



# Online Privacy and Safety Tips

## A Note on Language

In this toolkit, we will sometimes use the word woman/women and feminine pronouns for simplicity and to recognize the significant impact technology-facilitated violence has on women and girls. We recognize that TFCBV also impacts trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people. We hope that all people impacted by TFCBV will find these documents useful.

We've all heard it before – nothing that happens online is ever truly private or anonymous. And while this is true, it's also true that there are ways people can increase their privacy and feel safer online. This tip sheet is for anyone looking for ways to stay connected and also want to feel safer and keep their information more private.

## Signing Up for Accounts

- Create email addresses and usernames that don't contain identifying information such as your full name or birth date/year.
- Use different usernames and profile pictures for each site, and have more than one email account for different purposes like work, school, and social groups. You can also consider using a picture that isn't of you for your profile photo.
- Be thoughtful about sharing personal information beyond what's necessary to create an account or set up a profile. Sometimes sites don't make it obvious that the information being requested is optional, so look out for the fine print!
- Click "no" when sites or apps offer to check your contact list to help connect you with your friends already on their site.
- Opt out of having your profile be searchable on the site itself, and from showing up in general search results like Google.

## Passwords

- The best passwords are at least 12-15 characters long and contain letters, numbers, and symbols.
- Use different passwords for accounts that contain sensitive or personally identifying information.
- Log out when you're done and opt out when asked if you want the device, browser, site, or app to remember your password.
- Read more about [Password Safety](#).

## Privacy Settings and Policies

- Read the privacy settings guides that many social media sites now offer and adjust your privacy settings to meet your needs. Here are links to a few of the major sites' privacy guides:
  - [Safety@Facebook](#)
  - [WhatsApp Safety Tips](#)
  - [Instagram Safety Centre](#)
  - [Safety & Privacy on Twitter: A guide for survivors of harassment and abuse](#)
  - [Google Safety Centre](#)
  - [TikTok Safety Centre](#)
  - [How to Stay Safe on Snapchat](#)
- Read the privacy policies of apps and sites to find out who else has access to your information and how they can get it. Many sites and apps will share information if they receive a subpoena or court order, which is important for women who have or may have court-related interactions with the person who abused or stalked them.
- Read more about [Privacy Considerations When Posting Content Online](#).

## Social Media

- Social media is built to be social. Some information is by default always public, while you can choose who sees other information and posts. Regularly review who is in your friends or followers lists, and be aware that your friends' friends may be able to see your posts.

## Friends and Family

- Talk to your friends and family about what they can and can't post online about you.
- Don't forget that your employers, churches, sports teams, groups, and volunteer organizations may share your personal information online. If you have concerns about what kind of personal information these groups are sharing online, you could consider contacting them to see if they can remove your information from their sites.

## Safe Web Browsing

- Use anti-virus software, keep it updated, and regularly scan your devices.
- Periodically delete history, cookies, temporary internet files, and saved forms and passwords from your web browser.
- Learn more about [Internet Browser Privacy Tips](#).

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) is part of a continuum of violence that can be both online and in-person. If you or someone you know is experiencing TFGBV, you are not alone. You can use [sheltersafe.ca](https://sheltersafe.ca) to find a shelter/transition house near you to discuss options and create a [safety plan](#). You don't need to stay in a shelter to access free, confidential services and support.

Adapted for Canada with permission from NNEDV's Safety Net project, based on their resource [Online Privacy and Safety Tips](#)

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This project is made possible through funding from the department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada.



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