

NATIONAL  
HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING  
HOTLINE

Get Help | 24/7 Confidential

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We are currently receiving a lot of calls and it may take longer than 15 minutes to speak with one of our advocates. You can [search for local services](#) to find help in your community. We are very sorry for the delay, and look forward to speaking with you soon!

# Safety Planning Information

**Safety planning** can include risk assessments, preparations, and contingency plans to increase the safety of a human trafficking victim or an individual at-risk for human trafficking, as well as any agency or individual assisting a victim. **Safety plans:**

1. **Assess the current risk and identify current and potential safety concerns;**
2. **Create strategies for avoiding or reducing the threat of harm;**

### **3. Outline concrete options for responding when safety is threatened or compromised.**

Safety planning is important while a victim is experiencing trafficking, during the process of leaving, and once the victim has left. Consider these tips for conducting safety planning with victims of human trafficking as well as those who may be considering suspicious jobs or relationships and may be at risk for human trafficking. We cannot guarantee an individual's safety or the prevention of trafficking after using these suggestions. Each individual is in the best position to assess his/her own current level of safety and safety planning should be tailored to his/her unique circumstance.

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#### **▼ Potential Red Flags for Human Trafficking Situations**

The following scenarios might be red flags for relationships or jobs that may develop into human trafficking. One or more of these may indicate that an individual is at-risk for sex or labor trafficking. This list is not exhaustive.

##### **The Intimate Partner or Employer:**

- Comes on very strongly and promises things that seem too good to be true – i.e. promises extremely high wages for easy work.
- Expects that you will agree to the employment or relationship on the spot, and threatens that otherwise the opportunity will be lost.
- Is unclear about the terms of employment, location of employment and/or the company details/credentials. Partner/employer denies access to information about your rights.
- Denies contact with friends or family or attempts to isolate you from your social network.

- Constantly checks on you and does not allow you access to your money.
  - Asks you to do things outside of your comfort zone such as performing sexual favors for friends.
  - Displays signs/characteristics of a dangerous person including: attempts to control movement and behaviors, exhibits jealousy, lashes out or delivers punishment in response to noncompliance, is verbally/emotionally/physically abusive.
  - Uses threats or displays of violence to create a culture of fear.
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## ▼ General Safety Tips

- Trust your judgment. If a situation/individual makes you uncomfortable, trust that feeling.
- Let a trusted friend or relative know if you feel like you are in danger or if a person or situation is suspicious.
- If possible, set up safety words with a trusted friend/relative.
  - One word can mean that it is safe to talk and you are alone.
  - A separate word can mean you are not safe.
  - It is also important to communicate what you would like done (cease communication immediately, call 9-1-1, meet somewhere to pick you up, etc.).
- Keep all important documents and identification in your possession at all times. Your partner/employer does not have the right to take or hold your documents without your permission.
- Keep important numbers on your person at all times, including the number of someone you feel safe contacting if you are in trouble.
- Make sure that you have a means of communication (cell phone or phone card), access to your bank account, and any medication that you

might need with you at all times.

- If you think you might be in immediate danger or you are experiencing an emergency, contact 9-1-1 first.

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## ▼ Online Safety

Below are some options for you to consider. **Planning and testing out these options ahead of time can help keep you safe.** This list is not exhaustive.

[Safe Internet Searching](#) | [Social Media](#) | [Online Safety for Youth](#) | [Additional Security Measures](#) | [Online Harassment](#) | [More Resources](#)

## Safe Internet Searching

### Use Public Computers

Public Computers at local public libraries or community centers are more difficult to trace. Consider using these to access help whenever possible.

### Delete Search History

Search engines track your online searches and this information can be accessed by others using the same computer. If you are concerned that your trafficker will see what you have been searching for online, is important to clear your search history after each session. Here are instructions at [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), and [Bing](#).

### Delete Browser History

Your browser saves a list of all the websites you have visited while on the internet, and should be cleared after every session, especially if you've visited sites you wish to keep private from your trafficker. Learn how to

delete your search history on [Chrome](#), [Safari](#), [Internet Explorer](#), [Firefox](#), and [Toolbar](#).

If the "Use Inline AutoComplete" box in your Internet settings is checked, partial web addresses will be completed while typing in the Address bar and could reveal where you have been browsing. To make sure AutoComplete is not enabled, pull down the Tools menu, choose Internet Options, then click the Advanced tab. There is a box that can be checked or unchecked called "Use Inline AutoComplete." Uncheck the box if it is checked.

## Disable Chat Logs

If you are using a chat feature, check to see if your program has a Disable/Enable log setting that you can disable while you are chatting. Once you are done chatting, you can restore the settings.

