

Abuse is Wrong in Any Family | Know the Law

**What you need to know about
Nova Scotia's domestic
violence laws and resources**

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www.legalinfo.org

In Canada, it is against the law to assault, threaten, or harass another person. The laws apply to everyone in Canada. The laws apply whether the people are strangers, friends or family members, whether they are married, living together or dating.

Abuse is behaviour used to intimidate, isolate, dominate or control another person. Domestic violence is abuse that happens at home, within a family, or in an intimate relationship. Abuse can happen in any family or relationship. It happens to individuals of all backgrounds, religions, races, cultures, ethnic origins and sexual orientations, regardless of income, occupation, or education.

Abuse is never the survivor's fault.

This brochure talks about domestic violence in an intimate relationship, when one partner abuses the other. In this brochure, partner means husband, wife, spouse, common-law partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, and victim or survivor means someone who has experienced domestic violence.

There are resources to help survivors of domestic violence and abusers who want to get help. They are listed under RESOURCES at the end of this brochure. This brochure gives general legal information. It does not provide legal advice. See the RESOURCES section for ways to get legal advice.

What makes a relationship healthy?

Healthy relationships are respectful, trusting and supportive. You feel comfortable around the other person and know they will not hurt you. You like being around the other person. You feel like you can talk openly with them. Both people treat each other equally and share in decisions. One person does not make all the decisions.



People in healthy relationships are not violent or abusive with each other. No one has the right to be violent or abusive with other people.

What is abuse?

Abuse is behaviour used to intimidate, isolate, dominate or control another person. Abuse can be acts, words or neglect. It may happen once or over a period of time.

Domestic violence includes many different forms of abuse, neglect, mistreatment or harm that may happen in a close, personal relationship. Domestic violence is also sometimes called intimate partner violence, partner abuse, family violence, dating violence or gender-based violence.

Examples of Abuse

PHYSICAL ABUSE: when your partner hits, chokes, kicks, burns, punches, or pushes you, or throws objects at you

SEXUAL ABUSE: when your partner forces, threatens, or manipulates you into sexual acts you don't want to do, uses force, weapons, or objects in sexual acts without your consent, involves other people in sexual acts without your consent

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: when your partner cuts off your contact with friends and family, makes hurtful or cruel comments; constantly criticizes, insults or belittles you; frightens you, or threatens to harm or take your children or pets

VERBAL ABUSE: when your partner uses words to hurt you. This includes name calling, put-downs, blaming, bullying, humiliation, threats and teasing

FINANCIAL ABUSE: when your partner controls your finances, steals your money, refuses to share money so you can buy food or



other basic needs, or prevents you from working or going to school

ONLINE ABUSE: when your partner uses the internet, social media, email, texting, instant messaging or other technologies to intimidate or harass you or others. This includes sharing intimate images of you without your consent, or invading your privacy by trying to keep track of your electronic communications. Sometimes also called cyber-abuse or cyber-bullying.

SOCIAL ABUSE: when your partner uses your friends or relationships to harm you. This includes spreading rumours, gossiping, excluding others from a group or making someone look foolish or unintelligent.

HARASSMENT: any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends, threatens or humiliates you. It may also include following you and not leaving you alone, sometimes called 'stalking'.

NEGLECT is also abuse. Your partner neglects you if they intentionally do not provide what you need to survive, such as food, clothing, medical care, or shelter.

Is domestic violence a crime?

A crime is a violation of the Criminal Code of Canada. The Criminal Code applies to all of Canada.

Some acts of domestic violence are a crime. Examples are:

- physical assault
- sexual assault
- threats to harm
- theft
- criminal harassment (also called 'stalking')
- attempted murder



- murder
- property damage (also called 'mischief').

What is physical assault?

Assault is when one person applies force to another person, or attempts or threatens to apply force to them without their consent.

There are different levels of physical assault. Depending on what happened, your partner might be charged with:

Assault: when someone slaps, pushes or threatens, for example. There may not be any physical injuries. It includes an attempt to assault.

Assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm: when your body is hurt and there are physical injuries, and/or when someone carries, uses or threatens to use a weapon. A weapon can be anything used, or intended to be used, to cause death or injury, or to threaten or intimidate. Examples are a knife, a bat, a belt, a coat hanger or a toy/imitation gun.

