

**Don't become  
the road-kill  
of your  
relationship**

**BY LISA TESTART & OTHERS...**

**STAGE ONE - BEFORE YOU LEAVE:**

**HOW TO PREPARE  
TO LEAVE AN  
ABUSIVE  
RELATIONSHIP**

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This draft is released for comment, and suggestions.

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# BE INFORMED

This guide can't answer every question, but it will give you a starting point. It wasn't developed with a view to spoon feeding victims, but to encourage their own internal resources, strengths, and capabilities to be brought to the fore as you navigate a way out of the purgatory you are either in right now, or may face later in your journey.

It's impossible to provide answers for every conceivable issue that might arise, but we've tried to be as comprehensive as possible, keeping in mind that every situation is unique, even if it feels like everyone else has it much worse.

Your situation will unfold as you make choices, or have decisions made around you.

Only by being informed from the outset will you keep some of the power that has been drained from you to date. You will struggle. You will feel overwhelmed. You will feel like giving up. We all faced these challenges and battles too, some better than others, many didn't have the help or advice you will find so willingly gathered here just for you.

You will want to curl up into a ball and retreat from all of it. It will feel all too much. You will be traumatised by what you are embarking on. We've been there too. We know your pain. We are hoping our lived experiences will help you to suffer a little less than we did, and that your voice will add further insight to those who will come after you as well.

We can't afford to be giving you false hope, or false anything. Soft, gentle, nurturing support will need to come from the counsellors and support advocates you connect with along the way. We are here to help you survive, and hopefully thrive, when you find yourself on the other side of this nightmare and look back and see the footprints you left behind.

Only by being informed will you know when something isn't right. Being informed means not letting yourself sink into hopelessness, even though we all now that feeling only too well. We don't ever deny you will feel this way, and when you do, know it is ok to sit in it, feel it, acknowledge it, and then ring a service like 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) to talk about it and decompress from the heightened state of despair back to a normal state of whatever it is you have as 'normal.'

**I WISH I'D KNOWN THAT I COULD  
HAVE LEFT MUCH EARLIER, AND  
THAT I DIDN'T HAVE TO KEEP  
TRYING. IT TOOK LOOKING DOWN  
THE WRONG END OF A LOADED .22  
FOR ME TO THINK "THIS IS IT" AND  
DO SOMETHING.**

It's going to be a long, hard, difficult, frightening journey. We can't hide this from you, and nor should we. Leaving any relationship is

difficult, but those who leave an abusive one face so much more, and have far deeper wounds than most.

You will succumb to bouts of fear, depression, even suicidal thoughts. Don't think it won't happen to you. Even the strongest, most inspiring and courageous of us have been in your shoes, and we know how easy it is to lose your way when you try to be strong in the face of the storm that's on its way.

There is no weakness in allowing that fear of what might happen be present. But our hope is you will be stronger with this guide than without it. By utilising the information in this guide, we hope to convey to you our experience, strength, and hope, so that you too can know that at some point it will end, and you will have a life afterwards. Maybe not the life you envisaged, but a life without abuse.

## SUGGESTIONS

Immediate things to think about 'before you leave' – not in any particular order.

1. Set up a Post Office Box and get your mail redirected.
2. Set up a new bank account with a debit card attached so you can keep any payments you need to make going.
3. Get copies of any documents you can, even if you think you won't need them. Photograph everything.

4. Take photos of everything you have, if you have to leave it behind.
5. Connect with services.
6. Get a cheap phone and a pay-as-you-go sim card so you can have a safe number to only give out to those who you trust. Not being able to answer the phone is a seriously underestimated trauma response and can stop victims from getting the support they need. A phone you can answer without hesitation will stand you in good stead. Get a prepaid sim that doesn't require a monthly top up in order to get incoming calls and texts. You only need to answer incoming calls as you can call back from your own phone.
7. Have a safety plan in place.
8. Have all YOUR important documents in a place you can grab them in a hurry.
9. Arrange a safe deposit box service at the bank where you have your new account set up. It's not a 'locked box' service like on TV, but you can give the bank a brief case with your important docs in it and they will tape it with security tape and store it in their vault for a fee. Last time I used this service it was about \$80 for a year. Check with your local branch. You might have to go to a bigger town to access this service but to keep your documents safe will prove invaluable.
10. Have a second or secret social media account set up so you can sell stuff if necessary. Facebook Marketplace can be seen by everyone and will be used against you if you are seen to be selling things.
11. Gather any evidence and keep it safe.
12. Get financial information such as superannuation details.