## Social Media

### Privacy Settings

When posting on social networking sites, double check privacy settings and remove any geographical check-in points such as Four Square, or automatic GPS tags on photographs or photograph-based websites. [Privacy & Safety on Facebook: A Guide for Survivors](#) is an in depth guide on how to best manage your privacy on Facebook. Learn more about safety and privacy on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

### Discretion

When posting on social networking sites, be cautious not to provide unnecessary information regarding your daily activities or close friends and

family.

## **Block Trafficker/Trafficker's Acquaintances**

Consider blocking your trafficker, and "Unfriending"/"Unfollowing" all of your trafficker's friends or mutual friends you cannot trust. Blocking a user from a social network site, provides extra levels of privacy and security. Always consider that anything shared on a social networking site can eventually find its way to your trafficker and/or someone that might pass on this information, even innocently.

## **New Email Account**

Create a new email account from one of the free email providers such as [Yahoo!](#), [Hotmail](#), [Gmail](#) or [Hushmail](#).

## **New Username**

Choose a neutral, non-specific username that is not similar to one you have used before, not yourname@. Don't reference favorite hobbies or birthdates in your username, or anything that might alert your trafficker to your identity.

## **Online Address Book**

If you use the address book associated with your email program, do not enter sensitive information into the address book. If your email program automatically enters email addresses into the address book of people you've replied to, you may be able to disable that feature. You may also be able to disable the automatic name completion feature, which fills in an email address after the first few letters are typed.

## **Sent/Deleted Emails**

You can prevent items from being saved in your Sent folder by disabling that feature in your email. You can either set your deleted items folder to be cleared daily, or simply empty it at the end of each email session.

## Blocking/Filtering Emails

You can block incoming emails through your email program. You can select to block specific email addresses, or addresses ending in the same address (e.g. [name@address.com](#) or any email that ends in address.com.) You can also choose to have designated senders' emails sent to a specific folder. This will allow you the ability to read the emails at a time that is convenient for you, and also allows you to have a copy of the email should there be threats, etc.

## Online Safety for Youth

Below are resources to assist in teaching youth how to stay safe online:

- **[NetSmartz](#)**: NetSmartz is an interactive, educational program of NCMEC that provides age-appropriate resources to help teach children how to be safer on- and offline. The program is designed for children ages 5-17, parents and guardians, educators, and law enforcement. With resources such as videos, games, activity cards, and presentations, NetSmartz entertains while it educates. Its goals are to educate children on how to recognize potential Internet risks, engage children and adults in a two-way conversation about on- and offline risks, and empower children to help prevent themselves from being exploited and to report victimization to a trusted adult.
- **[Savvy Cyber Kids](#)**: Savvy Cyber Kids offers free guides for parents, grandparents, and teachers about current technology, how to educate children about the risks of being online, and how to discuss sex in the context of the digital age. Resources for educators focus on

frameworks for lesson plans about technology, appropriate for different age groups. Please note that users have to create a free account to access resources.

## **Additional Security Measures**

### **Password Safety**

Change passwords and PINs frequently, and never give your passwords/PINs to anyone. Choose passwords that are difficult to guess and include letters and numbers. If you need to write it down, write down a hint rather than the actual password. Do not allow the computer to remember passwords for you.

### **Search Yourself**

Do a search on Google, Bing, and Yahoo for your full name and city or state to screen all publicly available information that someone can find about you on the Internet. Also, be cautious about having photos of you or your children displayed online.

## **Online Harassment**

### **Personal Harassment (Authorities)**

If you are being harassed online, there are several steps you can take to end the harassment. The first thing to do is save copies of everything. If you have a protection order that stipulates no contact, email/contact in a chat room is a violation, and you can report that to the local authorities.

### **Personal Harassment (Internet Service Providers)**

You can also contact the internet service provider (ISP) and email the service of the person that is harassing you. For example, if you are receiving harassing emails from a hotmail account (address ending in @hotmail.com), you can contact hotmail through their website to report the harassment. If a website has been created about you, you can contact the host of the site. This can usually be done by selecting the Contact Us option on the website.

## More Resources

For additional online safety tips and links to excellent safety resources, visit [Domesticshelters.org](https://domesticshelters.org) for tips on [Safe Surfing](#) or the [National Network to End Domestic Violence \(NNEDV\)](#) for information on [Technology Safety](#).

