



# SAFETY PLANNING DURING COVID-19

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Under the coronavirus rules, most of us are having to spend a lot more time at home than we usually would. If you are experiencing domestic abuse, the lockdown may be making you feel particularly anxious about being at home most or all of the time. Below is some guidance about some things you can do to try to stay as safe as possible, either in your home or in making preparations if you decide to leave.

To talk about this in more detail, you can contact:

## Scotland's Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline

at any time on

**0800 027 1234**

or through web chat at

[www.sdafmh.org.uk](http://www.sdafmh.org.uk)

or by email:

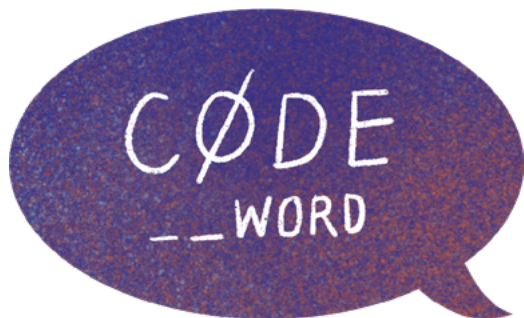
[helpline@sdafmh.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sdafmh.org.uk)

## What can I do in an emergency?

- If you are in immediate danger, phone the police on 999. Domestic abuse is still a priority for Police Scotland.

## Can I leave my home if I am unsafe?

- Under the government's coronavirus guidance, it is ok to leave your home 'to avoid or escape risk of injury or harm' [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)
- If you think you may need to leave, think about a safe place you could go (e.g. local police station). If possible, practise how you would get out and get to the safe place.



## What should I take with me if I leave?

- Consider keeping a small bag of essentials if it is safe to do so, e.g. under the bed, in the car.
- Try to pack things like important documents, medication and essentials (e.g. spare glasses, contact lenses), money, phone charger, important phone numbers, and spare clothes for yourself and any children you are taking with you.

### Your mobile phone. Consider the following:

- Try to keep your phone charged and on your person if possible
- If you suspect that your phone is being monitored, think about how contacts are stored. Consider storing contacts under code names, and talking to friends, family, and support services about agreeing a text to ensure it is safe to talk
- Think about important numbers to keep in your phone. This could include your local authority's daytime and out of hours housing numbers
- Consider keeping a written list of important numbers as a back-up, e.g. in case you have to leave the house without a charger
- If you have a smartphone, you could download a safety app like Hollieguard, if safe to do so.

## It's not safe for me to make phone calls – what should I do?

- If unable to talk on a 999 call, listen and respond to the operator's instructions. To make yourself heard, cough/tap the phone. Or if calling from a mobile, dial 55 when prompted by the automated system.
- If safe, drop in information about where you are, e.g. "you have bail conditions not to be in X Street."
- Consider agreeing code words with friends/family, which they know means to phone the police urgently. Make sure that the person in question knows your address.
- Consider contacting another agency for support if you're not in immediate danger. Some services can be contacted by email, text, or web chat (see below for details).

## What if I am not able to leave my home? How can I stay safe?

- Try to stay out of the kitchen, garage and bath room if you feel the situation is escalating, as there are things which can be used as weapons, hard surfaces, or the risk of being trapped. Do not go to a balcony for safety.
- Make sure knives/chemicals etc aren't out and able to be picked up easily. It might be helpful to move knives from where they're usually kept.
- Do not be tempted to pick up a weapon to defend yourself – this could be used to hurt you, or could result in you ending up in trouble.

## What about my children?

- The first priority for children should always be getting somewhere safe if they can. If they have access to a phone, you can explain how to call 999 and give your address, but make sure they know only to do this if they can get somewhere safe first.

## How can I cover my tracks online?

- If you think your internet use might be monitored, consider deleting your search history or using a browser such as Chrome's 'incognito' mode. More information here: [www.safer.scot/page-4/](http://www.safer.scot/page-4/)

## Where can I get further support?

- **Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline** open 24/7, for anyone looking for support around domestic abuse or forced marriage:
  - Phone: **0800 027 1234**
  - Web chat: [sdafmh.org.uk](http://sdafmh.org.uk)
  - Email: [helpline@sdafmh.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sdafmh.org.uk)
- **Women's Aid – local groups** throughout Scotland which support women and children experiencing domestic abuse:  
[womensaid.scot/find-nearest-wa-group/](http://womensaid.scot/find-nearest-wa-group/)
- **FearFree** supports men and anyone from the LGBT+ community
  - Phone: **0131 624 7270**
  - Email: [FearFreeInfo@sacro.org.uk](mailto:FearFreeInfo@sacro.org.uk)

