

Safety Suggestions

Following the
Issuance of an
Order for Protection
Or
Harassment Restraining Order

Do not depend solely on the information
in this brochure for your safety.

These are guidelines that
may reduce harm from an abuser or stalker.

Every situation will be different
and may require a different response.

These are suggestions, not requirements and
not all may apply to your situation.

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**Southern Valley Alliance
For Battered Women**

Serving the Minnesota Counties of Carver and Scott



Information provided in cooperation

By

Carver County Sheriff's Office

Civil Unit

952-361-1267

AND

**Southern Valley Alliance for Battered
Women**

952-873-4214

Frequently Dialed Phone Numbers

Police and Law Enforcement Non-Emergency Numbers

Carver County Sheriff	952-361-1231
Chaska Police	952-448-4200
VINE	1-877-664-8563

Prosecuting Attorneys and Probation Departments:

Carver County Attorney's Office	952-361-1400
Carver County Court Services	952-361-1460
Department of Corrections	952-496-4170

Other Emergency or Informational Numbers:

Sexual Violence Center	952-445-0547
Suicide Prevention	952-347-2222
Crime Victim's Reparations	651-282-6259
Carver County Crime Victim Coordinator	952-361-1400
Citizens Council Victim Services	612-340-5400
Nat'l Center for Victims of Crime	1-800-FYI-CALL
Privacy Rights Clearinghouse	1-619-298-3396

Legal Services

Southern MN Regional Legal Services	952-440-1040
MN Women Lawyers	612-338-3205
Chrysalis Women's Center	612-871-2603
Centro Legal	651-642-1890
Carver County Law Library	952-361-1564

Visitation Centers

i'M o.K. Children's Visitation Center	952-873-4216
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Safety in Your Home

- Change the locks on your doors as soon as possible. Get additional locks or safety devices to secure your windows. Consider replacing wood doors with steel or metal.
- Keep your house, windows, garage, and car locked at all times. Secure or disconnect your garage door opener. Keep fuse box and mailbox locked. Leave lights on at night or on a timer.
- Install fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, outside motion activated lighting, and security systems. Trim bushes and trees.
- Consider ways to handle harassing phone calls including disconnecting phone when not using it, hanging up, using voice mail, caller ID, or purchasing an "inbound call blocking" device.
- Assume your cordless phone, cellular phone, and computer can be monitored by your abuser/stalker and avoid confidential communications on these devices.
- Inform neighbors and landlord that you are being stalked and they should call the police if they see your stalker near your home or car.
- Secure/remove all firearms, ammunition, and weapons.

- Take precautions to secure valuables including photographs, family heirlooms, pets, and other items of sentimental value.
- Contact utility companies, banks, and insurance providers requesting to be notified of requests to close accounts or end services. Get accounts and services put into your name.
- Devise age appropriate safety plans with your children. Establish “code words” for emergencies.

Safety on the Job and in Public

- Use voice mail, caller ID, or have someone screen your telephone calls, if possible. Screen visitors and deliveries.
- Notify co-workers of your situation including your manager. Provide office or building security with a photo of your stalker, if possible. Instruct all persons NOT to disclose ANY information about you to your stalker or any third party without your knowledge or consent.
- Vary your work schedule, if possible. Eliminate or reduce times you are working by yourself. Don't walk to your car by yourself. Devise a safety plan for when you go to and leave from work. Plan what you would do if something happened.
- Vary your routine. Get a different work or break schedule. Use a different grocery store, bank, gas station, etc. and vary the day of the week and times you run errands.
- In a dangerous or suspicious situation or if a violation of a protective order has occurred while in public, ask for assistance from store clerks, store security, or anyone around.
- Avoid isolated places such as alleys and public restrooms. Avoid using elevators while alone. Use only stairways that are open or well traveled. Do not jog or walk alone.

