

Checklist and Useful Contacts

Leaving domestic violence

I have left a violent relationship. What are some practical things I need to organise?

- ❑ **Legal information and advice on your rights:** Some topics you may wish to discuss are VROs, family law and divorce, child support, housing and victim's compensation.

Your local community legal centre - find details at www.communitylaw.net or (08) 9221 9322

Women's Domestic Violence Helpline: (08) 9223 1188 or 1 800 007 339

Aboriginal Family Law Service: 1800 469 246 or www.afls.org.au Domestic Violence Legal Unit (Legal Aid): (08) 9261 6254

Women's Law Centre: 1800 625 122 or (08) 9272 8800 or www.wlcwa.org.au

Your local Family Violence Service: Details available from www.courts.dotag.wa.gov.au/f/family_violence_service.aspx

- ❑ **Housing:** To find alternative accommodation: call Department of Housing or in an emergency call Crisis Care to find a refuge. If you have moved out of a rental property, have your name removed from the lease. Call the Tenants Advice Service. If you own your home, get legal advice about your immediate rights and responsibilities.

Crisis Care: 1800 656 463 (24 hours)

Street Law Centre: 1800 234 566 or (02) 9265 9087

Department of Housing: www.dhw.wa.gov.au or 1 800 093 325

Tenants Advice Service: www.taswa.org or (08) 9221 0088 or 1 800 621 888

- ❑ **Utilities:** If you have moved out of the house, remove your name from utility accounts such as water (www.watercorporation.com.au), gas (alinta.net.au) and electricity (synergy.net.au). For more information, see the Debt factsheet in this toolkit.
- ❑ **Phone:** Update your details with your mobile phone company. If you want a different number, contact your phone carrier to change your phone number for free. Cancel any home phone in your name at your old house, including Internet and Pay TV accounts.
- ❑ **Bank and Credit Union:** Update your details and talk to your bank about opening your own account and closing joint accounts.
- ❑ **Mail:** Contact Australia Post to redirect your mail to your new address or, for increased privacy, get a Post Office Box. There may be costs involved.

Australia Post: 13 76 78 or www.auspost.com.au

- ❑ **Important documents:** If you no longer have the originals, you can get copies of most documents including birth certificates, marriage certificate, passports, bank books, VROs, property (title) deeds, car registration, Medicare card. There may be costs involved for some of these documents. You also may be able to recover personal items from your old address with police assistance.

Births Deaths & Marriages: 1300 305 021 or www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au

Australian Passports: 131 232 or www.passports.gov.au

Magistrates Court (for VRO and other local court orders): www.magistratescourt.wa.gov.au

- ❑ **Centrelink:** Update your details, including contact details and change in family and employment situation and make sure you are getting payments you are eligible for. You may be eligible for a Crisis Payment. You can also get a password put on your file to make your information more secure. For more information, contact the Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service.

Centrelink: 131 794 or www.centrelink.gov.au

Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service: (08) 9328 1751 or www.wraswa.org.au

- ❑ **Child Support:** You may want to apply for child support payments. If you feel it is unsafe for you to collect money from your ex, the Child Support Agency can arrange to collect the money. See the Property, Child Support and Maintenance Factsheet in this toolkit.

Child Support Agency: 13 12 72 or www.csa.gov.au

- ❑ **Children's school and/or preschool:** Update your contact details. Also let the school know if there are any safety issues for the children, and/or any restrictions in a VRO that they should know about (such as your ex not to contact the children).

- ❑ **Victims Services:** You can get information about counselling, victims compensation and court support from a community legal centre or directly from the Victim Support Service.

Victims Services, Victims Access Line: 1800 818 988 or (08) 9425 2850 or www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au

- ❑ **Pets:** Temporary housing for pets of people who have escaped domestic violence is sometimes available through the RSPCA, depending on their capacity. You can also update your details through a microchip register if your pet is microchipped.

RSPCA (WA): www.rspcawa.asn.au or (08) 9209 9300

Microchip register: www.petaddress.com.au

- ❑ **Update all your details:** There are many other services you may need to provide with your new contact details or discuss your options with. Some of these are:

- Employer
- Local doctor, health provider, counsellor, dentist
- Medicare: 13 20 11
- Insurance companies - Health, Car, Home and Contents, Life, Funeral etc
- Department of Transport - drivers licence and car rego:
www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/566.asp
- Solicitor, accountant, financial counsellor etc
- Superannuation fund
- Australian Electoral Commission: 13 23 26
- Australian Taxation Office: 13 28 61
- Police - if there are criminal charges against your ex, or police have applied for a VRO for your protection, and you need to be contacted

Ask for a free interpreter if you need one. Or, to call an interpreter yourself, call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on 131450.

❑ **Social media and other IT safety precautions:** Social Media and other IT safety precautions: Because leaving an abusive relationship can often be the most dangerous time, it is important to consider the following:

- Opening a new email account with tight security: If you think your ex-partner may know or be able to guess your old password (or be able to answer your security question), you should consider changing the password, tightening the security, or opening a new account with tighter security.
- Tightening your social media security: you may wish to consider removing any personal details from your profile, tightening your security passwords and questions, make sure your profile is not publically viewable (by anyone who does a Google search) and set it to private, taking any pictures down that you don't want your ex to have access to (once a photo of you is on Facebook, it becomes the property of Facebook), limiting what information on your profile particular friends can see, refraining from "checking in" to certain locations (turn off your location settings) and other measures you think necessary.
- Refraining from making posts about any court proceedings involving your ex as these may be used as evidence against you in court.
- Turning off GPS location services on your phone (if your ex has your phone number) as there are apps available that your ex can use to find your location.
- If you have an iPhone, smart phone, iPad, iPod or tablet and you and your ex-partner were sharing the same account or syncing through iCloud or similar program, you may wish to consider removing your name and opening your own account, so that your ex does not have access to your activities.