

Safety Planning – Stalking/Criminal Harassment

Stalking is against the law. Therefore I know that I can contact the police, if I choose. The police might be able to help with additional safety strategies such as Peace Bonds or No Contact Conditions if there are charges laid.

I have already contacted the police and they responded by:

I have not contacted the police at this time because:

Keep a written record and document incidents. Take notes of times, dates, and place of every contact with the stalker, even if it seems insignificant at the time. Note all hang ups and occasions where the person on the other end of the line says nothing. Make sure you save all text messages, voicemails, emails, or notes they may leave or incidents of vandalism. These records can assist a criminal investigation if you choose to contact the police and can also assist you in identifying patterns to help in a better safety plan.

Choose the best way for you in doing this. It might be writing it in a day planner or printing off a calendar you can write on with all the details of each incident. It might be using a simple “Incident Log” such as the one at the end of this safety plan or keeping track in a notebook. Whichever method you choose, doesn’t matter, as long as it works for you.

Reduce Isolation. Do you have at least one trusted family member, friend, co-worker, or neighbour that you can tell about what is happening? Do you feel comfortable asking this person to be part of your safety plan with you? Do you trust them to keep your privacy and confidentiality?

Below are some strategies that others have sometimes found to be helpful in increasing safety if experiencing stalking. Check off ones that you want to try and discuss with a worker if you need help getting started.

- Going to the police is one option, but you may also apply for a civil restraining order on your own through the Court of Queens Bench.
- Get a PO box for all mail so you don’t have to give out your address.
- If you are in an apartment building, remove your name from the door buzzer or use an alias if one is required. See if you can park your vehicle in a way that does not identify which apartment you live in.
- Avoid giving out your Social Insurance Number. It is only legally required at banks and/or employer tax forms.

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- If you are able, get call display on all phones. Do not answer the phone unless you know who is calling. Always let it go to voicemail if it is an unknown caller. You can then listen to the message and call people back, if you choose.
- Find out from your telephone provider about access to special features such as call block, call trace, or requesting an unlisted number.
- Use a generic pre-recorded answering message or have someone else record the message on your voicemail. Don't include your name.
- Change your routines and places you frequent as much as possible.
- If you think you are being followed
 - And you are driving – drive around the block to see if the person continues to follow you. If you are still unsure or fearful, drive to a safe place such as the police station, or public area rather than going home.
 - If you are walking – turn around and show that you are aware. Go to a safe place such as a store or business.
 - If you are on public transit – inform the driver. Do not get off the bus until the other person has already left.
- Shred all documents you are throwing out that has your name, address or identifying information on it. If you don't own a shredder save until you are able to take to a community shredding event (usually held a few times a year).
- Search your name on the internet to see if you can find links to you or your contact information. If you find something, you can ask to have your name and address removed from public records.
- Be aware of how technology might be used to stalk/harass: change ID and passwords, use privacy settings on emails/social media platforms, turn off GPS on all devices, ensure they can't access "smart" devices in the home (security system, the "cloud" or items they have previously synched to such as your phone)

One area that I still feel I need support/help in is: _____

NOTE: If you would like additional information on safety plans for other situations such as: If you are thinking about leaving, if you have children, safety in public, if you have a pet, or other personalized situations please contact the Medicine Hat Women's Shelter at 403-529-1091.

