

# Quick Reference

To be given to client

## ONLINE SAFETY

In an abusive relationship, being on-line and using devices like smart phones can be another area of safety risk. An abuser can track your Internet activities, including websites you have visited and searches. There are ways to cover your tracks online but you need to be careful. Information is available at: [www.humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/15728.html](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/15728.html)

### Emails and Social Media Accounts

- Make your online presence anonymous, so that you are not easily identified. Only give out your new email address or social media accounts to trusted contacts.
- Strong passwords are critical. Change all your passwords.
- Once you've created a new email account, check to make sure your real name is not displayed. Send yourself an email and check to see if your real name is displayed alongside your email name in the sender field.
- If you use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, use your new email to create a new account. When setting up the account, be sure to choose a username that does not identify you. Don't use any photos of yourself or photos that could be uniquely associated with you.
- Set your account to private (friends only) and be careful when adding friends so that your abuser doesn't have access through a friend's.
- Turn off the location functionality that might show where you are whenever you post.

### Cellular Phones

- Cell phone and smart phone settings can be set to disable Global Positioning Systems (GPS) so that your device does not tell someone else where you are.

## IF YOU ARE BEING STALKED OR BELIEVE YOU ARE BEING STALKED

It is important that you seek support to manage the stalking and its impact on your life. Consider the following recommendations and attempt only if and when it is safe to do so:

### Avoid all contact with your stalker

At the earliest stage, give one clear, firm message to the stalker that their attention is unwanted and you want no further contact from the person. If you have children with the stalker, consider filing for custody or seek legal advice.

### Contact the Police

Stalking is a crime. If you are being stalked, contact the police immediately.

### Document all incidents

Keep a log of every stalking incident with dates, times and details of incident.

### Increase your Personal Safety by Creating a Safety Plan

A safety plan allows you to think about things that could happen and what you could do in the event that it does.

## IF I CHOOSE TO STAY WITH MY ABUSER

Be aware. Pay attention to changes in mood and behaviour and take action.

1. When an argument erupts move to a safe place, either inside or outside the home. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen and garage where there are many potential weapons. If you stay inside, try to be in a room with outside access like windows and doors. If you don't have access to a safe room and it is safe to do so, leave the residence.
2. Teach others, including children, to get out of the room where the abuse is occurring and to call 911 out of view of the abuser.
3. Have a safety pack already prepared and stored safely, but remember it has the potential to alert the abuser and put you in danger. Hide it well!

## SAFETY PACK

Keep your safety pack hidden in a place where you can grab it quickly. Or ask someone, a close friend or shelter, to hold on to your pack. While a safety pack is a useful tool it also has the potential to alert the abuser and put you in danger. Take precautions to ensure safety pack is well hidden. Items with a \* indicate important items.

All other items are considerations to have on hand.

Safety pack should include:

- Identification for self and children. Copies or pictures uploaded to internet are also an option. \*
  - » Driver's License & Passports \*
  - » Health Card & Provincial drug plan \*
  - » Birth Certificate \*
  - » Social Insurance Card \*
  - » Status Card \*
- Copies of custody orders / restraining orders/ Emergency Protection Orders (EPO), court orders\*
- Immigration or work permits and visa\*
- Marriage license or Divorce Decree \*
- Recent picture of you, kids, and abuser
- Cash, debit card, and/or credit cards
- Medication, hearing aids, glasses
- Keys (house, car, work, safety deposit box)
- Extra clothing for you and your kids
- Address book with important contacts
- Baby food, formula, diapers
- Small saleable objects (jewelry)
- A pay-as-you-go or pre-paid cellular phone

## I DO NOT LIVE WITH MY ABUSER BUT WANT TO END THE RELATIONSHIP

Ending an abusive relationship may be dangerous. Take extra precautions and consider the following safety strategies when it is safe to do so:

Take all threats seriously and contact police.

Make it clear you want the relationship to end.

Make it clear to the person that you do not want them to call you or see you and that you do not want any of their friends or family to try to contact you.

Stop any and all contact with the person. If the person begins stalking, phoning or following you, document the times, events, and your fear level. This evidence is important if a criminal harassment charge is to be laid.

Get a new unlisted phone number but also keep your old telephone number. Do not give out your new number to the abuser or their associates.

Tell others not to give out any information about you. Find out those who might be associated with the abuser and do not give them any information.

Create new social media accounts but keep the one known to the abuser to capture harassing messages. Do not reply back. Save these messages and take them to the police.

If you have children with the abuser get legal advice and other support to help you make decisions about the safety of your children.

## CREATING A SAFETY PLAN

- Identify who you can tell and discuss how they can help (code words).
- Identify appropriate transportation options.
- Rehearse escape plan with children.
- Open separate bank accounts, if possible.
- Hide money and spare change in a safe place
- Find places in the neighbourhood, open 24 hours 7 days a week.
- Take the children with you.
- Get a police escort if you fear violence and if you need to return to your home

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Family Violence Information Line, phone toll-free in Alberta: 310-1818 Open 24 hours, 7 days per week. All calls are answered by trained staff and kept confidential. Services available in 170 languages. Government of Alberta emergency funding, phone toll-free in Alberta: 1-866-644-5135. To locate a shelter or if you need someone to talk to, phone toll-free: 1-866-331-3933.



## PROTECTION ORDERS

There are a variety of protection orders available with or without police involvement or criminal charges before the courts.