# GATHER YOUR EVIDENCE

At some stage you will leave this relationship you are in. It might be tomorrow, or in ten years; you won't know until you make the decision.

It is important to think about what you will need in terms of evidence. What is evidence?

Evidence can be emails, letters, text messages, videos, anything that will prove what you are saying, prove what happened, prove your position. You won't realise what is evidence until it's needed, so gather everything you can even if you think it isn't relevant.

Suggested things are:

- Tax returns
- emails
- text messages
- bank statements
- credit card statements
- copies of any documents
- tax assessments
- company documents
- photographs

If in doubt, many email programs will allow you to export the entire mailbox which can then be opened on another computer.

Get a dropbox or other 'cloud' service that will allow you to upload and save your documents. Take note that Dropbox is not a

cloud storage service like some other services, but is instead a cloud ‘syncing’ service, which means all your documents will be synced to any device connected to your account.

Honestly..... I wish I had listened to my mom. She didn't want me to marry him. We didn't have a great relationship and so it was hard to put our differences aside and allow her to confirm what my gut was telling me already. When she asked me not to she said it with conviction and sincerity.

## GATHER DOCUMENTS

Whatever happens after you leave, you will need certain documents. If you were married some documents are particularly relevant for a divorce application, which will be explained in a later section.

- Your tax returns
- Your birth certificate
- Your marriage certificate if relevant
- Citizenship certificate
- Bank statements

- Insurance documents
- Superannuation documents
- Employment documents
- Copies of demerit point notices, fines etc

# SUPPORT PEOPLE

Support people are going to be critical as you go through this journey. But who do you trust?

Will your ex turn family and friends against you? Do you have someone that won't be swayed by your exes version of events, who won't decide later that you are the perpetrator?

Before you leave you will think everyone supports you, even if you don't understand what is happening. But that will change if your abuser begins a smear campaign to paint themselves as the victim. I know, it sounds improbable as you are reading this. No one could be that stupid as to believe that the perpetrator is a victim, but the sad truth is it happens every day. This book is filled with the lived experience voices of those who went through this nightmare, and we all warn you to take heed of this and not to dismiss it.

Many victims lose entire families and friendship networks, not to mention jobs, and professional networks, because their ex convinced everyone they were the real victim. It's not until you fully experience the bizarre reality of this alternate universe kind of reverse thinking that you realise how dangerous your situation is.

This is why finding the right support people will be critical. You will need someone you can talk to, who will hold documents for you if needed, and who will never disclose anything.

You'll certainly discover who your friends are as one by one they stop interacting with you, distancing themselves from you, not wanting to be tainted by the smear campaign your ex will have started long before you left.

This stuff gets real very fast, and it's a dirty fight that most want to whitewash away. But you, the person reading this today, you get the benefit of an unvarnished reality that you might not believe today, but will come back to and go 'thank god I read that'.

## CHANGE PASSWORDS

Changing passwords could flag that things are afoot, and signal to your abuser that you are making plans.

It's important to ensure that your day to day life continues as much as possible, so you have less to hide. Keeping stories straight, hiding stuff, it takes a toll and you'll create a space to slip up. This can be dangerous. Change passwords if it's safe, otherwise do it later when you've left. There will be more about that and how to keep yourself safe in another chapter.

# REDIRECT YOUR MAIL

It can take up to a week to have a mail redirection take effect. Before you leave you should arrange for a post office box in another location you can easily get to, and have all your mail redirected to this new post box.

Mail redirection costs at the time of writing are \$165 for a twelve month redirection, and \$99 if you are on a concession. It's worth it for peace of mind regarding your mail and is an overlooked aspect of safety when leaving.

Australia Post state on their website:

## How it works

Mail Redirection is designed to make moving home or business easy. Once set up, your mail will be forwarded from your old address directly to your new address, leaving you free to focus on your move.