Safety in Your Car

- Look inside and under your car before entering. Lock your car doors at all times. Do NOT leave mail, valuables, papers, calendar, or information about you or your activities in your car.
- Contact a locksmith about changing the keys for your car or enhancing the locking device.
- Vary your routes to places you regularly drive. Look for places you can drive to for help, if needed.
- Avoid getting into a vehicle with your stalker. If your stalker gets into your car, avoid driving anywhere. Consider throwing your keys as far away as possible.
- Don't get out of your car if followed by your stalker. Drive to a public place and honk your horn.
- Install a locking gas cap and/or hood latch on your car. Consider installing an alarm on your car. Also consider purchasing a remote automatic starting device or, if already installed on your vehicle, USE it.

Protect Your Privacy

- Get a post office box or use a private post office box company to use as your address. Don't give out your real address.
- Get an unlisted and unpublished phone number. Get Caller ID and/or an answering machine or voice mail. Get a new cellular phone and keep it charged up at all times.
- Guard your Social Security Number and DO NOT give it out to any businesses to use as an identification number. Consider changing your driver's license number and, if necessary, your social security number.
- DO NOT have your social security number, phone number, driver's license number, or street address printed on your checks. Use a post office box instead.
- Search the Internet for your name. Remove your name from reverse directories on the Internet. Public libraries have reverse directories and free Internet access that you can use if it isn't available to you.
- Get on the national "Do Not Call" list by calling 1-888-382-1222. To remove yourself from lists offering credit cards, call 1-888-567-8688.

- Protect your computer and Internet activities. Change passwords and PIN numbers. Change your e-mail account. Notify Internet provider/server of harassing or threatening e-mails.
- Be aware that your computer may have “snoop ware” software installed on it. These programs are well hidden and record all e-mails, web pages, or credit card numbers. Video and listening devices may also be hidden in your computer.
- Contact the credit reporting agencies to request your credit report and/or to prohibit the use of information in your file. They are:
 1. Equifax P.O. Box 740123, Atlanta, GA 30374
 2. Experian (formerly TRW) P.O. Box 919, Allen, TX 75013
 3. TransUnion, P.O. Box 97328, Jackson, MS 39238
- Use Anonymous Call Rejection that programs your phone to reject calls from anyone who blocks their phone number. Start it by pressing *77. (To stop, press *80).
- Block display of your phone number on caller ID by pressing *67 before each call or contact your phone company to request a complete block of display of your telephone number.



Who to Notify of Your Need for Privacy:

- Phone company
- Newspaper delivery
- Employer
- Utility providers
- Internet provider
- Church
- Pizza delivery
- Insurance agencies
- Charities
- Doctor's Offices
- Daycare providers
- Landlords
- Banks
- Family
- Veterinarian
- Other
- Post office
- Magazine subscriptions
- Professional associations
- City Hall
- Club memberships
- Schools (current & past)
- Video rental stores
- Pharmacy
- Blood drive committees
- Accountants
- Baby sitters
- Credit card companies
- Credit unions
- Neighbors
- Dentist/other medical

Safety with a Protective Order

A criminal charge, an Order for Protection and a Harassment Restraining Order may involve a hearing that you may have to attend and your abuser may be present.

- Keep your protective order and a photo of your abuser with you at all times.
- Once the order has been served, the Carver County Sheriff's Office will notify you of the date and time of service. If the order is sent to another sheriff's office, we cannot guarantee timely notification.
- Once the order has been served, give a copy of the protective order and photo of your abuser to your employer's security department, any NEW police department, your school, and/or your child's school/daycare.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and landlord that you have a protective order in effect and give them a copy.
- CALL THE POLICE if the Respondent violates the protective order, especially if he is at an address he is prohibited from being at by the order. Show the police a copy of the order. Tell the police about anyone who saw or heard the violation.

