate.

We encourage the non-commercial reproduction of information in this publication.

Charitable registration number: 118870757RR0001

ISBN 978-1-989140-28-4

Published 2012

Updated January 2023



**Community Legal
Information**
Empowerment Through Knowledge