

## If the defendant contacts you

Sometimes despite your efforts and those of the justice system, the defendant may contact you against your wishes. It is important to make a police report each time this occurs. You should also contact the Victim/Witness Unit to let them know what has happened. If the defendant contacts you, he or she runs the risk of being put back in jail and/or facing additional charges.



## Developing Your Safety Plan

Most witnesses will not need a safety plan in the end, but it is important to think ahead and be prepared. If you need assistance creating a safety plan for yourself and your family or for more ideas, please contact the Victim/Witness Unit.



## SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Inform trusted neighbors or friends and your child's school or daycare about the situation and your safety plan
- Keep copies of important documents, money, clothes, and keys in a safe and secure location
- Ask trusted neighbors to contact law enforcement if they suspect something is wrong and are unable to contact you
- Teach your children what to do if you or they are contacted by the defendant in any way
- Keep your home and vehicle locked at all times
- Report any contact by the defendant to law enforcement and the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Victim/Witness Unit  
Spokane County Prosecutor's Office  
1100 W. Mallon  
Spokane, WA 99260  
Phone: 509-477-3646  
victimwitness@spokanecounty.org



**THE KEY TO  
PERSONAL SAFETY  
FOR  
VICTIMS & WITNESSES  
OF CRIME**

Victim/  
Witness Unit

*Serving victims and  
witnesses of crime*

## The Importance of Your Safety

The Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's office is concerned about the safety of the people who assist in the prosecution of criminal cases. If you have experienced threats or intimidation from the defendant or believe that you may, the following tips can help increase your safety.

### Locks



If the defendant or defendant's friends or family has keys to your home or vehicle, consider having your locks changed. If you do not currently have locks on your home, investing in locks may be an option to consider. Always lock your vehicle whether at home, around town, and even when you are out of the area.

### Protection Orders

You may wish to seek a protection order against the defendant. Protection orders prohibit the respondent from contacting the petitioner either themselves or through a third person. For more information or to obtain a protection order, contact the Spokane County Clerk's Office at the Spokane County Court House or call 509 477-3646. Always keep a copy of the order with you and report every protection order violation to law enforcement.

### Cell Phones

Did you know that any cell phone can call 9-1-1 in case of emergency? Even if you have a cell phone with no paid coverage plan, it can still be used. Keeping a charged cell phone on your person at all times ensures that you can contact emergency services if necessary. Keep emergency numbers in your cell phone so that you have access to them if needed.



### Awareness

Remain aware of your surroundings. If you notice something unusual, get help. For example, if you notice while driving that you are being followed, do not go home. Instead, drive to a police station or to another safe place. If you have a cell phone, call law enforcement or someone you trust.

### A Safe Place

Arrange for a safe place to go if you feel you are in danger. This may be with a friend, neighbor, relative, or shelter. If at all possible, it should be a place that the defendant is not familiar with. Have extra clothes for yourself and your children at your safe place or store clothes in a place where you can get them if needed.

### Money

Keep a moderate amount of money available to you at all times. If the defendant has access to your bank accounts or credit cards, create separate accounts at least temporarily. If you suspect the defendant may abuse access to your accounts, close or freeze the accounts.

## When Children Are Involved

### School/Daycare

Inform your child's school or daycare provider about the situation and be sure they have your current contact information. If your child is listed in a protection order, be sure the school or daycare provider has a copy.

### Informing your child

Being involved in a criminal case can be very frightening for children, which can increase when they are not informed of what is happening. Reduce their stress by assuring them that you and others in the criminal justice system (such as law enforcement and the judge) are there to protect them. Help them gain a sense of control and



safety in the situation by talking to them about what to do in case of emergency. Be sure they know where to go or who to contact for help if for some reason you are not available.

### Your child and 9-1-1

Practice calling 9-1-1 with your child on a pretend phone. Be sure the child can give their name, address, and telephone number when you practice with them. If your child can read, post your address and telephone number near the phone so they won't need to remember it.