

- ❑ If you do not think you can stay safe if DCS collects child support, you can request that the state not collect or enforce child support. To do this, fill out the “Good Cause” form in the safety packet.

Technology and confidentiality

Abusers often misuse technology to stalk their victims. An abuser can monitor your computer activity, intercept emails or text messages, track your location, watch you on a camera, send false text messages, or monitor banking activity. If you suspect your abuser may be using technology to find you or harass you, here are a few steps you may want to take:

- ❑ Change your passwords, usernames, and security questions to something the abuser isn’t likely to know or guess.
- ❑ Use a new computer, such as a library computer, to do sensitive research or check personal emails.
- ❑ Check your cell phone settings and pay attention to apps you don’t recognize or excessive battery or data usage.
- ❑ If you suspect your abuser is using your phone to monitor your location, the safest thing to do is get a new phone, or you can do a factory reset of your phone.
- ❑ Check your privacy settings on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and your other social media accounts. Limit the information you provide online.

If your abuser is using technology to find you or harass you, talk with an advocate about creating a technology safety plan, or for more information visit www.techsafety.org.

Identify theft

Abusers may also steal your identity, for example by applying for credit cards or loans in your name, as a form of financial abuse. If you suspect your identity was stolen, here are a few steps you can take:

- ❑ Check your credit report to find out what loans and credit cards are associated with your name. You can check your credit report for free, once a year, by going to www.annualcreditreport.com.
- ❑ If your identity was stolen, the Federal Trade Commission website has information about the steps you can take: www.identitytheft.gov.

Changing your identity

It may seem like changing your name and/or social security number and relocating would be the easiest way to escape abuse. Unfortunately, this often causes more problems than it solves. You may be able to stay safe by using some of the programs discussed in this brochure.

Before trying to change your identity, talk to an attorney about whether this choice is right for you. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be able to talk to a legal aid attorney in Oregon for free. To find your local legal aid office, go to: oregonlawhelp.org//resource/oregon-legal-aid-offices.

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Legal Aid Services of Oregon & Oregon Law Center



Maintaining Your Privacy.

**Confidentiality and privacy
protections for survivors of
domestic violence, sexual
assault, and stalking.**

This brochure is provided by Legal Aid Services of Oregon for general informational use only. It is not a substitute for individual legal advice. Consult an attorney for more information or for advice. The information in this pamphlet is accurate as of November 2017.

Why confidentiality matters

If you are a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, your abuser may try to use your personal information to find you, harass you, or continue to abuse you. Personal information includes your home address, phone number, driver's license or social security number, and other personal identifying information. This personal information can be found in a variety of places, including online, in court documents, in your child's school records, and more.

This brochure will cover some of the steps you can take to keep this information away from your abuser.

Protecting your information

Keeping your home address private

If you do not want your abuser to know where you live, you can apply for the Oregon Address Confidentiality Program (ACP). If you qualify for the program, you will be given a substitute address to use in place of your home address. All mail sent to the substitute address will be forwarded to you. You can use the substitute address for:

- The delivery of first class, certified and registered mail.
- Obtaining an Oregon driver's license or identification card.
- Receiving or paying child support.
- Enrolling dependents in public school.

For more information, go to: www.doj.state.or.us/crime-victims/victims-services/address-confidentiality-program-acp.

Confidentiality and public bodies

You can also request that public bodies keep your information confidential. Public bodies are organizations run by the state, county, city, or other local government, including:

- Your child's school district
- A public utility board
- The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
- The Department of Human Services (DHS)

When you request confidentiality, you may have to provide proof, such as a copy of a police report or restraining order, to show that you were a victim of abuse. If your request is granted, your information will be kept confidential for five years.

Confidentiality and the courts

Court proceedings are generally open to the public, and most records filed with the court are available for the public to view. Thus, to keep your information private, you can:

- Use a contact address whenever court documents require an address.** Instead of listing your home address, you can use a PO box or a friend or family member's address on court documents. However, you should check the substitute address and phone number often so you do not miss important court notices.
- If you are the victim in a criminal case, you can ask that your phone number and address be kept from the defendant.** To get more information, talk to the district attorney or a crime victim assistant in the district attorney's office. If you have ques-

tions about your rights, go to: www.oregoncrimevictimsrights.org.

- Only provide confidential information in a "confidential information form" ("CIF") in family law cases.** If you are filing for divorce, custody, child support, or a restraining order, you have to provide the court with personal information, like your social security number, birth date, and your employer's information. However, all of this information goes in the "CIF" form, which is not available to the public or the other party. The other party can request a copy of this form, but if they do, you can ask for a hearing so you can explain to a judge why the other party should not have access to your confidential information.

Confidentiality and child support

If you receive DHS benefits, like TANF, SNAP, or OHP, the state, through the Division of Child Support (DCS) can automatically collect child support from the other parent. If you are not receiving benefits or DCS is not attempting to collect child support, you can also request that your local district attorney's office collect child support.

When DCS or the district attorney's office collects child support, they may give personal information about you, such as your current address and phone number, to the other party. If this would put you in danger, you can ask for a "Client Safety Packet."

- If you think you will be safe if the state collects child support, you can fill out the "Claim of Risk" form in the safety packet. This will allow you to use a contact address instead of your home address on all child support paperwork.