- Redirect eligible mail and parcels for 1, 3, 6 or 12 months.
- Add up to 6 names to your application (e.g. people you live with, your legal name before marriage, chosen English name or alias).
- Opt-in to notify selected banks, insurers, energy providers and telcos of your new address.

Post Office Boxes are charged from 1 April to 31 March, and you will be charged a pro-rata price depending on when you apply.

A standard box will average out at approximately \$140 per year, and is well worth the cost when considering the peace of mind you'll have at not having to give your address out to strangers.

I wish I'd known that there were free smart phones available that didn't require ID for 90 days so I could have a safe way to stay in contact with people.

A post office box can also be used as an address for Medicare, and gives you safety if you have to go into hiding for any reason.

## A NEW BANK ACCOUNT

**Who controls the money? Do you have your own accounts?**

While you may not have money issues at the moment, there may come a time when your world will implode and you'll wish you'd had an account that isn't trackable.

If you end up in family law proceedings you'll wish you'd had a new account, particularly if you are in hiding or need to make purchases that don't show up on existing bank statements or credit cards.

In family law proceedings there is an obligation to make full and frank financial disclosure going back 3-7 years depending on the financial nature of your relationship. Having a separate debit card account that isn't linked to a bank account will be a life-saver if you ever need to escape, go into hiding, or just act discreetly for a while. This isn't about hiding money, but keeping you safe at a time when violence can erupt from even the most loving of partners.

Australia Post have a prepaid 'Everyday Mastercard' and at the time of writing it costs \$8 to purchase, and requires \$50 to activate. It has a BSB and Account number for online transfers, and a bpay facility that could be very beneficial if you are in business and need a new way for clients to pay you.

You could ask a trusted support person to set one up for you, and it's easy to go into any post office and make cash deposits over the counter into the card. It does require ID to open, and cash deposits require ID as well if the staff don't know you.

## DOCUMENT SAFETY

There have been many times when I have acted as the support person for my friends during their tumultuous and difficult separations. Having someone you trust to hold important documents for you will help give you not just peace of mind, but also certainty that nothing can be destroyed or found at home before you leave.

And, if you are the one staying in the family home, it helps to have your evidence / important documents off-site anyway. Many victims keep their important documents in their car boot, only to regret later that their ex had a spare key and got in to the car.

# COMCOURT PORTAL

## **Register for a free Comcourt e-filing account!**

At the time of writing, there is still a Federal Circuit Court and a separate Family Court.

Electronic filing of documents has been available for some time, but Covid made the courts change how cases were managed and conducted, with most, if not all cases being heard electronically during the height of the pandemic. E-filing is done through [www.comcourts.gov.au](http://www.comcourts.gov.au) where you can create the free account.

Even if you don't think there will be any court proceedings, it is highly recommended you register for a free account so you are prepared from the beginning. As you will hear throughout this book, preparation will be key to many of the issues you will face once you leave, and the person who promised to keep you safe, who promised to look after you, who you thought would be the last person to harm you, will often be the one to turn on you when you least expect it.



We never think our partners will behave as they do, but that's the reality of dealing with the kind of abuse that stays hiding in plain sight.

Plus, you are still probably ambivalent, wanting things to work out, feeling caught because you love them so much.

Planning doesn't stop you from reconciling, but it can mean the difference between being ready or being caught by surprise. Don't be the deer in the headlights bowled over by the road-train your ex will use to run you over.

The Federal Circuit Court has its own Youtube channel where you can find plenty of information.

I wish I'd known "what the safe exit button meant on a website"

Watch the video on how to register for the comcourt portal here: <https://youtu.be/4jNC-VKgNPA>

# VEHICLES

Who owns the vehicles? Which one will you take if there is more than one? What will you do if your ex refuses to transfer the vehicle into their name?

If you leave a vehicle behind and it's in your name, you should think about?

- Potential of demerit points and fines accumulating in your name
- Getting the transfer documents ready as soon as possible
- Think about which vehicle you will keep
- If there isn't a vehicle in your name, will it be reported stolen as part of your exes strategy to keep you off balance?

