Tips for Survivors of High-Tech Abuse and Stalking

NNEDV

If you are experiencing High-Tech Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence or Stalking:

1. Trust Your Instincts
2. Talk about Safety with Advocates & Other Supporters
3. Save and Document Everything

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1. Trust Your Instincts

❑ Does the person know too much about your activities or things you've only told a few people? If you think you're being monitored by an abuser, you probably are.

❑ Are you followed around town, even to new places? Abusers and perpetrators frequently stalk and follow their victims to work, school, etc, but if they show up to places you've never been before, perhaps they are using a global positioning device or other monitoring technique.

❑ Is the stalker comfortable with technology? Use computers? Willing to go to any effort to maintain control of you? Technology is getting easier to use and cheaper to access. Abusers are incredibly persistent and creative.

2. Talk about Safety with advocates and other supporters

❑ Are you in or ending a relationship with someone who might be dangerous or stalking you? In domestic violence situations, stalking is common during the relationship, when trying to end the relationship, and often occurs long after the relationship is over.

❑ Are you considering ending an abusive relationship? Trying to stop the abuse can be a very dangerous time, but there are steps you can take to try to increase your safety. Specially trained advocates at a local program or regional/national hotline can help you plan for safety and discuss options.

> If you or someone you know is in danger, please call 911, or your local or regional hotline for support. In the U.S. you can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or TTY: 1-800-787-3224.

❑ Can you safely change your passwords, PIN numbers, create a new email account? (only do this on a safer computer if you suspect your home computer is being monitored)

❑ Which family members, neighbors, friends, and co-workers do you trust to help you plan for safety? It is common for batterers to push away most of your support systems, but they may be able to help you through a difficult time.

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3. Save and Document Everything

❑ Even if you are not sure if you want to involve the police, it is a good idea to **keep a log of all incidents**. You may only use this log in your safety planning, but details can help you identify patterns. If you want the police to investigate they will need as many details as you can provide.

> You might want to include: date, time, location, officer information (if reported), witnesses (if any), suspected technology involved (if any - phone, email, etc), and a description of the event or incident. (See appendix for a sample log)

❑ **Save** everything related to the event or incident. If you receive a threatening note on your car windshield, save it (and try not to touch all of it if possible to save fingerprints). Similarly, if you receive a threatening electronic message by email, pager, or voice mail, make sure you save it. Rather than deleting all traces of an incident, saving everything can help show patterns, plan for safety, and provide evidence for police. (see additional tips on saving email and instant messages below).

❑ If appropriate, take **photos**. If you find something suspicious, try not to remove it. You might want to carry a disposable camera with you. If the event is on your computer, there are ways to document and save your computer files. (see below tips on taking "**screen shots**")

❑ Tell police about **all technology you know of**, if you are reporting the high-tech incidents to the police. It may help them find the appropriate technology devices used in the stalking or abusive incidents.

❑ Think about **patterns and passwords**. Are there patterns to some of the incidents? Do you only receive harassing email during the day when the abuser might be using a work computer? Do you think you are followed only when the stalker isn't at work? Does the abuser have favorite passwords that you know? Is there a place you think that the passwords might be written down? If the police need to collect computer evidence, it will help them to know where passwords might be stored.

Appendices Below

Contact information for advocates & allies:

(The project is not staffed for crisis calls)

Safety Net: the National Safe & Strategic Technology Project, at the
National Network to End Domestic Violence
Phone: 202-543-5566
Email: SafetyNet [at] nnedv.org
Web: nnedv.org/safetynet

Sample Log for High-Tech Stalking Events

Date:	Time: (am/pm)	Location:	Witnesses: (if any)	Technologies Used (if any)
Sun 5/4/2003	8:30 PM	My home	My computer	Email

Description of Event:

I received a threatening email from an email account that my ex created a few years ago. It isn't his normal email account, but I recognize the screen name. The email said "if you don't come back, I'm going to kill you"

Response, check as many as boxes as appropriate and describe police or other response below: **Police said to save the email and they would come out tomorrow.**	☒ Saved paper & electronic evidence by doing: **saved and printed email_____** ☒ Called Police (Report Number **20030504XCA**) and Officer Name **Sgt Jane Brown, County Police** ☐ Went to the hospital or doctors office (name: _____ _____)

Date:	Time: (am/pm)	Location:	Witnesses: (if any)	Technologies Used (if any)
Sat 5/31/2003	2:00 – 3:30 PM	Downtown	My neighbor XXX	Phone and Answering Machine

Description of Event:

All afternoon I received hang-up calls about every 5 minutes but the caller didn't leave messages and I didn't answer. My neighbor was there at 3:30 PM when my machine recorded a message from my ex saying I'd better watch out, and if I called the police I would get what's coming to me

Response, check as many as boxes as appropriate and describe police or other response below: **Police said to save the answering machine tape and they would pick it up on Monday.**	☒ Saved paper & electronic evidence by doing: **removed tape so I wouldn't tape over it** ☒ Called Police (Report Number **20030531DG5**) and Officer Name **Trooper J. Smith, County Police** ☐ Went to the hospital or doctors office (name: _____ _____)

Date:	Time: (am/pm)	Location:	Witnesses: (if any)	Technologies Used (if any)
Tues 6/3/2003	5:00 – 7:00 PM	Downtown	XXX, friend	I suspect GPS

Description of Event:

When I drove to a restaurant I've never been to, I noticed my ex in the parking lot watching me. My friend and I were going there for dinner. My ex has followed me to work (see log from last week), but this was the first time I was somewhere completely new. I suspect a GPS device might be in my car somewhere.

