

How do I safely start planning my finances?

If you are thinking about leaving, or even if you are not ready to leave your relationship, it can be helpful to safely start to make your financial position more secure and independent through a financial action plan. If it is safe to do so, try to:

1. **Pull together identification and any documents relating to finance for you and any children you may have.** If you cannot take the originals, make copies or scans, take photos or note down important reference numbers. Having these on hand will make it easier for you to access support when you leave. Store these in a safe space, like at a trustworthy friend or family member's home or at your workplace in a safe, secure place.

Key documents include:

- **Identification**
 - Driver's licence
 - Passport
 - proof of age card
 - birth certificate
 - Marriage certificate
- **Financial documentation**
 - Bank cards, credit cards and/or cheque book
 - Details and passwords to bank accounts, including internet and telephone banking passwords
 - Details of any government benefit payments
 - Details of any superannuation accounts
- **Account statements in your name**
 - Details of any bills or accounts which are either in your name or in a joint account with the person using violence, like utility accounts, bank accounts, credit cards and/or loans.
 - Details of children's accounts
 - Details of any joint debts you have with the person using violence
- **Accommodation documentation**
 - Documentation of any personal or joint accommodation arrangements, i.e. home ownership, tenancy or mortgage accounts.
 - Any utility accounts in your name related to the property
- **Health cards**
 - Medicare card
 - Health Care Cards
 - Health insurance card

- **Tax documents**
 - Tax file number
 - Your most recent Notice of Assessment from the Australian Tax Office if you have one
- **Immigration documentation**
 - Visa or residency documentation
- **Important phone numbers**
 - Phone numbers of any close friends or family who may be able to help you

2. Set up a safe and confidential way to be contacted without the person using violence knowing. You could do this by:

- setting up a new email account an Australia Post account gives you access to secure online services where you can redirect or hold your mail, manage your parcel deliveries and more. (Phone: 13 7678); or
- using an alternative postal address of a trustworthy friend or family member.

Keep any record of these safe by storing the documentation securely. Use a computer, Smartphone or tablet that the person using violence against you does not have access to, like a work or public library computer. This is to safeguard you from any spyware which may have been installed on your devices.

Remember to also always keep your passwords safe, and to delete your browsing history.

How do I delete my browsing history on the internet?

The way you delete your browsing history depends on which internet browser you are using. Internet browsers are applications which let you browse the internet. Major internet browsers include Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, Safari and Mozilla Firefox.

As a general rule you can delete your browsing history by following these steps:

1. In the toolbar or menu select 'Tools'.
2. Under the 'Tools' drop down menu select 'History'.
3. Select 'Clear History'. This may also be called 'Clear Recent History', 'Clear Private data' or 'Delete Browsing History'.

If you are having trouble deleting your internet history, try asking a friend or family member to show you how. You could also ask a librarian, or do an internet search for 'How to delete internet browsing history'.

3. Create an escape fund by setting aside money where you can.

If the person using violence controls your money, try to gradually put away small amounts that may not be missed. Every little bit counts.

Find a safe space for your escape fund:

- Leave money with trustworthy friends or family members; or
- Open a new bank account at a different bank. Be sure to have statements sent to a different address or sent electronically to a new email address. Access your statements at work (if you can), in a free internet space, such as ACT Libraries, or at a friend or family member's house. Always be sure to erase your search history wherever you are and keep your passwords safe.

4. Collect essential items you'll need when you leave

If it is safe, slowly collect items that are less likely to be noticed by the person using violence - like basic clothing, medications or toiletries for you and your children.

Store these with a trustworthy friend or family member or at work if you can, making sure they are secure.