# MEDICARE

More than likely you will have a shared Medicare card if you are a couple. Sometimes people keep their own accounts, but for the purposes of this book, we will assume you have a shared card.

It will seem crazy, but Medicare have no protocols for removing a person from your Medicare account.

Before you do anything, make sure you register for the online Medicare service via the My Gov portal. This will give you access to your online digital account, and your Medicare card will be available as a digital version there.

Having access to your account online will allow you to change your address to the PO Box you will have set up. You can ensure that all mail goes to your PO Box.

The only way to get someone off your card is to:

- A. get a completely new account in your name;

B. ask the other person to please remove themselves from your account.

If option b doesn't work, you're stuck with option a.

However, if your partner happens to be a member of a profession with a disciplinary body, you could complain to them about their conduct if it is part of their abuse of you.

One victim had to publicly humiliate her ex before they would transfer themselves of the victims Medicare account.

Not every service has a domestic abuse approach to its clients.

Medicare staff will be very sympathetic, and they will do everything they can to assist you, but ultimately their hands are tied and you'll be left to figure out which way you'll go.

The logo for MY GOV, featuring the words "MY GOV" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

myGov is a simple and secure way to access online government services and you should register well in advance for services that are available online.

Register at [www.my.gov.au](http://www.my.gov.au)

This information is lifted directly from the myGov website:

## About myGov

myGov is a secure way to access government services online in 1 place.

Government services you can access

You can link these government services to your myGov account:

- Australian JobSearch
- Australian Taxation Office
- Centrelink
- Child Support
- Department of Health Applications Portal
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- HousingVic Online Services
- Medicare
- My Aged Care
- My Health Record
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- National Redress Scheme
- State Revenue Office Victoria.

One Inbox for your important messages

myGov Inbox keeps your messages secure and in the one place from these services, if you have them linked:

- Australian Taxation Office
- Centrelink
- Child Support

- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- HousingVic Online Services
- Medicare
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- State Revenue Office Victoria.

One place to update your details with linked services

You can update your contact details in your myGov Account settings. Your update will be shared with these services, if you have them linked:

- Australian JobSearch
- Australian Taxation Office
- Centrelink
- Medicare
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- State Revenue Office Victoria.

## BREAKING A LEASE

If you are renting then check your states rules for breaking a lease, or dealing with a rental property as a result of domestic abuse.

You may also find yourself listed on a tenancy database if there is damage done to a property as the result of domestic abuse. A Google search will call up tenancy blacklist databases and you can

check your details to see if you have been listed. Most states have a process for getting your name off these databases if you are a victim of violence.

## **New South Wales**

Fair Trading NSW has information on how to manage the process, along with forms to download <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/renting/during-a-tenancy/domestic-violence-in-a-rented-property>

Tenants Union of NSW <https://www.tenants.org.au/sample/termination-domestic-violence>

*Tenants in circumstances of domestic violence are now able to end their tenancy by serving a termination notice, with relevant evidence, and vacating – see [Resource: Domestic Violence Amendments to Residential Tenancies Act](#) and [Factsheet 12: Domestic violence](#).*

### ***Evidence which needs to be attached to the notice:***

*You must attach **ONE** of the following to this notice to give it to the landlord, or their agent. You do not have to attach this evidence to the notice/s you give to any other co-tenants.*

- *a copy of the certificate of conviction for the domestic violence offence against you or your dependent child, **OR***
- *a copy of a current Domestic Violence Order protecting you or your dependent child (need not be a final order), **OR***

- *a copy of a current injunction granted under section 68B or 114 of the Family Law Act 1975 protecting you or your dependent child, **OR***
- *a declaration made by a **competent person** in the required form, that you or your dependent child are a victim of domestic violence. The form is in **Schedule 3 of the Regulations** as well as on Fair Trading's website:*
  - [Declaration by competent person](#)
  - [Declaration by competent person \(for a tenant's dependent child\)](#)

## **Victoria**

Consumer Affairs Victoria has advice on rentals and domestic abuse <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/resources-and-tools/family-violence>

Tenants Victoria also has comprehensive advice <https://www.tenantsvic.org.au/advice/during-your-tenancy/family-violence-and-your-tenancy/>

## **COVID-19 update**

### **New family violence protections**

Victim-survivors of family violence will be able to apply to VCAT to get a lease in their name (excluding a perpetrator) or remove themselves from a lease and also protect themselves from the debt created by the perpetrator due to damage to the property or unpaid rent.