**Emergency Protection Order (EPO)** – Police or victims (depending on location) may apply for an EPO through the courts. An EPO is available when the violence, harassment or threatening behavior warrants conditions to provide the immediate protection of victims and/or family members. For more info: [www.alberta.ca/get-emergency-protection-order.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/get-emergency-protection-order.aspx),

**Queen's Bench Protection Order (QBPO)** – Available on application by victims to a Court of Queen's Bench Centre. Conditions would be similar to that of an EPO though this order is not meant for emergency situations.

**Restraining Order** – Available through a Court of Queen's Bench. Intended for situations of domestic violence where the parties are not related, never having lived together but in an intimate relationship.

## INFORMATION IF YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED AN EPO

**\*\*An EPO is only effective keeping you safe if breaches are reported and conditions enforced\*\***

Getting an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) can be difficult and traumatic, but is an important tool to help keep you and your family safe. This guide explains what you can expect after getting an EPO, and provides steps you can take to protect your safety and access other supports.

### AFTER THE EPO IS GRANTED

The respondent must be served the EPO. DO NOT serve the EPO yourself as this is not safe.

- If you live in the Edmonton or Calgary, your EPO will automatically be forwarded to the police and they will serve it for you.
- If you live in any other municipality, deliver a copy of the EPO to the police station or RCMP Detachment that is closest to where you live.
- Police will contact you when the EPO has been served.

Once the EPO has been served, you should give it to anyone that needs to know, such as:

- Your workplace security or your employer (if you choose to advise them).
- Children's schools, childcare centres, etc.
- Any other persons named on the EPO for protection (i.e. other family members).

You should also complete the Safety Planning Checklist on the back of this information sheet.

### ATTENDING THE EPO REVIEW

The EPO has a date on it when the court will review your case and decide whether to revoke it, continue it or replace it with a different order. You need to attend this review.

- Date and time of your review (found on line #7 of your EPO):
- Call the EPO program at least 24 hours before the review date: Calgary & Area: 403-297-5260; Edmonton & Area: 780-422-9222  
Other Locations: 1-866-845-3425.
- Arrange for a friend or relative to attend as respondent may be present.
- Arrive at the specified courtroom for review at least 30 minutes early.
- Do not leave the review until your case has been heard.

If at any time you feel unsafe in the court house or the respondent has made contact with you seek a Sheriff or Security officer within the courthouse immediately.

### COMMON QUESTIONS

#### What is a breach of the EPO?

Once the respondent is served the EPO, they are required to obey all conditions. If they do not obey a condition, they have breached the order.

Depending on the conditions of your order, this may mean any contact with you directly or indirectly is considered a breach. This includes a text message, email, phone call, private message via social media or anything like that, regardless of what the message says or why they are contacting you.

Being within the "do not attend, enter or be within" distance of you or the addresses outlined in line #1 of your EPO is also a breach.

When you attend the review date for the EPO, the respondent will be within the no contact distance. However, the respondent is not allowed to speak to you, approach you or sit with you in or out of the court room. The court house is not a free zone.

#### What do I do if I suspect the respondent has breached the conditions of the order?

If the matter is an emergency, call 9-1-1. If the matter is not an emergency, call the non-emergency line of your local police to report the breach.

#### The order says the respondent cannot contact me, can I still contact them?

No. Do not have any contact with the respondent until your case is settled through court. If you require certain contact with the respondent for the sake of children or financial matters, you can discuss this with the Justice in court at the EPO review.

#### Why is it important to report all breaches to police?

An EPO is a valuable tool that allows police additional powers to keep you and your family safe. Do not downplay the seriousness of a breach. Contacting the police to report all incidents helps police officers to prevent more breaches from happening.

## SAFETY PLANNING CHECKLIST WHEN AN EPO HAS BEEN GRANTED AND ABUSER IS NOT LIVING IN YOUR RESIDENCE

### ONLINE SAFETY

- Change all your passwords (i.e. Internet banking, email, social media accounts, etc.)
- Increase privacy settings on social media accounts and consider staying off social media temporarily or deleting accounts
- Ask friends & family members not to share or post information about you
- Turn off the location settings on all electronic devices (cell phones, social media, GPS)
- Consider creating a new email account. Retain your old accounts only for documentation/tracking purposes if respondent attempts to contact you

### SAFETY AT HOME

- Consider changing locks on doors or windows (if applicable), or if there are additional security measures that can be added to increase security at your residence such as video surveillance
- Rehearse an escape plan from within the residence in the case of an emergency (include children if applicable)
- Find places in your neighborhood that are safe places to go, like neighbors or nearby businesses

- Create a safety plan including code words that you can use to tell extended family members you need help
- Pack a safety pack and include items such as important documents, identification, medications, keys and an extra set of
- clothing, if possible

### SAFETY AT WORK

- Inform your co-workers (if applicable) about the EPO and the conditions so they can report if the respondent shows up or contacts you at your place of employment
- Consider asking security or a co-worker to walk you to and from your vehicle or mode of transportation

### DOCUMENTATION & REPORTING

- Keep a log of any incidents with specific details: telephone calls, emails, in-person contact, indirect contact, or any suspicious behavior
- Report all breaches of the EPO to police immediately
- Provide any notes or documents related to potential breaches to police so they can enforce the EPO conditions

### RESOURCES

Alberta Works: Emergency funding and assistance with basic needs.

Toll Free Number: 1-866-644-5135 [www.humanservices.alberta.ca/financial-support](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/financial-support)

Sexual Abuse Toll Free Number: 1-877-237-5888 Domestic Violence Toll Free Number: 1-866-606-7233