Aggravated assault: when a person's life is put in danger and/or the person is badly hurt.

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault is a sexual act or touch that you do not consent to. This includes kissing you or touching you without your consent, forcing you to have sex (also called rape), torturing you in a sexual way, threats to force you to do any of these things. All the facts are important, including the type of contact, words and gestures. It is sexual assault if sexual gratification is the goal of the assault.

Sexual assault is a crime even if you are not physically hurt. Sexual activity without consent is against the law.



What is consent?

Consent means freely and voluntarily agreeing to take part in sexual activity, like touching, kissing, or having sex. Consent must be ongoing. You can change your mind at any time during a sexual activity.

There is no consent when someone:

- says or does something to show they are not consenting to a sexual activity
- says or does something to show they are not agreeing to continue a sexual activity that has already started
- is not capable of consenting to the sexual activity because, for example, they are unconscious
- abuses a position of trust, power or authority to get consent. A person in a position of trust or authority includes people like a teacher, coach, police officer, babysitter, religious leader or healthcare worker
- claims to consent on someone else's behalf
- lies to get consent.

You can find out more about consent at getconsent.ca or breakthesilencens.ca

Depending on what happened, your partner might be charged with a crime.

This could be crimes such as:

- sexual assault
- sexual assault with a weapon
- threats to a third party or causing bodily harm
- aggravated sexual assault.



Can the police charge my partner with sexual assault?

Yes, a partner can be charged with sexual assault. Being married or in a close or intimate relationship does not give your partner the right to sexually assault you.

There does not have to be a witness other than the survivor for a judge to convict a person of sexual assault.

If you have been sexually assaulted, you may want to visit a nurse through the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE) to do a medical exam and/or collect evidence within five days of the sexual assault. Medical evidence can help if you decide to report what happened to the police and the person is charged with sexual assault. Sexual assault survivors can get services and support by calling SANE at **1-877-880-7263** or by contacting the police, a healthcare professional, or local transition house or shelter. For more information on SANE, see the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program in the WHAT CAN I DO and RESOURCES sections.

Other charges

- If your partner forced you to stay somewhere by threatening you or physically stopping you from leaving, they might be charged with "forcible confinement".
- If your partner threatened you, they might be charged with "uttering threats".
- "Criminal harassment" is also a common charge in partner abuse cases. Criminal harassment includes things like stalking, harassing phone calls, or unwanted visits to your home or workplace.
- Stalking is when you have a reasonable fear for your safety because your partner

does one or more of the following:

- watches and follows you
- damages your property
- tries to contact you when you don't want them to
- sends you lots of messages that you don't want by mail, voicemail, email, or through other people.

Police and Court

When do the police get involved?

You can call the police if your partner assaults or threatens you. A family member, neighbour, friend or someone else might call the police if they hear or see the assault and are worried about you or your children.

The police enforce the law and look into crimes. Police are allowed to come into your home when they get a report of abuse or domestic violence.

When they come to your home, the police will talk with you, your partner and any other family members or witnesses who saw or heard what happened. They will do this before deciding if they should charge either or both of you with a crime.

The police decide what happens. You do not decide. Your partner does not decide.

Could I be charged with a crime?

The police will talk to both you and your partner, and look for evidence to decide if they will charge anyone involved with a crime. There is always a chance that you will be charged with a crime, even if you are the person who was abused.



Sometimes an abused partner could be charged with a crime because:

- your partner lied to the police about what happened
- the police might not have a good understanding of domestic violence or abusive relationships and may not know what is really going on
- language and/or cultural barriers make it difficult for you to explain what happened to the police.

If the police think there is a good legal reason (called reasonable grounds) to believe that someone committed a crime, they must charge that person with a crime. This means the police may charge your partner, you, or both of you with a crime.

The police will also contact Child Protection Services if they think your child or children have been harmed or are at risk of being harmed.

If your partner is charged, the police can connect you with Victim Services. They can help support you. See the RESOURCES section for more information.

Will the police take my partner from our home?

If your partner is charged with a crime the police will most likely take your partner from your home to the police station. Your partner might be released by the police or by the court if your partner agrees to follow certain conditions, which could include:

- not contacting you
- not going to the family home
- having limited or no contact with your children



- not having a gun or any kind of weapon
- handing in their passport
- showing up in court on the date ordered.

