

# Planning for an Emergency

If you are at-risk of or currently experiencing domestic violence, it is important to think about what to do if the situation escalates and you need to get help right away.

## Put your safety plan into action

If you need to flee an abusive situation and you have a safety plan, put it into action.

If you don't currently have a safety plan and want to create one, visit <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/15727.html>; call the Family Violence Info Line at 310-1818; or contact your nearest family violence information centre.

## Call 911

If you or your children have been hurt or are in danger, call 911. Tell the operator what is happening and follow the operator's directions.

## Go to a safe place

If you and your children can safely leave your home, know where you can go for help. Have a list of trusted family members, friends, or neighbours who can provide you with a safe place to stay. Know the contact information for your nearest emergency shelter if you have nowhere else to turn for help. Locate your nearest shelter by calling the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters at 1-866-331-3933 or visiting <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/15670.html>.

## Collect your personal belongings

If you are not in immediate danger, try to collect important things before you leave your home, including: health care cards, birth certificates, debit and credit cards, keys, medication, prescription eyeglasses, insurance policies, and a change of clothing. If you are leaving with your children, bring items that will comfort them.

## Consider applying for an Emergency Protection Order

If you fear for your safety, you may be able to apply for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO). An EPO can prohibit your abusive spouse or partner from contacting you and entering the family home, among other things. You can apply for an EPO by going to your local courthouse, contacting Legal Aid Alberta's Emergency Protection Order Program (call 1-866-845-3425), or calling your local victim services unit (call 310-0000 then 780-427-3460) or the police. For more information, read **What You Need to Know About...**

**Emergency Protection Orders** (available online at [www.willownet.ca](http://www.willownet.ca) or [www.cplea.ca/publications](http://www.cplea.ca/publications)).

## Plan for the future

If you think you may need to flee your home, start preparing for some of the legal issues that you may need to deal with after you leave:

- Learn about applying for an interim child custody or parenting order.
- Learn about applying for interim financial support or emergency financial support. Alberta Works offers financial support for Albertans fleeing abuse - call 1-866-644-5135 for more information.
- Learn about exclusive possession of the family home (if it is somewhere you would feel safe returning to if your abusive spouse or partner was no longer present).
- Consider whether you want to lay criminal charges or apply for a protection order.
- If you were renting a property, know how to remove your name from the lease. Visit Laws for Landlords and Tenants at [www.landlordandtenant.org](http://www.landlordandtenant.org).
- If you had joint bank or credit card accounts, know who to contact about changing these accounts



If you can afford to hire a lawyer, you may find it helpful to have a lawyer guide you through these steps. If you cannot afford to hire a lawyer, call Legal Aid Alberta at 1-866-845-3425 to see if you're eligible for assistance or your local legal clinic (a complete list can be found here: [http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help\\_for\\_Individuals](http://www.pbla.ca/gethelp/item.5602-Help_for_Individuals)). You can also learn more about many of these issues by reading the other information sheets in this series by visiting [www.cplea.ca/publications](http://www.cplea.ca/publications).

## Further Information

**Government of Alberta - Resolution and Court Administration Services** may be able to help you with your family law matters through connecting you with appropriate assessment services. For more information about services available, call 1-855-738-4747 or visit [www.rcas.alberta.ca](http://www.rcas.alberta.ca).

**Family Violence Info Line:** 310-1818

**Alberta Works Emergency Financial Support:** Call 1-866-644-5135 or visit [http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/RRM-PUB\\_fs\\_supports\\_fleeing\\_abuse.pdf](http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/RRM-PUB_fs_supports_fleeing_abuse.pdf)

**WillowNet: Abuse and the Law in Alberta** (a website of the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta): [www.willownet.ca](http://www.willownet.ca)

**LegalAve** (produced by the Alberta Legal Information Society): [www.legalave.ca](http://www.legalave.ca)

**Legal Aid Alberta's Emergency Protection Order Program (EPOP)**

In Edmonton, call 780-422-9222; in Calgary, call 403-297-5260; in Lethbridge, call 403-388-3162; other areas, call 1-866-845-3425