

Health Safety

After a sexual assault, it's important to seek medical care.

You can have a FREE Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) even if you choose not to involve the police. SAFEs are available at many hospitals across Maryland. To find the SAFE program closest to you, visit mcasa.org/survivors.

Try not to shower, clean yourself, or use the bathroom after an assault, before going to the hospital. **But even if you have, don't let that stop you from getting care as soon as possible.**

At the hospital, you can ask for an advocate. The advocate is there to support you and answer any questions you may have. You can also ask to have your advocate with you during the exam.

When you first speak with a Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE), they will review all of your options for care.

Medical care provided during a SAFE inclm,kjudes injury care and medication for the prevention of sexual transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and pregnancy.

You may be given emergency contraception (EC) if there is a risk of pregnancy from the assault. EC contains hormones like those found in birth control pills. In order to be provided with HIV prevention medication, known as nPEP, the FNE will ask you a series of questions to determine your risk level for contracting HIV. EC and nPEP can be effective when taken within 72 hours of sexual intercourse.

If you choose to have forensic evidence collected, the FNE will look for things that might identify the attacker, such as hairs, fibers, and body fluids. Based on the facts of the assault, the exam may include oral swabbing and photographs of visible injuries. An internal exam with swabbing may also be conducted. You may be asked to give blood, urine, and hair samples. **You can decline any part of the medical forensic exam at any time.**

Any materials and samples collected will be stored in a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK), known as a "rape kit." The FNE will provide you with information on SAEK testing, storage, and tracking.

Rape Crisis Centers

Maryland's rape crisis centers provide support, counseling, and advocacy. Trained hotline staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer questions or to just listen. Your call is FREE and always confidential. We're here for you.

Allegany

Family Crisis
Resource Center
301-759-9244

Anne Arundel

YWCA of Annapolis &
Anne Arundel County
410-222-6800

Baltimore City

TurnAround, Inc.
443-279-0379

Baltimore County

TurnAround, Inc.
443-279-0379

Calvert

Calvert Center for Change
1-877-467-5628

Caroline, Dorchester,
Kent, Queen Anne's,
Talbot

For All Seasons, Inc.
410-820-5600
Para Espanol:
410-829-6143

Carroll

CARE Healing Center
410-857-7322

Cecil

The Bridge
410-996-0333

Charles

Center for
Abused Persons
301-645-3336

Frederick

Heartly House, Inc.
301-662-8800

Garrett

Dove Center
301-334-9000
Toll free: 1-800-656-4673

Harford

Sexual Assault/
Spouse Abuse Resource
Center (SARC)
410-836-8430

Howard

HopeWorks of Howard
County
410-997-2272

Montgomery

Trauma Services
240-777-4673

Prince George's

DV/SA Center at UM
Capital Region Medical
Center
240-677-2337

St. Mary's

Southern Maryland Center
for Family Advocacy
240-925-0084

Somerset, Wicomico,
Worcester

Life Crisis Center, Inc.
410-749-4357

Washington

CASA, Inc.
301-739-8975
(Hearing impaired: 711)

How to Feel
Safer After
Sexual Assault

Safety Information for Survivors of
Sexual Assault in Maryland



SALI
Sexual Assault Legal Institute
A Division of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Survivors of sexual assault often have unique safety concerns. Even though the initial crisis of an assault may be over, there are things you can do to help you feel safer in the aftermath.

This brochure is designed to give you some ideas about how to stay safe, both in a crisis and in your daily life.

Maryland's rape crisis centers are available to provide support, counseling, and advocacy.

To find your local rape crisis center, visit mcasa.org or call 211.

The Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI) has attorneys and advocates available to help you with safety planning and other legal issues related to sexual assault.

Call SALI at 301-565-2277 or 877-496-SALI for free legal help.

If you ever feel that you are in immediate physical danger, you can call 911 for help.

Sexual assault is a form of oppression, as well as a crime. It is an abuse of power that uses violence and coercion to control, silence, and deny people their autonomy and dignity. Sexual violence thrives when people who have power in society use that power to commit violence against vulnerable individuals. We must all work together to end these forms of violence.

SALI
Sexual Assault Legal Institute
mcasa.org
301-565-2277 | 877-496-SALI
fax: 301-565-3619
P.O. Box 8782, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

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Safety Planning

Safety planning is making a plan to help keep yourself safe during dangerous times. It includes thinking about what could go wrong, finding ways to cope, and knowing who can support you. The following are suggestions for things you may do as part of your safety plan.