If your partner was released and contacts you, or does not follow other conditions, you should call the police. Your partner may be arrested, charged with a new crime, and/or kept in custody until the matter goes to court.

Conditions can be changed by the court at any time during the court process. They end when the case is over.

Your partner might try to force or scare you into asking the Crown Attorney (a government lawyer) or the court to change or remove the conditions. If your partner threatens you or your children, you should tell the police. Your partner can be charged for making this type of threat.

If you also have a family court case, you need to tell your family law lawyer or the family court about any conditions of release. It is important that your family court orders and criminal court orders say the same things.

If I call the police, will I have to go to court?

You may have to go to court if the police charge your partner with a crime. If necessary, the police and the courts must provide an interpreter free of charge for you and any other witnesses. You will have to go to court if you are charged with a crime.

Can the charges be dropped?

Only the Crown Attorney can change or withdraw criminal charges.



My partner is abusing me. Can my partner be ordered to stay away from me?

Police or court conditions for someone charged with a crime:

If the police were called and the person is arrested, the police can require them to sign an undertaking. This is a written promise to follow conditions. This can include a promise to not contact the person being abused until it goes before the court. A judge can also order them to stay away as part of their release from custody.

If you want to keep your partner away, but you do not want to call the police, you can apply for:

- an Emergency Protection Order, or
- a Peace Bond
- a Cyber-Protection Order to stop cyberbullying.

Emergency Protection Order

An Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is a temporary court order made by a Presiding Justice of the Peace (PJP) to protect a victim of domestic violence when the situation is serious and urgent.

You can apply for an EPO if you are 16 or older, and:

- live with, or lived with, your partner as a couple; OR
- you have a child or children together, even if you have never lived with each other.

If granted, an EPO:

- can order that your partner have no contact with you



- is put in place right away and lasts up to 30 days
- can give police power to remove your partner from your home (owned or rented)
- can give you temporary possession of personal property like a car, bank card or other important things you need.

An EPO gives immediate, short-term help. It gives you time to look at longer-term options like a peace bond, criminal charges, or applying to family court.

An EPO is not a custody order. While custody can be granted in an application for an EPO, it is not common. Talk to a family lawyer about custody, parenting arrangements, child and spousal support, and dividing family assets and debts.

An EPO can last up to 30 days. It may be extended for up to another 30 days. If you want an extension you must apply to court at least one week before the EPO runs out. Or, if you have new evidence, you could apply for a new EPO.

You apply for an EPO over the phone by calling the Justice of the Peace Centre at **902-424-8888** or **1-866-816-6555** or by contacting the nearest transition house or police services for help applying.

You can apply any day of the week from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. A police officer or other designated person (such as someone working at a transition house) can apply on your behalf after regular business hours.

When you call, a PJP will speak with you to decide if an EPO should be made.

If you need an interpreter to help you apply for an EPO, you must arrange one. The interpreter cannot be your family member or friend. They must be a professional interpreter. Nova Scotia Victim Services and/or Nova Scotia Interpreting



Services can help you find a professional interpreter (see the RESOURCES section for more information).

The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) has a legal information pamphlet about Protection Orders under the matrimonial real property laws in Bear River, Millbrook, Paqtnkek, Pictou Landing and Sipekne'katik communities. Copies are located in band offices of CMM's member bands or online at cmmns.com.

If you have an EPO and you think you might want to apply for a Peace Bond in the future, you should talk with a lawyer.

Peace Bond

A peace bond is a criminal court order. You can apply to court for a Peace Bond if you fear that your partner or ex-partner will harm you, your family, or your property. A peace bond can require that your partner or ex-partner stay away from you for as long as one year.

You can apply for a Peace Bond at the Provincial Court or Family Court. The court will give you the forms you need to apply. Once you fill out the forms you will meet with a Justice of the Peace who will decide if the application will go to court. Only a judge can order a Peace Bond.

Applying for a Peace Bond can take a long time. Tell court staff before your court date if you need an interpreter. The court may arrange one depending on the language and interpreter's availability. You do not have to pay for the interpreter. It is also a good idea to talk with a lawyer if you have to go to court.