- If you are unable to get the relief you desire because the language of your final order is unclear or too vague, you may want to request your order be modified or changed.
- Consider filing a motion for contempt if the Respondent is not paying support/restitution as ordered, doesn't return property listed on the order or is not following a visitation order. Forms can be obtained at court administration.
- If the Order allows, consider using e-mail, text messaging, family and friends as ways to communicate with your abuser on necessary issues such as children, parenting time, property, and bills. Keep copies or save e-mails and text messages. Use a visitation notebook to send with children to communicate about children's issues.
- Consider visitation centers for supervised exchanges of children or supervised visitation/parenting time.

What is Stalking?

Stalking is unwanted pursuit, following or harassment that usually includes repeated:

- Phone calls, mail, e-mails;
- Requests to meet or date;
- Notes, packages or gifts;
- Waiting or showing up outside your home, work or places you go to;
- Gathering information about you;
- Observing/following you;
- Breaking into your car or home when you're not there;
- Direct, implied or symbolic threats; and/or
- Vandalism, property damage, theft, etc.

Harassment now includes a single incident of physical or sexual assault under MSA 609.748

Stalkers can be ex-partners (spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend); co-workers; former co-workers; acquaintances; friends; former friends; and/or strangers.

There are Laws Against Stalking

Minnesota's Harassment/Stalking law (MSA 609.749) makes it a crime for a person to commit acts which would cause another person to feel frightened, threatened, oppressed, persecuted, or intimidated. This includes:

- Committing an unlawful act with the intent to injure a person or the property of another;
- Stalking, following or pursuing a person;
- Coming on a person's property without consent;
- Repeatedly making telephone calls or causing a person's phone to ring; or
- Repeatedly sending or delivering letters, messages, and/or packages.

Minnesota has a variety of laws that may apply including: Assault; Domestic Assault; Terroristic Threats; Criminal Sexual Conduct; Burglary; Theft; Interference with an Emergency Call; Kidnapping; False Imprisonment; Abduction; Deprivation of Parental Rights; Motor Vehicle Tampering; Trespass; Obscene or Harassing Telephone Calls; Opening Letter, Telegram, or Package; Falsely Reporting Child Abuse; Criminal Damage to Property; Forgery; Arson; etc.

Document the Harassment

- If you contact the police, ask them to keep your address and phone numbers confidential. You do not have to disclose these in court or on a restraining order.
- Keep a detailed log of all harassing behaviors including date and time, location, description of the harassment, your response, and all witnesses. Keep the log in a safe place.
- Keep all evidence like cards, letters, flowers, gifts, etc. Print off and save all e-mails. Save all phone messages.
- Record a description of all cars and license plate numbers in which the stalker is seen and provide these to the police.
- Record all phone calls from the stalker. Purchase a tape recorder that will begin when the phone answered. Save voice mail messages and caller ID displays.
- Take photos of injuries, damage etc. Rent a surveillance camera or a video camera to capture the stalker on video.

Violation of a Protective Order is a Crime

Violation of an Order for Protection, Harassment Restraining Order, or Domestic Abuse No Contact Order is a crime in Minnesota (MSA 518B.01, Subd. 14 or 22 and MSA 609.748, Subd. 6.) Police **must** arrest a person who is at an address he is prohibited from being at that is cited in one of these orders. Police have discretion to arrest for all other types of violations. Victims can request the police bring charges and can contact the prosecuting attorney to follow up with a request to charge. Victims can also file contempt charges in civil court. Contact Court Administration for necessary forms.



Report Violations

- Contact the local law enforcement agency in which the violation occurred.
- Whether the order has been served or not, report every violation.
- Tell the police of any witnesses, recordings, or evidence you may have. Show them a copy of your order.
- Ask the police to document in their report that you are requesting confidential information – like your new address or phone numbers. Tell police you don't want these numbers to be disclosed.
- **Don't delay contacting the police. Report the violation immediately!**

Always Dial 9-1-1 in an Emergency

Contact Southern Valley Alliance to speak with a woman's advocate about:

- these or other safety plans,
- assistance with filing for an Order for Protection or,
- attending a hearing related to an Order for Protection or,
- to assist in following up on a report to the police

Call 952-873-4214. Southern Valley Alliance is here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

