

Safety Planning During COVID-19

During times of crisis, and especially forced isolation, incidents of domestic violence often rise. As the spread of the COVID-19 virus continues, there may be additional safety concerns that arise for you and your family.

Safe+Sound Somerset's call and text hotline remains available 24/7 at [866-685-1122](tel:866-685-1122) to help those in crisis and to answer questions.

Below is a list of safety recommendations to consider as our nation handles this outbreak and you deal with increased social distancing.

- If you or your family members are in immediate danger, call **911**
- Keep your phone charged and on you at all times. Know where your charger is, or keep it stored in an easy-to-grab go-bag. Keep a few safe phone numbers written down on paper in your car or go-bag in case you don't have your phone with you.
- Identify safe ways out of each room, including windows if necessary. Make sure that these pathways are cleared.
- When violence occurs, lead your abuser to a safe room that has an exit path. Avoid rooms that have items that could be used as weapons (kitchens, garages), avoid rooms that have lots of hard surfaces (kitchens, bathrooms), and try to avoid rooms that only have one exit that can be blocked (second-story bedrooms, closets).
- Identify a code word to use with children so they know to leave the room/home and go to a trusted neighbor. Plan a code word with trusted friends or family outside of the home that indicates you are in danger and need help.
- Identify transportation options. Keep your car's gas tank full, and back in to your parking spot/driveway so that it's easier to drive away. Identify a safe spot for your keys. Make plans with a trusted person who can pick you up.
- Pack a go-bag. Possible items to include: extra sets of clothing for you and your children; items for any pets you will take with you, copies of important documents and/or IDs, medications, an extra set of keys, a written list of safe phone numbers, and extra cash in case your partner cuts off your credit cards or phone pay apps. Important documents include a copy of any restraining orders, medical records, and documentation of abuse. Keep the go-bag in a hidden but easy to reach location.
- Document any abuse, including harassment or stalking. Take screenshots, make notes, and store these in a safe place. If you feel comfortable, report to police.
- As people move to using technology more in place of physical interaction, please practice tech safety. Protect your passwords, or change them if your abuser has access to them. Make your accounts as private as possible. Assume that any communication with your abuser can be documented by them and used against you. Visit techsafety.org for additional safety tips.
- Keep yourself and others safe by following the latest health guidelines and recommendations. This includes wiping down frequently used surfaces vigorously and washing your hands often. For up-to-date information visit cdc.gov, or nj.gov/health.

During COVID-19, Safe+Sound Somerset will continue to adapt our services to abide by public health directives to reduce the spread of the virus and keep everyone safe, while working to ensure that our most essential services for safety and security are available to anyone in need.

The S+SS call and text hotline will remain available 24/7 at [866-685-1122](tel:866-685-1122) to help you create or update a safety plan today, as we navigate the changes surrounding the pandemic, and later as things return to their normal. Do not hesitate to call or text repeatedly if needed. The statewide hotline is also available at [I-800-572-SAFE \(7233\)](tel:1-800-572-SAFE).

For additional tips, please visit our safety planning webpage at safe-sound.org/safety-planning

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