Cyber-protection Order

The Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act aims to protect people from being bullied online, or from having intimate images of



themselves shared without their consent. Cyber-bullying is when someone uses electronic communication, like email, text messaging or social media communication, to harm your health or well-being. They might be doing this on purpose to hurt you or they might not care about hurting you.

Examples of cyber-bullying:

- creating a website, blog or profile that takes your identity
- sharing sensitive personal information or breaking your confidence
- threatening, intimidating , harassing or scaring you online
- making false statements about you,
- communications that are grossly offensive, indecent, or obscene
- encouraging you to commit suicide.

Cyber-bullying can also include encouraging or forcing someone else to do these things.

The law also protects you if someone distributes a private intimate image of you, such as a photograph, film, or video, without your consent. An intimate image is one that is private, shows sexual activity or nudity or partial nudity. It is an image you have good reason to think will stay private.

For example, without asking you and to try to hurt you, your former partner posts a private, sexually explicit, intimate picture of you on Facebook that you had good reason to think was going to stay private.

A cyber-protection order can order the person to stop the bullying and/or sharing of images, and do things like:

- stop the person from contacting you



- order that they take down or disable access to an intimate image or communication about you; and/or
- award damages to the victim.

You apply to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia for a cyber-protection order. You can apply with a lawyer's help or on your own. A parent or guardian of a victim under the age of 19 can also apply to Supreme Court for a cyber-protection order. You can get information about applying to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia for a cyber-protection order at courts.ns.ca.

Nova Scotia's CyberScan Unit oversees Nova Scotia's Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act and can give you help and information, including about applying to court for a cyber-protection order. Contact CyberScan at novascotia.ca/cyberscan/ or call **902-424-6990** or **1-855-702-8324**.

What happens with my children?

The law says that anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been harmed, or might be harmed, must report this to Child Protection Services. Harm can include the child being exposed to domestic violence, even if the child is not being physically hurt.

If you contact domestic violence outreach services or go to a transition house, or leave an abusive partner, you may be seen as having made the situation better by taking steps to protect your child(ren). In that case domestic violence outreach services and transition houses may not be required to report to Child Protection - unless you return to the abusive situation or put your child in harm's way again. The safety of children is the priority for outreach and transition house staff.

Child Protection Services will contact you if



a report is made. They will suggest services and resources to help you. They can remove your child from the home if they believe it is necessary in order to protect your child.

If you are asked to sign anything, or your child is removed from your home, you should contact a lawyer right away. You can contact Nova Scotia Legal Aid or a lawyer you would pay who does family law, including child protection law. See the RESOURCES section for support services and ways to get a lawyer.

Abuse & Immigration Status

If you are a Canadian citizen born abroad or a permanent resident, you can stay in Canada if your partner is arrested or if you leave the relationship. You will not be deported.

Speak with a lawyer as soon as possible if:

- you have temporary status
- you are sponsoring your partner
- your sponsor is trying to force you out of Canada
- your partner or someone else is threatening to hurt your family back home.

Abusers may use threats to keep their partners from leaving or to try to scare them into dropping the charges, but charges can only be changed or dropped by the Crown Attorney (a government lawyer). The complainant or victim does not have the power to change or drop the charges.

Conditional Permanent Residence

As of 2017, conditional permanent residence no longer applies to anyone. This means there is no conditional period (set amount of time) where you must live together with your sponsor to keep your permanent residence status in Canada.



What can I do...

Abuse is a community issue—not a private family matter. Everyone has a part to play in helping to stop abuse and foster healthy relationships. You can get help and support if you are in an unhealthy or abusive relationship, or if you want to help someone who is experiencing abuse.

If it is an emergency or someone is in danger, call **9-1-1**. They can connect you with the police or medical help.

You can go to:

nsdomesticviolence.ca for information and resources about domestic violence

legalinfo.org or nsfamilylaw.ca for more information on the law and domestic violence

breakthesilencens.ca for information and resources about sexual violence.

Talk to a lawyer. A lawyer can help with legal problems like separation, custody, child and spousal support, criminal charges, applying for a no contact order, and immigration concerns. See the RESOURCES section for ways to get legal advice.