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### ▼ Safety Apps for Smart Phones

There are a variety of apps for smart phones to keep you or your loved ones safe. Learn about and download the apps that you think would work best for you. A list of common apps is below. The National Human Trafficking Hotline is not affiliated with any of these apps. Remember that technology changes rapidly, so this list should not be considered exhaustive. **Consider googling "safety apps" to find more suggestions or solutions.**

- [BSafe](#) - BSafe offers 6 features to help you stay safe. The Alarm feature sets off a siren (optional), and bSafe starts recording video and voice as well as sending your GPS location to your chosen friends. The Follow Me feature lets friends follow your movements on the mobile map. Once you have arrived home safely, your friends will be notified. The Fake Call feature will make your phone call you. You can also set it on a timer in advance to have an excuse to leave a situation. The Recording feature automatically starts recording video and audio and the recording is sent your primary person's mobile phone. The I Am Here

feature shares your location with your friends. The Timer feature notifies your friends if you have not checked in within a certain time.

- **Noonlight** - This is not a free app, and requires a monthly or yearly fee. To use it you open the Noonlight app and hold your thumb on the safe button. If you determine you are safe, release the button and enter your 4 digit pin. If you are in danger, release the button and do not enter your pin. Local police will be notified of your location and that there's an emergency.

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## ▼ Safety Tips for Suspicious Employment

**Some employment opportunities may raise red flags for human trafficking. When considering new employment:**

- Request information about the position, scope of work, and hours/conditions of the position.
- Do not provide personal information (address, SS#) to the employer if you do not feel comfortable.
- If meeting with the employer, make sure a trusted friend/relative knows where you are going and what time you expect to return.
- Plan to meet the employer in a public place where others are around.
- Verify that the business is legitimate by asking for the Employer Identification Number (EIN). This information can be checked by calling the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at (800) 829-4933 (for U.S. businesses only).
- Ask to speak with former employees/clients about their experience with the company. This can be particularly important for positions abroad.
- If the employment opportunity involves travel to another country, make sure you obtain the appropriate visa. Depending on the country and the nature of the employment, you or your employer may be responsible for

securing the visa – make sure to check with the country's regulations to confirm before accepting an offer.

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## ▼ Safety Tips for Domestic and International Travel

**Some jobs or relationships may involve travel to a different city, state, or country. When considering a suspicious travel opportunity, take the following additional steps to secure safety:**

- Request address information for employment and/or housing.
- Request information about travel arrangements and who is expected to pay for travel and any visa or other entry fees.
- Make copies of important documents for yourself and give some to a trusted friend or relative.
- Have a ticket home in your name and keep it in a safe place.
- Provide a trusted friend or relative with information about your travel arrangements.
- Arrange a time to contact a trusted friend or relative to let them know you arrived safely.
- Have access to a bank account and have a way to maintain control of your own funds.
- Take a map of the city you are traveling to and make sure you know how to get from your residence to the bank, Embassy or Consulate (for international travel), police department, or hospital in case of emergency.
- Know basic phrases in the local language.
- Know how to access emergency services in that country. If there is an emergency number (equivalent to 9-1-1 in the U.S.), memorize this number or keep it in a safe place. Memorize the address and contact information for your Embassy or Consulate in that country.

- U.S. citizens should visit the U.S. Department of State website for information on how to register their travel details with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP):  
<https://travelregistration.state.gov>.
- For U.S. citizens experiencing emergencies overseas, contact the local Embassy or Consulate, or the U.S. State Department Office of Overseas Citizen Services at 888-407-4747 (from the U.S. or Canada) or 202-501-4444 (from overseas).

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## ▼ Safety Tips for Suspicious or Controlling Relationships

**Some relationships with signs of abuse and control, as well as those with promises of a better life, may have the potential to develop into situations of human trafficking.**

- If your partner asks you to do things you are uncomfortable with (forceful sex or sex acts, videotaping sexual activity/nudity, engaging in commercial sex or sex acts with his/her friends/strangers, abusing drugs/alcohol, etc.), let your partner know that it makes you uncomfortable and inform a trusted friend or relative.
- Make sure a trusted friend/relative knows where you are when with your partner, especially if you are traveling with this person or going to an unfamiliar location.
- Maintain access to all of your documents (driver's license, ID card, birth certificate, passport, or visa), your bank account, and all important phone numbers and do not provide this information to your partner if you do not feel comfortable.