Applications by victim-survivors will be heard within 3 days to help protect them.

## **Where to get help**

Specialist family violence services remain open during the outbreak of COVID-19. There are also additional resources available online to support people during this time. See:

[COVID-19 and family violence \[DVVIC website\]](#)

[Emergency contacts \[DVVIC website\]](#)

## **Western Australia**

Safe Tenancy WA <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection/safe-tenancy-wa>

If you are a tenant dealing with a family or domestic violence situation you now have options on managing your tenancy agreement. Remember, whatever path you choose, your safety is paramount and there are support agencies around to help you.

Tenants affected by family and domestic violence (FDV) are able to:

1. GO - leave a tenancy agreement without going to court and with as little as seven (7) days' notice (you can leave right away for safety but will need to pay rent until the end of the notice period)



2. STAY - apply to court to have a perpetrator's name removed from a lease
3. Make a rental home safer through lock changes or security upgrades
4. Sort out disputes about property damage, unpaid rent or bonds
5. Seek removal from, or avoid being listed on, a tenancy database if the listing was because of FDV.

The content below is for tenants and we have a [poster/factsheet](#). We also have a specific factsheet [for landlords and property professionals](#) as well as [resources for tenant advocates or FDV community workers](#) and a [family and domestic violence and tenancy laws](#) page.

## **Queensland**

QLD Residential Tenancies Authority <https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/forms-resources/fact-sheets/general-tenancy-fact-sheets/domestic-and-family-violence-information>

What if I'm renting a premises with the person who is violent towards me?

The Act gives rights to people in a domestic relationship whether you are a tenant named on the tenancy agreement or not. This includes a spouse (including a defacto), a dating partner, a family member or an informal carer.

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence while living in rental accommodation, you can apply to the Tribunal for an order to:

1. be recognised as the tenant
2. remove the name of the person who has committed an act of domestic and family violence from the tenancy agreement
3. restrain the person who has committed an act of domestic and family violence from causing further damage or injury
4. Prevent your personal information being listed in a tenancy database where a breach of the agreement is a result of the actions of another person who has committed an act of domestic or family violence, or
5. end your tenancy agreement altogether.

What if the person you live with is violent and you are not in a domestic relationship with them?

If the person you live with is violent and you are not in a domestic relationship with them and the person has, or is likely to cause serious damage to the premises, or injury to you or someone else occupying the premises, you can apply to the Tribunal for an order to:

1. be recognised as a tenant, or
2. remove the name of the person that has been violent from the tenancy agreement.

How do I apply to the Tribunal?

For information on applying to the Tribunal, visit [www.qcat.qld.gov.au](http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au), or contact the QCAT registry on 1300 QLD CAT (1300 753 228).

## **South Australia**

Tenancies and domestic violence victims <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing/renting-and-letting/domestic-violence-protections-for-renters>

### **Residential tenancy protection for domestic violence victims**

New residential tenancy protection for victims of domestic violence has been introduced.

Victims can apply to the [South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal](#) (SACAT) to:

- stay at the rented home and have the perpetrator leave
- leave the rented home and be removed from the rental agreement.

Under changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1995* people may be able to leave violent relationships without facing financial penalties from their residential tenancy agreement.

### **What to do if you need to move because of domestic violence**

Contact Consumer and Business Services (CBS) tenancy advisory service on telephone [131 882](tel:131882).

If you are a tenant or a co-tenant in private rental, community or public housing then you can apply to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) for an order to:

- terminate the tenancy
- allow you to stay in the property without the perpetrator
- leave the property and terminate your responsibility under the tenancy
- stop a landlord from listing your details on a Residential Tenancy Database (tenant ‘blacklist’) for damage caused by the perpetrator
- determine how the bond will be refunded.

### **Northern Territory**

There doesn't appear to be anything available to support victims of domestic abuse in a residential tenancy situation that is easy to find. You may need to dig deeper to find support through a territory based advocacy organisation.