Response, check as many as boxes as appropriate and describe police or other response below: **Police suggested I bring my car to their dept or have a mechanic check it**	☒ Saved paper & electronic evidence by doing: **looked around my car, under seat, under hood, under bumper, in trunk** ☒ Called Police (Report Number **20030531DG5**) and Officer Name **Officer Doe, Municipal Police Dept** ☐ Went to the hospital or doctors office (name: _____ _____)

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Stalking and High-Tech Stalking Log

Date:	Time: (am/pm)	Location:	Witnesses: (if any)	Technologies Used (if any)

Description of Event:

Response, check as many as boxes as appropriate and describe police or other response below:	❑ Saved paper & electronic evidence by doing: _____ ❑ Called Police (Report Number _____ and Officer Name _____ ❑ Went to the hospital or doctors office (name: _____ _____)

Date:	Time: (am/pm)	Location:	Witnesses: (if any)	Technologies Used (if any)

Description of Event:

Response, check as many as boxes as appropriate and describe police or other response below:	❑ Saved paper & electronic evidence by doing: _____ ❑ Called Police (Report Number _____ and Officer Name _____ ❑ Went to the hospital or doctors office (name: _____ _____)

Date:	Time: (am/pm)	Location:	Witnesses: (if any)	Technologies Used (if any)

Description of Event:

Response, check as many as boxes as appropriate and describe police or other response below:	❑ Saved paper & electronic evidence by doing: _____ ❑ Called Police (Report Number _____ and Officer Name _____ ❑ Went to the hospital or doctors office (name: _____ _____)

Note from the Stalking Resource Center at the Nat'l Center for Victims of Crime www.ncvc.org/src/Help/log.html

"It is critical that victims of stalking maintain a log of stalking-related incidents and behavior. Recording this information will help to document the behavior for restraining order applications, divorce and child custody cases, or criminal prosecution. It can also help preserve your memory of individual incidents about which you might later testify…"

Important note: Since this information could potentially be introduced as evidence or inadvertently shared with the stalker at a future time, **do not include any information that you do not want the offender to see."**

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Information about the High-Tech Abuser/Stalker/Perpetrator:

Even if you are not sure you want to report the abuse to the police, keep a log of the events and also as much information about the abuser as possible. If you decide to report the events to the police in the future this information can help them investigate the crimes. It's OK if you only know some of the below information – any information may help police with your case.

Keep this information in a safe place – if you live with the abuser, consider keeping your logs locked in your office or with a trusted friend or relative.

Name of the stalker: _____ Date of Birth or Age:_____

Address:_____

Workplace & Address:_____

Type of Internet at stalker's home: ___ Dial Up ___ Cable ___ DSL ___ unknown

       Name of Internet Service Provider, if known (Cox, AOL, etc)_____

All phones numbers used by this person or used in the abuse (from Caller ID, etc):

Home:	Cell:
Work:	Fax:
Other:	Other:

All email addresses used by this person or used in the abuse:

All screen name(s) used by the person or used in the abuse:

If known, list any favorite passwords used by this person:
_____

Does this person keep a list of passwords in a book, or in a small handheld computer, or any other place you can think of?_____

Check as many as you know of that this person uses:

❑ Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) such as a Palm Pilot or a Handheld Computer

❑ Laptop Computer

❑ Desktop Computer(s)

❑ Digital Camera

❑ CD Rom Burner (to make or copy CDs)

❑ DVD Burner (to make DVDs)

❑ Global Positioning Devices (GPS)

❑ Cell Phone

❑ Small "Mini-Drives", also known as Pen Drives or USB drives

❑ External Hard Drives

❑ Tape Back-up System

❑ Others:

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Save All Harassing Emails with their Header Information

To preserve evidence of harassing emails, you need to SAVE ALL EMAILS, including the email "header", the codes and letters that identify this particular message (it is usually hidden from view). The email header contains a lot of valuable information about where the email was sent from and who wrote it. Each email program is different, but SpamCop has some good instructions for many email programs. If you go to the web address below you can read the instructions for your email program.

If you are not sure how to do this correctly, contact your high-tech computer crime police unit. Do not delete anything.

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http://spamcop.net/fom-serve/cache/19.html

How do I get my email program to reveal the full, unmodified email?