If you think someone is being abused

Call the police or let the person know that they can talk to you. You can also offer to take them to a safe place if they decide to leave the abusive situation, or you can provide information about what services are available. Go to nsdomesticviolence.ca for information about other ways you can help.

If you are being abused

Call **9-1-1** if you and/or your children are in danger right now.



You can also:

- see a doctor, nurse or psychologist
- leave your partner and/or the abusive situation
- get counselling, support, help with safety planning and shelter from a transition house or community organization
- talk with someone you trust.

If you have been hurt

If you have been physically hurt and it is an emergency, call **9-1-1** for medical help. If you have been sexually assaulted in the past 5 days (120 hours), you can call the police and ask for an ambulance to take you to the health centre. You have the option to ask for a female nurse at the health centre.

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program (SANE)

If your community has a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program (SANE), you can ask the hospital or health centre staff to call SANE for you. SANE is a 24 hour, 7 day a week program that serves people of all genders (including trans-identified people) and all ages who have experienced a sexual assault in the past 5 days (120 hours).

SANE's 24 hour response line (**1-833-577-7263**) offers non-judgemental, confidential support and information about options after an immediate sexual assault. SANE also offers supportive care and follow-up for sexual assault survivors. The response line can also connect you with a nurse, who can meet you at a hospital to provide medical care and/or collect evidence. More information on this program is at nshealth.ca/sane.

You decide if you want to get a medical exam and/or have evidence collected.

A medical exam includes:

- taking a medical history
- documenting the details of the sexual assault
- taking blood and urine samples to test for pregnancy and/or infections
- doing an internal exam (vaginal) and general physical exam
- providing follow-up treatment.

To collect evidence (or do a forensic examination), nurses prefer that you do not shower, bathe, douche, use the washroom, change your clothes, eat/drink or clean your teeth until the exam is completed. This could destroy evidence. Nurses could also ask to collect your clothing for evidence, do a head-to-toe visual exam looking for injuries and/or take photographs of the injuries. Police are not present during the exam.

If you decide to immediately report the sexual assault to the police, SANE nurses can help notify the police and send over the evidence collected. If you decide not to file a report with the police, they can still collect evidence and keep it for a period of time. If during this time you decide to report the sexual assault, SANE can give the evidence to the police. The evidence will not be destroyed without your consent.

See the RESOURCES section for SANE contact information in communities across the province.



If you are being bullied online

If you have been bullied or harassed online, or by text or email, or had intimate pictures of you shared without your consent, you can speak with the police, or contact Nova Scotia's CyberScan Unit. CyberScan oversees Nova Scotia's Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act. Contact CyberScan at novascotia.ca/cyberscan/ or call **902-424-6990** or **1-855-702-8324**. You can also speak with a lawyer. And, see the information on cyber-protection orders above.

I am thinking about leaving

Remember you are not alone. This is not your fault.

- Make sure you and your children are safe.
- Get legal help. Call a lawyer. Nova Scotia Legal Aid can help. You can also contact a lawyer you would pay (a lawyer in private practice).
- You might want to leave your home and go to a safe place like a transition house.
- You might be able to get your partner court ordered to leave.
- You might be able to get your partner court ordered to stay away from you.
- You might want to take your children with you.
- You can apply to family court for custody of your children.
- You might be able to get your partner to pay money to support you and your children.
- You can apply to the government for help with money.
- You might be able to end your lease early.

- You might be able to take time off work and get paid for some of that time.

Do I need a lawyer?

You may need to talk to a family lawyer if you are trying to get an Emergency Protection Order (EPO), or a family law order for custody, support or property division. You can speak to a criminal lawyer if you have a criminal charge or need help to get a peace bond. It is a good idea to talk with a lawyer if you want to apply to Supreme Court for a cyber-protection order. You can speak with an immigration lawyer if you have immigration concerns.

A trusted family member or friend may be able to help you find a lawyer. You can also contact Legal Info Nova Scotia's Lawyer Referral Service (902-455-3135 in Halifax or 1-800-665-9779 for the rest of Nova Scotia, or email questions@legalinfo.org) for a referral to a lawyer you would pay. Before hiring a lawyer, ask the lawyer how they charge for their work and how much the lawyer thinks the process will cost.

