



Tech Safety Planning Tools for Women Experiencing TFGBV

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 TFGBV also impacts trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people. We hope that all people impacted by TFGBV will find these documents useful.

Documenting Tech Abuse

How technology is misused to harass and control may seem unbelievable. However, it is important to trust your instincts. If you believe that you are being monitored or stalked via technology, you might be. Narrowing down what is happening, including the tactics and technology used, can help to determine if technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) is occurring and, if so, how to address it.

It is important to document everything that is happening. Documentation is important for many reasons:

- It will give you a record of what is happening, which may be helpful if you want to pursue legal action.
- It will alert you to any escalation in monitoring and control, which may indicate that the danger is increasing as well.
- It will help you see patterns of technology-facilitated violence and may help determine how the perpetrator is misusing a particular technology.

Documentation Tips

- **Keep a log of all incidents**, even if you are not sure that you want to involve the police. Some of the information you might want to include is the date, time, location, police officer information (if reported), witnesses (if any), suspected technology involved (e.g. phone, email, etc.) and a brief description of what the perpetrator did.

- **Save everything related to the event or incident.** If you receive a threatening note or a threatening message by email, text message, or voicemail, make sure you save it. Take a photo or screenshot of the message. While it may be tempting to delete it, saving it could show patterns to help you determine safety strategies and provide needed evidence.
- **Think about what technology you suspect the abuser could be using.** In some cases, women have strong suspicions about what technology the perpetrator is using based on the type of abuse, the tactics involved, and what they know about the perpetrator.
- **Think about your safety first.** In some cases, when abusers know that women are documenting the abuse, they might escalate their monitoring, control, or physical violence. You will know best how to assess the situation and what could happen. Trust your instincts and do what is safest for you.
- **Document only relevant information.** Keep in mind that this information could potentially be introduced as evidence or inadvertently shared with the perpetrator at a future time. For example, you may not want to document personal photos that aren't being used as part of the abusive tactic.

What to Document

Email

- Emails contain IP addresses, which could reveal the originating IP address and, therefore, the identity of the sender. Because of that, it's important not to delete the email and not to forward the email to someone else.
- If you are saving email content by printing or taking screenshots, be sure to also save the email header (often hidden and can be found in the settings), which is where the IP information is stored. Depending on the email platform you are using (Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo! Mail, etc.), how you access the email header will be different.
- If you're concerned that the perpetrator could access the account and delete emails, then try to print or take screenshots of the content, including the headers. Forwarded emails will lose the identifying information needed for evidence.

Text Messages

- Text messages that are just stored on a phone may be inadvertently deleted or may be automatically deleted if you run out of space. Take a screenshot or picture of the text messages to retain the evidence.
- Also, take a screenshot of the contact page to show that the harassing messages from the perpetrator are associated with the perpetrator's phone number.
- Text message content is kept by the wireless carrier only for a limited time. If you are working with law enforcement, be sure to ask them to send a preservation letter to the phone company as soon as possible, so the phone company knows not to destroy the data.

Social Media/Internet Harassment

- To keep evidence of harassment on social media, take a screenshot of the harassment/abuse on your computer or device.
- Some sites offer alternative ways to document activity on the site or on your page. For example, using Facebook's "Download Your Information" (DYI) feature, you can capture all content and save it for later.
- If working with law enforcement, they could send a letter to the social media or website company asking them to preserve the account information or contact the Department of Justice's Mutual Legal Assistance team.

- You may consider reporting the harassment to the social media or website company. However, be sure that you document the abuse first if you want evidence of it. If it violates the site's terms of service or content guidelines, they may remove the content.

Harassing Phone Calls

- You could consider recording your phone conversations to keep evidence of harassing or threatening calls as Canada allows for one-party consent recording.

Phone Number/Caller ID Impersonation

- Document your call logs by taking a photograph of the Caller ID. Be sure to include the date and time of the calls.
- Keep your phone records to show the number of the originating call, date, and time.

Our [technology-facilitated violence log](#) can help you document what is happening to you. For more information on how to store your digital evidence, see our info sheet "How to Back Up and Store Evidence of Technology-Facilitated Violence."

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](#) 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 [Documenting Abuse](#).

Stalking and Technology-Facilitated Abuse Log

What is a stalking and technology-facilitated [abuse log](#)?

Stalking and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) is when an abuser uses technology as a tool to monitor and harm someone. This can include things like tracking location, sending harassing texts, and threatening to share abusive images. Some of the common technologies that are used as tools of abuse are devices and accounts.

This handout has a log to write down important details about the abuse. Two logs are provided, in a long and short form, so you choose the one that works best for their situation.

Why keep a stalking and tech-facilitated abuse log?

- To capture evidence at the time the abuse occurs, making it more reliable in court
- To support the evidence captured
- To help see patterns and escalations of abuse for safety planning purposes
- To provide evidence for police and assist with their investigations
- To give support workers insight into the risks a survivor faces so that they can assist further

- To support you to take back control and be proactive
- To validate experiences. This can help if an abuser minimizes, denies, or gaslights the person they are abusing. Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse where an abuser pretends the abuse did not occur and may blame a victim for “going crazy.”
- To remind you about an abusive person’s behaviour. Sometimes memories of abuse can be blurred over time. A log might assist with making statements for court or by helping a survivor decide what to do if an abuser is trying to re-establish a relationship.

Staying safe while logging abuse

Think about where you can store the logs safely so that an abuser will not find them. This may be in a locked desk at work, with your support worker, or with a trusted friend. Trust yourself. You know your situation best.

If you decide to provide your logs to police or other services, they may ask for more details about the person who is abusing you. These items may include information about the abuser’s technology, such as their:

- Internet and phone provider and account information;
- Devices, such as phones, computers, tablets, cameras, drones, external hard drives, USBs, children’s devices, etc.;
- Accounts or apps that have been used in the abuse such as social media or banking accounts;
- Email addresses, phone numbers, cloud storage accounts, usernames, avatars, pseudonyms, online identities, etc.; and
- any other information that relates to their technology, such as passwords, online associates, tracking devices, ISP addresses, identity theft or fraud, etc.

Download a blank Stalking and Technology-Facilitated Abuse Log

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Adapted for Canada with permission from WESNET’s Technology Safety project, based on their resource [Stalking and Tech-Facilitated Abuse Log](#).

This document is part of a series of resources provided through Women’s Shelters Canada’s Tech Safety Canada project. We encourage you to visit www.techsafety.ca to find additional information and resources about technology-facilitated violence, technology safety planning, and preserving digital evidence. This document, or any portion thereof, may be reproduced or used as long as acknowledgement is included. If you would like to adapt the content, please contact Women’s Shelters Canada at info@endvaw.ca.



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