<https://nt.gov.au/property/renters/moving-out/breaking-a-lease-early>

Consumer Affairs NT <https://consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au/for-consumers/residential-tenancies>

# **HARDSHIP**

Many businesses now understand the issue of domestic abuse and violence, and if you call and ask for the ‘hardship team’ or talk about family violence, you’ll often find yourself transferred to a

specialist team who will help you work through what can be done to assist you.

Your bank, local council rates, phone, electricity, gas and other utilities and services you have will do the best they can to help you.

Sometimes you'll be able to get refunds, extra time, or delayed payments if you are not able to pay. Even if you've buried your head in the sand like so many of us do because it's just so goddamn overwhelming, you'll be surprised at how supportive and understanding people will be when you surface and begin the process of reconnecting and sorting out the financials.

Don't be afraid to start talking about what's happened.

# INTERVENTION ORDERS

## **Know your local family violence team at court**

As a counsellor I learned about intervention orders and domestic violence. In my ten years working in family law I also saw many cases that involved IVO's and abuse.

You walk through the world knowing these things until it smacks you on the head and knocks you for six.

You'll think you don't need an intervention order, and you'll likely be correct in that moment of time. You'll probably have been to a

DV service, or looked online, and decided that your soon to be ex would never harm you, and you'll thank your lucky stars you won't be going down that path.

Yeah. I wish I could say that this will be how your situation plays out, but there is a predictable reality to all of this that makes me want to cry in sympathy, while also knowing that nothing will sway you from how you feel right now.

You will read this and more than likely dismiss this section as irrelevant, and that's perfectly fine. Not every section in this book will relate to you, but much of it will. Use what is needed in the moment knowing you can come back to anything at any time and it will still be here for you.

Intervention orders are done in the local magistrates court. Each state has its own way of handling this, so I can only talk about how Victoria handles it, and then you can find out what happens in your own state.

In Victoria most Magistrates courts will have a domestic violence registrar, and a counsellor for the person alleged to be the perpetrator of violence against you, the affected family member.

If you need to seek an order you will need to go to your local court and make an application.

If you are a victim, and find yourself on the receiving end of an order, the family violence team will be able to support you through the process and hopefully identify you as a victim of legal abuse.

With the changes in family law prohibiting the cross examination of victims of domestic violence by their perpetrator, there is a very real need to be alert and aware of this as a strategic tactic in any family law proceedings you may be considering. You won't be the only one considering a family law approach, and if you find yourself on the pointy end of a protection order, you could be forced to rely on the family violence cross examination scheme for your case if a final order is granted against you. This book will have more about this issue as you progress.

Get to know your family violence team at court, even if it's just to say hello and find out more about the process. Don't rely on any agency or service to give you information on this.

# EMAIL

If you haven't already done it, make sure you have a new email account that isn't used on any device in the home, or that someone else has access to.

Two of the best and easiest to access free services are Proton Mail and Google Mail (gmail). Both encrypt messages, but Protonmail is by far the superior. IP addresses used to relay data all go through non-identifying

I wish I'd known how to export an entire email account instead of having to try and save every email

servers which means your location can't be traced back through your email header. This was one of the key features behind Google's release of Gmail.

Be aware that Protonmail has ***NO FORGOT PASSWORD*** option. If you lose your password you're fucked. No if's or but's. Your email is as lost as the a Bitcoin wallet with a lost password.

Proton Mail <https://protonmail.com>

## **End-to-End Encryption**

Messages are encrypted at all times

Messages are stored on ProtonMail servers in encrypted format.

They are also transmitted in encrypted format between our servers and user devices. Messages between ProtonMail users are also transmitted in encrypted form within our secure server network.

Because data is encrypted at all steps, the risk of message interception is largely eliminated.

