Resetting Your Wi-Fi Network

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.

Once you no longer live with your abusive partner, it's important to take steps to secure your technology and online accounts to prevent the abuser from accessing your important information. This includes resetting your Wi-Fi network. This is because anyone on your network could easily take a look at what you're doing, what your passwords are, and other private information with just a few simple software tools. This document explains how to reset your Wi-Fi network so that you can be assured that your Internet connection, and the devices in your home that depend on it, are safe.

Step 1: Find Your Router

The first step is to know where your Wi-Fi router is in your home. With so many electronic devices plugged into our walls, it can sometimes be hard to figure out which one is your actual Wi-Fi router. If you're unsure which device is your Wi-Fi router, try unplugging the device you suspect it is. Does your Wi-Fi internet access go away? If so, that was the one! Plug it back in and move on to the next step.

Step 2: Find Your Manual

Some of the next steps involve looking at your Wi-Fi Router's manual. The exact steps to take can be very different depending on which model you have. Try finding your router's model number. It should be listed somewhere on the back or side. Then enter your Wi-Fi router brand (e.g. Linksys) and model number into a google search and add the word "manual" at the end. The manual should be one of the first few results Google returns. If you cannot find the router brand contact your internet provider (e.g. Rogers, Shaw, Telus, Northwest Tel) for the information. They may even be able to help assist you through the reset process.

Step 3: Clear Existing Settings

Now that you've found your Wi-Fi router and manual, it's time to clear out all the existing settings on your Wi-Fi router, because there is no way to know exactly what the person who originally set up your router has done to it. To do this, find the "reset" button on the back of the router. Often these buttons are just small holes that you can only push in with a pen, unfolded paperclip, or the back of an earring. If you can't find it, try looking for the words "reset button" or "factory defaults" in your Wi-Fi router's manual.

Hold the reset button down (again, you may have to use a paperclip or the back of an earring to push it). You should see all the lights on the Wi-Fi router flashing to let you know it's about to be reset. Keep holding that button down. When the reset is done, the lights should stop flashing.

Step 4: Set It Up Again

With your Wi-Fi router reset, you now need to set it up again with a new password.

The first step is to connect to the reset router's Internet. Look in your computer's list of available Wi-Fi connections for the new Wi-Fi connection. If you had a custom Wi-Fi network name before, that name will have been erased. Your network name will now be something generic, usually named similar to your Wi-Fi router brand. If you see a lot of Wi-Fi networks in the list of networks you can connect to, make sure you're standing next to the Wi-Fi router and try connecting to the one that has the strongest signal. When you connect to the Wi-Fi network, there shouldn't be a password. If there is, look for a default password printed on your Wi-Fi router or in your router's manual. Some routers may have the default network name for your router printed on the router along with the default password.

Step 5: Access Your Router's Settings

Once your device is connected to your Wi-Fi router, it's time to get into the Wi-Fi router's settings. The settings can be found by going to your browser and entering a special address made specifically for Wi-Fi router settings. Open your web browser and try entering each of these special addresses until you find one that gets you to your Wi-Fi router's settings page:

- 192.168.0.1

- 192.168.1.1

- 10.0.0.1

If none of those addresses take you to the settings, this article can help show you how to find your Wi-Fi router's address depending on what kind of device you're using.

If you visit one of these addresses and see instructions to download an app to modify the router's settings, follow those directions to download the app to a smartphone and edit the router's settings there.

If you can't figure out how to get to your Wi-Fi router's settings, try calling your Wi-Fi provider. Their tech support team can likely help you access the settings.

Step 6: Log In to the Router's Settings

Once you get to the settings page, you should see a screen asking for the admin username and password. This is a different password than the one you previously used to connect to the Wi-Fi. Every router manufacturer sets a different default username and password. Sometimes these admin default passwords are written on the router itself; other times, they are written in the manual. You can also look up your router model's default password by visiting this webpage.

Step 7: Set Up a New Password

After you've logged in to your Wi-Fi router's settings, it's time to set up a new network password. Every Wi-Fi router's settings are different from each other. Look in your Wi-Fi router's manual or just try clicking on the different settings sections and look for something called "Network Name" or "Network Password." Come up with a good, strong password for your network. Write your new password down and store it in a safe place in your home. A good password is at least twelve characters of random letters and numbers. You won't have to memorize this password so it's best to make it long and complicated. Try doing a Google search for "random password generator" to find plenty of tools to help you make up a new password.

You can change the network name if you'd like. The generic name for the network is fine if you want to keep that. If you do change it, it may be wise to pick a name that doesn't identify you especially if you're living in home, condo, or apartment building with multiple Wi-Fi networks in range.

Once you've changed your network password or name, you will lose your connection to the Wi-Fi router. You now need to open up your device's Wi-Fi settings and reconnect to your Wi-Fi network, this time putting in your new password.

Step 8: Disable WPS

Before you're done, there are two more settings for your Wi-Fi router that you should consider changing.

First, go back to your Wi-Fi router Settings page and see if you can find a setting called WPS. If you find it, disable this feature. WPS is a method for connecting to your Wi-Fi router that has a serious security vulnerability that many router manufacturers have not fixed. You would never actually need this feature turned on, so it's safer to just disable it.

Step 9: Set Up a Different Username and Password (Optional)

And finally, you may want to set up a different username and password to access the Wi-Fi router's settings. This is different than the network name and network password. This is the username and password that gets used to sign in to your Wi-Fi router's settings page. Look through your Wi-Fi router's manual or click around the various settings until you find a setting that looks like "admin username" and "admin password." The username can be anything you want, but make sure the password is a different, secure, random password than what you set for your network password.

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.

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