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## ▼ Safety Tips when Leaving a Human Trafficking Situation

**In some cases, leaving or attempting to leave a trafficking situation may increase the risk of violence. It is important to trust your judgment when taking steps to ensure your safety.**

- If you are ever in immediate danger, the quickest way to access help is to call 9-1-1.
- If you are unsure of your current location, try to determine any indication of your locality such as street signs outside the residence or place of employment, or newspapers/magazines/mail that may have the address listed.
  - If it is safe to go outside, see if the address is listed anywhere on the building.
  - If there are people nearby and it is safe to speak with them, ask them about your current location.
- Plan an escape route or exit strategy and rehearse it
- Keep any important documents on or near you to be ready for immediate departure.
- Prepare a bag with any important documents/items and a change of clothes.
- Keep a written copy of important numbers on you at all times in case your phone is taken or destroyed at any point. Memorize important numbers/hotlines
- Think about your next steps after you leave the situation.
  - Contact trusted friends or relatives to notify them or to ask for assistance if you feel comfortable.
  - Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline 24-hour hotline at 1-888-3737-888 to obtain local referrals for shelter or other social services and support. The Hotline can also connect you with

specialized law enforcement referrals. However, if you are ever in immediate danger, contact 9-1-1 first.

- During violent or explosive situations avoid dangerous rooms
  - Examples of Dangerous Rooms: kitchen (knives, sharp utensils, pots), garage (tools, sharp objects), bathroom (hard surfaces, no exits), basement (hard surfaces, no exits), rooms where weapons are kept and rooms without an exit.
  - Examples of Safer Rooms: front room, yard or apartment hallway where a neighbor might see or hear an incident.
- Develop a special signal (lights flickering on and off, code word, code text message, hand signal, etc.) to use with a trusted neighbor, relative, friend or service provider to notify them that you are in danger.
  - It is important to proactively communicate what action steps you would like taken (call 9-1-1, check-in, pick the children up, etc.).
- If you have children who are also in the trafficking situation, explain to them that it isn't their responsibility to protect you, and make sure that they know how to call someone for help, where to hide during a violent incident, and practice your plan of departure with them.

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## ▼ Safety Tips after Exiting a Human Trafficking Situation

- Keep your residence locked at all times. Consider changing your locks if the controller has a key or may be able to access your residence.
- If moving to a new residence, only disclose your address to people that you trust and consider accessing the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP).
- Consider taking out a protective order against the controller so that he/she will be legally prohibited from contacting you.

- While options vary by location, you can typically obtain a protective order civilly without talking to or involving law enforcement.
- Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-3737-888 to find the service provider nearest you that can assist you in long-term safety planning, including taking out a protective order or accessing the ACP in your state.
- If the controller has made unwanted contact, document the contact made (calls, texts, showing up at your work/home, etc.) and save any voicemails and text messages that are threatening in nature.
- Consider changing your phone number to a number unknown by the controller. Most cell phone carriers will allow you to block individuals or to change numbers at no or low cost.
- Keep a cell phone or emergency phone on you at all times. If you feel comfortable, tell your neighbors, employer, or friends to call the police if they see the controller near, in, or around the residence or you.
- Develop a special signal (lights flickering on and off, code word, code text message, hand signal, etc.) to use with a trusted neighbor, relative, friend or service provider to notify them that you are in danger or need help. This can be the same safety signal used while exiting the situation or something new.
  - Be sure to communicate what action steps you would like taken if you use the signal (call 9-1-1, check-in, pick up your children, etc.).
- If you have children who were also in the trafficking situation, create a safety plan with them making sure they know what to do if the controller makes unwanted contact and how to call someone for help.
- If your child still has ongoing contact with the controller, discuss a safety plan and how to keep themselves safe while with the controller.
- Consider referencing this [resource](https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/safety-planning-information#additional-security-measures) for information on rebuilding your finances after leaving a financially abusive relationship

- Consider referencing this [resource](#) for information on address confidentiality programs by state
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## ▼ Tips for Communicating with Someone in a Trafficking or Dangerous Situation

**When communicating with someone in a dangerous or potential trafficking situation:**

- Recognize that the person in the situation knows their situation best, and it is necessary to honor their requests to ensure their safety
  - Maintain open and nonjudgmental communication, ensuring they know they can reach out at any time, and end the call when they need to
  - Try to speak in person if possible
  - If that is not possible, try to speak on the phone first [rather than via text or social media messaging] and ask if the person is alone, and then use yes/no questions until they indicate it is safe to communicate more freely
  - If they are alone, try to establish safety words: one word to indicate it is safe to talk/the person is alone [for future communications] and one to indicate it is no longer safe to talk and what the person in the situation would like done [cease communication immediately/contact law enforcement/etc.]
  - Try to learn more about safety concerns
  - Try to learn more about their needs/wishes moving forward [reporting, shelter, counseling, legal services, etc.]
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# National Human Trafficking Referral Directory

This online Referral Directory is made up of anti-trafficking organizations and programs that offer emergency, transitional, or long-term services to victims and survivors of human trafficking as well as those that provide resources and opportunities in the anti-trafficking field.



# Human Trafficking Hotline Statistics



# 50,123

signals were received by the Hotline in 2021. Includes calls, texts, and online chats and tips.

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