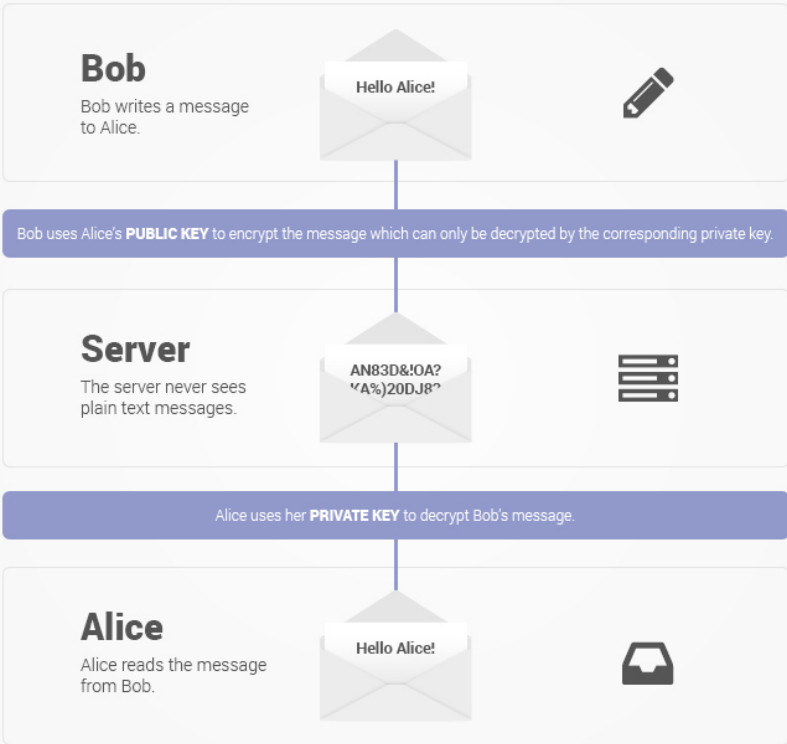
## **Zero Access to User Data**

Your encrypted data is not accessible to us

ProtonMail's zero access architecture means that your data is encrypted in a way that makes it inaccessible to us. Data is encrypted on the client side using an encryption key that we do not have access to. This means we don't have the technical ability to decrypt your messages, and as a result, we are unable to hand your data over to third parties. With ProtonMail, privacy isn't just a promise, it is mathematically ensured. For this reason, we are also



unable to do data recovery. If you forget your password, we cannot recover your data.



*End-to-end encryption means that no one but the intended recipient can read the message*

## Open Source Cryptography

Time-tested and trusted encryption algorithms

We use only secure implementations of AES, RSA, along with OpenPGP. Furthermore, all of the cryptographic libraries we use are open source. By using open source libraries, we can guarantee that the encryption algorithms we are using do not have clandestinely built in back doors. ProtonMail's open source

software has been thoroughly vetted by security experts from around the world to ensure the highest levels of protection.

Gmail <https://accounts.google.com>

## **Security - Two-step verification**

Gmail supports [two-step verification](#), an optional additional measure for users to protect their accounts when logging in.<sup>[94]</sup> Once enabled, users are required to verify their identity using a second method after entering their username and password when logging in on a new device. Common methods include entering a code sent to a user's mobile phone through a text message, entering a code using the [Google Authenticator](#) smartphone app, or by inserting a physical security key into the computer's USB port

# SAFETY ONLINE

## **Your online history and safety.**

Disconnect all your accounts from any search browsers. Google loves to connect to websites to collect your browsing and search history, but this can also be used to track you.

Log out of everything, every time you leave a computer or device. Do not leave Facebook open, or just close the browser as this isn't sufficient to log out.

Check your passwords aren't saved. If you don't know how to do it, then don't use anything that requires a log in. Do it at the library, or a friends place.

Likewise, Apple devices share search history, messages, passwords etc across all devices on a single account.

Delete your search history, clear cookies, clear your cache every day if you can. If you can't, try to use browsers in dark, or private mode. Apple include this as standard on their mobile devices, and Google also has a private search mode function that doesn't store or hold data.

The last thing you want is your ex turning up on your doorstep because they found your search history for places to rent and they just door knocked every place you looked at online. Trust me on this. There are people who will go to extraordinary lengths to find you, or the ex they are hunting, if they are enraged and full of narcissistic rage at your discard of them. Don't leave breadcrumbs like Hansel and Gretel in the internet woods. Be smart. Be aware. Stay safe.