

What can the victim do?

Get help from a professional

All across Alberta there are services that help victims who may be experiencing any type of domestic violence. Some are free, some have fees based on ability to pay, and some charge a standard fee to everyone. The **Family Violence Info Line 310-1818** is free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in more than 170 languages. Some municipalities also maintain help lines. In many centres, these can be accessed by calling 211.

Make a Safety Plan

If the victim wants to separate from the abuser, this can be the most dangerous time in their relationship. The Family Violence Info Line will help victims develop a safety plan. If there are children involved, they must be safe at all times. If something does happen, children also need to be prepared. Should they go to a friend or neighbour's place and wait? Should they call 911? Having a plan can make a huge difference in an emergency situation.

Get a protection order

There are several kinds of protection orders that can help victims of abuse. They apply in different situations but there is usually one that will help. Police or a service agency will likely be able to provide some assistance in getting what is needed.

Get a parenting order

If children are involved, the victim may want to get a Parenting Order from Family Court to set out who will be responsible for making decisions about the children and what time each will have with them.

Move out

The victim may decide that it is best to move to a new place as quickly as possible. If the victim is living somewhere else and afraid to go back to the apartment to get personal things, the police may be able to help.

Under the *Residential Tenancies Act* a tenant can apply for a certificate that will allow a victim to terminate the lease with 28 days notice and without a financial penalty.

You may be able to make this easier by offering the victim another unit in a different building.

Frequently asked questions

It's great that victims have all these options but how do they get these orders?

The police may help the victim get an *Emergency Protection Order*. If not, Legal Aid Alberta will. If they can't help, they will likely know who can. Most police departments have a Victims Services Unit that helps with criminal matters.

There are also services available through Family Court that might be able to help. Refer the victim to the **Family Violence Info Line 310-1818** to get connected to the help needed.

The victim's doctor or other professional can help get the certificate to terminate a lease early.

Does the victim have to stay in the apartment for 28 days after giving the landlord the certificate and the notice?

NO! The victim can leave as soon as it is best to do so. The victim (or the abuser) still has to pay rent for those days.

Handy resources

Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta

If You're Thinking of Leaving – booklet

Leaving an abusive relationship if you are not a Canadian – booklet

What you need to know about Emergency Protection Orders – booklet

No Contact Orders – poster

If you leave...Your Guide to Child Custody and Parenting Orders – booklet

Renting and Domestic Violence: Ending Your Lease Early – booklet

Alberta Human Services

Create a safety plan – website

Alberta SPCA and the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta

Get Out and keep them safe too – brochure

Alberta Government

Apply for a Parenting Order – website

Safer spaces certificate to end tenancy – website