SAFELY SETTING UP & ACTIVATING A PHONE OR OTHER DEVICE #KNOWTECHABUSE

WESNET

Who is this information for?

This handout has general information for survivors who want to set up a new phone with a new number. Sometimes abusers destroy phones or monitor a woman's 'main' phone. Many women choose to get an extra backup phone to call 000 or support services privately as they plan for what to do next.

Each survivor will have their unique situation and tech safety needs that may not be covered by this basic advice. Trust your instincts. If you feel you need more information, particularly if your abuser knows a lot about tech, please see our other guides.

NB: If you are activating a Telstra-WESNET Safe Connections Phone - please talk to your support worker about the process to follow.

Important: Common risks and benefits of setting up & activating another phone

There are common risks and benefits of getting a new phone. These sometimes include:

- ❗ an abuser finding the phone and becoming more abusive,
- ❗ setting up a new mobile phone account that may unintentionally link to an abuser's account due to similar or shared data (like address, email, etc.)
- ❗ an abuser finding out a survivor has removed herself from his mobile phone account
- ❗ financial abuse that can affect credit and make it harder to qualify for a phone,
- ❗ information from an old phone automatically moving to the new phone,
- ✔️ being able to call 000, support workers and people you trust,
- ✔️ Searching the internet or undertaking other activities on the device without being monitored.
- ✔️ being able to flee and use location-based services like maps, and
- ✔️ being less isolated.

What are the risks and benefits you might have if you get a new phone? Each person will have their own reasons, but what is important is that you understand what your risks are so that you can plan for how to stay safer. These are some of the things you might think about:

- creating new, unlinked accounts (like Google, iCloud or Apple ID) how you will keep the battery charged on the phone
- how to keep credit on the phone, and knowing when it may expire
- what you could say and do if an abuser or child finds the phone
- using the phone's data instead of your home wifi since it can be monitored
- how you will keep the phone from vibrating or ringing

*Fictional name

The main thing to remember as you set up and activate a new phone

An important thing to think about when setting up or activating a new phone, especially if you plan on still using your 'main' phone, is how to **keep everything about the new phone and your 'main' phone separate.** We will cover some basic things you can do.

Depending on your situation and how tech-savvy the abusive person or their contacts are, it may be safer to review our more in-depth guides before getting a new phone.

Why keeping information separate is for safety - Kristin* & Joanna's* tech safety stories

Kristin bought a new sim card and a new phone and set up the new phone with the same provider. After a few days, her partner confronted her and angrily asked why she was setting up a new phone. Kristin had not realised that her husband was the legal account holder of their family account and he was notified when she added a new phone number in her name.

Joanna had a similar experience after providing her email address to the telco and not remembering that her abusive ex-husband could access her email account and read her incoming emails. He saw an email in her account from the phone company advising her that her new account had been successfully set up.

Step-by-step simplified process for safely setting up and activating a new phone

1. Create a **new email address using a device an abuser has not accessed.** Whether the new phone you get is an iPhone or Android phone, this email address can become the Apple ID, iCloud, Google Account, etc.

2. Update the **privacy and security settings** on your new email account. Adjust settings to your comfort level so that your contacts, location and other personal information is collected only with your knowledge. Stay safer by being selective about the personal information you share during setup.

3. Get a **new phone** that was not a gift from an abusive person. Keep receipts, if possible.

4. Find **a new mobile service provider** that your abuser does not or has not used, if possible. Separate your identity by insisting on a new account number and a new phone number for the new phone. Where possible, use the phone company's dedicated domestic and family violence phone line. If this option is not available, stress to the person activating the phone that the account is in your name and request for additional security measures, like a pin or two-step authentication that an abuser could not guess or access.

   Telstra's WESNET-trained Domestic and Family Violence team: 1800 531 903

*Fictional names

Vodafone : 1300 650 410
Optus: 1300 303 509

5. **Get a new phone number.** This can be hard, and each survivor's needs may be different. The main risks of keeping an old number and porting it to a new account is that the abuser will still know the number. This may result in harassment or even impersonation to gain control of that number again.

6. **Get a new SIM and a new SD card**. Do not use the new SIM or SD in the old phone or the old SIM or SD in the new phone. Keep the phones separate. This may require physically entering contacts onto the old phone.

7. Explore your **new phone's privacy, security features and connectivity features**. that may collect your contact, location or other information. Make sure to practice using the phone's features so you know how to silence it, charge it and load credit on it.

8. Use **new locks, passcodes and complex passwords** for your new phone. Be cautious about what apps or accounts you access on your new phone as some may notify an account holder of a login from an unknown device. Only download apps under your new AppleID, iCloud, Google account, etc.

Additional resources

Learn more about creating a Technology Safety Plan.
Consider starting a Stalking & Technology Facilitated Abuse Log.
Learn about Mobile spyware.
See our video on how to take a screenshot on a computer and smartphone.
Read about Increasing Privacy and Security when Using Google.
Read our Password Safety advice and Tips for Secure Email.

*Fictional names