Safety at Home

- Keep a charged cell phone with you at all times.
- Keep your doors and windows locked.
- Plan an escape route out of your home and teach it to your children.
- Think about where you would go if you needed to escape. What are some safe places nearby?
- Keep a bag packed with essential items such as cash, keys, court papers, identification (like passports), medical records, immigration papers, medications, clothes, and toiletries.
- Think about the people you know and consider who can support you in a crisis (like providing childcare, food, transportation, and a place to stay).

Internet and Technology Safety

- Check your computer and phone for signs of tampering or spyware by using spyware detection and antivirus software.
- Do not open suspicious emails.
- Change passwords periodically.
- Disable transmission of geolocation information on any smartphone.

Social Media Safety

- Do not share information about your home, workplace, school, childcare, social plans, methods of transportation, or any aspect of your location or habits on social media.
- Consider limiting the photos you share to ones that don't show your identity or personal details about yourself, like where you work or live.
- Review security settings and ensure all your accounts are set to "private" so that only approved accounts are following you.
- Do not accept requests to connect with anyone you don't know.
- Review your followers and friends and delete anyone you do not know or who might share information about you.

Peace Orders & Protective Orders

Peace orders and protective orders can be used to keep a perpetrator away and let you receive other types of help.

- Protective orders** are useful for victims of sexual assault. You may be eligible to file for a protective order if:
- You are the spouse, former spouse, or family member of the perpetrator;
 - You have a child in common with the perpetrator;
 - You are an adult who lacks the ability to take care of your daily needs;
 - If you have had a sexual relationship with the perpetrator within one year of filing for the petition; or
 - If you are filing based on a sexual assault that occurred within the past six months.

Protective orders can temporarily help with family matters, such as custody, visitation, emergency support, and other relief like removing the perpetrator from the home.

Peace orders may be an option if you don't fall under one of the protective order categories listed above AND you have experienced stalking, harassment, revenge porn, or other qualifying acts. You have **30 days** from the time of the incident to seek a peace order, and you must prove to the Court that the act of abuse is likely to occur again.

You can apply for a protective order from the District or Circuit court. Final protective orders last for up to one year. You can apply for a peace order from District Court. A final peace order lasts for up to six months.

If you filed criminal charges or might do so, you should consult with a lawyer before seeking a peace or protective order.

Criminal Cases & Safety

Survivors of sexual assault do not need to report to the police to receive some rights and protections. Reporting to the police is the first step in a criminal case. After a crime is reported, the police conduct an investigation and may file charges against the perpetrator.

Stay-Away Orders

Defendants in criminal cases are often released on bail until their trial. The court should order the perpetrator to stay away from you as a condition of their release. The court can also order other protections for you. You can contact the State's Attorney Office or SALI for help in finding out if there is a stay-away order. **It is a crime to violate these orders.**

You may also want to seek a peace or protective order, but should talk with a lawyer first.

Release Information

Survivors may request to be notified by phone or email when a defendant is transferred to a new facility or released from jail or prison. To do so, you can sign up for Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) online at **www.vinelink.com** or by calling **1-866-634-8463**.

Privacy & Criminal Cases

Criminal cases involving adult abusers are open to the public, but survivors can protect their names, addresses, and phone numbers. Survivors interested in keeping their information private can request this protection. This may require filing a request form with the court, depending on the stage of the case. Survivor names should never be published on the Court's website.

Address Confidentiality Program

Maryland's Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) allows participants to protect their home, work, and school addresses from the public and their perpetrators. ACP has two components:

- **Substitute Address:** ACP provides a legal substitute address for participants to use in place of a home, work, or school address.
- **Mail-Forwarding Service:** ACP provides a free mail-forwarding service to participants' confidential addresses.

The ACP allows participants to keep their address confidential while safely:

- Obtaining a Maryland driver's license
- Registering to vote
- Renting or purchasing real property
- Enrolling in school
- Accessing social services
- Participating in court proceedings
- Interacting with law enforcement and emergency services

To participate in ACP, survivors must:

- Reside, or will soon reside, in a safe place in Maryland that is not known to the perpetrator;
- Not already own the home in which they are residing or plan to reside; and
- Not have given their new address to Post Office for mail forwarding or to MVA for updated Driver's License or State ID.

Enrollment is effective for 4 years with the option to reapply.

Contact your local rape crisis center or SALI for more help with safety planning.