If you cannot afford a lawyer, contact Nova Scotia Legal Aid (NSLA). You can apply for Legal Aid online at www.nslegalaid.ca/online-application, or by calling or visiting your local NSLA office (see the RESOURCES section for more information).

If you need an interpreter for meetings with your lawyer, you will be responsible for the cost if the lawyer is not a Legal Aid lawyer. You do not have to agree to have your children or friend interpret for you.

Where will I live if I leave my partner?

If the police are called during or after an assault, you can ask them to take you to a transition house or shelter. Transition houses and shelters give women and their children a



short-term safe place to live, and can give you information and support.

You can contact a transition house or shelter yourself. You can contact the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS) **(902-429-7287** or thans.ca). THANS is a network of shelters and transition houses with locations across the province. Or, you can call **2-1-1** to find your closest transition house or shelter.

After leaving an abusive situation, second stage housing provides safe and affordable housing for women and their children for six months to one year.

You can also choose to rent an apartment or stay with a family member or friend.

Shelters and crisis services are also available for men. For more information, see the RESOURCES section of this brochure.

Can I take my children with me?

It is best to take your children with you if you are concerned about their safety or you think that your partner will try to stop you from seeing them. You should contact a family law lawyer to get legal advice about your situation as soon as possible.

Whether or not you take the children with you, you can apply immediately to family court for interim (temporary) custody and financial support orders for you and your children. You can ask the court to limit your partner's time with your children, and to make it against the law for your partner to take the children from you.

You should not try to take the children out of the province or the country as your partner could accuse you of kidnapping the children. Your lawyer will explain what you can and cannot do.

You can get legal information about family law at nsfamilylaw.ca. See the RESOURCES section



for ways to get family law legal advice.

Can I get income assistance?

If you leave your partner and have no income, you may also be able to get income assistance from Nova Scotia's Department of Community Services, if you are a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, refugee claimant, or a Temporary Resident Permit holder (not the same as a Temporary Resident Visa for school, work, or visits).

You can apply for income assistance over the phone by calling **1-877-424-1177**, or go to your local Nova Scotia Community Services office. You will be asked for your bank statements, Social Insurance Number (SIN), Nova Scotia Health Card number, and other documents to help the intake person understand your financial and/or family situation. You may find out on the first call whether you are eligible. Or you may get a meeting with a worker or be asked to wait for someone to return your call.

Ending your lease early

You might be able to end your lease for your rented apartment or home early, without a financial penalty, if you are leaving an abusive situation.

Year-to-year or fixed-term lease: Contact the Department of Justice Victim Services (**902-424-3309**) to see if you can end your lease with one month's notice to the landlord. If you are a survivor of domestic violence, Victim Services can help you file an application to end the lease.

Month-to-month or week-to-week lease: You can end your lease using Nova Scotia Residential Tenancies Form C ("Tenant's Notice to Quit"). You must give one month's written notice to end a month-to-month tenancy, or one week's written notice to end a



week-to-week tenancy.

Contact Nova Scotia Residential Tenancies (Access Nova Scotia) at **902-424-5400** or **1-800-670-4357** for more information about Residential Tenancies. Nova Scotia Legal Aid or Dalhousie Legal Aid can also help.

Taking time off work

After at least three months in a job, you might be able to take time off work if you and/or your child experience abuse. This is called domestic violence leave. It gives employees the right to take time off work to move or to get medical, legal and/or psychological support or other professional counselling for you and/or your children.

Domestic violence leave allows an employee to take:

- up to 16 weeks in a row of unpaid leave, and
- up to 10 days of protected leave in a calendar year, taken all in a row or broken up.

Protected leave means that after the leave you must be allowed to return to the same job or, if that job is no longer available, to a comparable one with no loss of seniority or benefits.

Employers must pay for up to three days of domestic violence leave.

This leave applies to employees in provincially regulated workplaces, and to unionized employees.

You can combine domestic violence leave with other types of leave. Contact Nova Scotia Labour Standards (**902-424-4311** or toll-free at **1-888-315-0110**) for more information about domestic violence leave and other leaves from work.

If an abusive partner needs help

There are community programs that give education and counselling to men who have abused their partners and/or children. They teach about how to have healthy and respectful relationships. See the RESOURCES section for more information on how to contact these programs.

RESOURCES

If you have an emergency, call **911**. If someone is hurting you or you are afraid, call **911**.