It depends on your email software. The above website offers instructions for some of the more popular programs:

Normal email software:
- Microsoft products: Outlook, Outlook Express
- Mac OS X
- Netscape, Mozilla and Thunderbird
- Eudora
- AOL
- Pine
- Lotus Notes
- Pegasus Mail
- WebTV
- Claris Emailer
- kmail (KDE Desktop)
- GNU/Emacs integrated email
- Mail Warrior
- Juno Version 4+
- Mutt
- The Bat!
- Pronto mail (GTK/unix)
- StarOffice

- Novell Groupwise
- Blitzmail
- Forté Agent
- Ximian Evolution
- Sylpheed

Web-based email software:
- Hotmail and Windows Live Hotmail
- Yahoo Mail
- Excite web-mail
- Netscape Webmail
- Blitzmail
- Operamail
- Lycos Mail (mailcity.com)
- Onebox.com
- Outlook Web Access
- Shawcable Webmail
- MSN Premium

AOL Tip: Save Email   [www.techtv.com/callforhelp/aol/story/0,24330,3370605,00.html]
Store your messages in your Personal Filing Cabinet automatically.

By Nicole Guilfoyle.

America Online has a horrible habit of deleting email before you're really done with it. A great workaround is to save the messages you want to keep in your Personal Filing Cabinet. Here are the steps:

1. *Click Preferences, and choose Filing Cabinet.*
2. *Put a check in the box next to "Retain all mail I read in my Personal Filing Cabinet."*
3. *Repeat steps 1 and 2 for your sent mail.*

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Save All Instant Messages

To preserve evidence of harassing or abusive instant messages or chat, you need to SAVE THEM. Each Instant Messenger (IM) program is different, but below are instructions for three common programs: AOL, Yahoo, and ICQ.

Since there are multiple versions of even these 3 programs and many other programs, please check the "HELP" section of your instant messenger or chat program to find out how to save messages. Some programs have settings to let you automatically log or archive everything.

If you are not sure how to do this correctly, contact your high-tech computer crime police unit.

YAHOO Instant Messages:

If you are chatting with a friend in Messenger and want to save the conversation to a text file:

1. Open the **File** menu at the top of the Instant Message window.
2. Choose **Save** from the menu.
3. Specify a name and location for the file, then click **Save.**

Do you want to automatically archive of all the Yahoo instant messages you send and receive on your computer? Do you want to view any existing archive of your previous chats?

1. Open the top **Messenger** menu and choose **Preferences**.
2. Select **Archive** from left menu and choose: **"Yes Save all my messages"**
3. After chatting, to view chats, you can select **View Archive.**

AOL Instant Messages (AIM):

If your chat messages are still on your screen in the Chat Room window:

1. Open the **File** menu, and click **Save**.
2. Enter a name for the file.
3. Select **Text Only** in the Save As Type field to save just the text of the messages or select **AOL Rich Text Format** if you want to save the text and be able to follow any hyperlinks in messages. This choice creates an HTML file you can view with a web browser.
4. Click **Save** to save messages that appear in the upper pane of the Chat Room window.

To turn on automatic logging of all your instant messages (IMs) or Chat room conversations:

1. Open top **Edit** menu and select **Settings**
2. Click on the **IM Logging** tab
3. Check or uncheck boxes to start or stop logging: ☐ Log IMs   ☐ Log Chats
4. **Store Logs** lets you choose the place that chats are saved on your computer.

ICQ Instant Messages:

1. Open the **Preferences & Security** menu. Click **Main**.
2. Click **Preferences & Security**. Choose **Saving Options** (under Preferences).
3. Select the **Auto-save option** OR if you choose to save your history automatically, in the Save Messages/History pane, select the Save **History** checkbox.
4. Select **OK** to save your changes and close the window, or select **Apply** to save your changes and keep the window open.

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Taking picture or "screen shots" of the computer screen

If you need to take electronic pictures of your computer screen to document high-tech stalking, harassment, or hacking, you can do it manually or purchase software to help you take "screen shots" or "screen captures" as it is called.

Windows Computers

Manual Way to take Screen Shots:

1. **Press** "PrntScrn" or "PrintScreen" on your keyboard to take a "screen shot" of everything viewable on your computer monitor.

2. **Open** a program (like Microsoft Word or PowerPoint) and create a new document.

3. **Paste** the screen shot into new document. To Paste, go to the Toolbar at the top of the program screen, click on EDIT, then click on PASTE.

Macintosh Computers

Manual Way to take Screen Shots:

1. **Press** three keys at the same time: **Shift + Command + 3**

2. **See** the picture saved to your desktop as a file named Picture 1.

3. **Open** the image in a new document or click on the file saved to the desktop.

Sample Screen Capture Software Applications:

www.CaptureWiz.com
www.etrusoft.com
www.fullshot.com
www.screencapture.com
www.techsmith.com

Some companies offer a trial version you can download for free.

Acknowledgements: Some information was adapted from NCVC's Stalking Resource Center (www.ncvc.org/src).