General information and resources

211 Nova Scotia

2-1-1 or text **21167**
ns.211.ca

Finds services in your community any time of day or night and any day of the year. They can help you in French or English. They can also help you through an interpreter in many languages.

2-1-1 can help you find:

- a safe place away from an abuser
- information or advice about the law
- victim services to help when you need it

Healthlink

8-1-1
811.novascotia.ca

Information or advice about your health. It can help you find a health care service in your area. Nurses can help you in French or English. They can also help through an interpreter in many languages.



Adult Protection Services - Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

1-800-225-7225 toll-free

Adult Protection Services can help if you are worried that an adult is being neglected, abused or harmed. You can call between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Child Protection Services (Department of Community Services)

2-1-1 to find Child Protection Services near you

Call Child Protection Services if you believe that a child is being abused or neglected or could be abused or neglected, you can call Child Protection Services. During the day, contact the district office of the Department of Community Services near you. After 4:30 p.m., call 1-866-922-2434.

Neighbours, Friends and Families Program

A campaign to help people learn signs of violence against women. To learn more, visit nsdomesticviolence.ca/nff

www.nsdomesticviolence.ca

General information on domestic violence and resources

Women's Centres

womenconnect.ca (across Nova Scotia)

Help with information, support, advocacy and referrals

Making Changes

women.gov.ns.ca

Making Changes: a book for women experiencing intimate partner abuse, with information that is also relevant to men and non-binary people who have experienced abuse. A



Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women publication

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project

nsrap.ca

Seeks equity, justice, and human rights for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Nova Scotia

Legal Help

Independent Legal Advice for Sexual Assault Survivors Program

2-1-1

novascotia.ca/SexualAssaultLegalAdvice

Up to 4 hours of free legal advice if you have been sexually assaulted and are 16 years old or older. You do not have to report to police or go to court if you use this service. They can help in English or French, or use a free interpreter for other languages.

Halifax Refugee Clinic

902-422-6736

halifaxrefugeeclinic.org

Gives immigration legal services to refugee claimants and people in need of protection who cannot afford a private lawyer. They offer legal advice to survivors of domestic violence only about their immigration status.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

nslegalaid.ca or look under Legal Aid in the telephone book

Free legal information, advice and representation for adults and youth. Legal Aid might help with criminal or family law, employment insurance, income assistance, or a problem with your landlord. Some services are based on financial need. Apply online at nslegalaid.ca or contact your local Legal Aid



office. Legal Aid can help if you are accepted into Domestic Violence Court in Sydney or Halifax.

Dalhousie Legal Aid Service

902-423-8105

Free legal information, advice, and advocacy if you have low income. They can help with issues like income assistance and tenant rights and housing. They do not do immigration issues or adult criminal matters.

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia— Legal Information and Lawyer Referral Service

1-800-665-9779 (toll-free) or **902-455-3135**

legalinfo.org

Email: questions@legalinfo.org (English or French)

Free legal information on any legal topic, or help to find a lawyer and other legal help. You do not have to give your name.

Accès Justice Access

902-433-2085 or **1-844-250-8471** (English or French)

Free legal information and legal form-filling help. You must make an appointment. In-person in Halifax.

Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network

1-877-379-2042

mlsn.ca

Support services and victim support services to Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia, particularly through the Mi'kmaw Court Worker Program and the Mi'kmaw Customary Law Program.



reachAbility

902-429-5878 or **1-866-429-5878**

reachability.org

Legal referral service for people with disabilities.

nsfamilylaw.ca

Nova Scotia legal information about separation, divorce, child and spousal support, and domestic violence.

Emergency Protection Order—Justice of the Peace Centre

1-866-816-6555 toll-free or **902-424-8888**

Call the Justice of the Peace Centre to apply for an emergency protection order. A justice of the peace will hear your story and decide right away whether to give you an emergency protection order.

Online Abuse (CyberScan Unit)

902-424-6990 in Halifax or **1-855-702-8324**
toll-free
novascotia.ca/cyberscan/

CyberScan helps if someone has shared private pictures of you without your consent or is bullying you online, or by text or email. They might also help you apply to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia for a cyber-protection order.

Domestic Violence Courts

courts.ns.ca (under Domestic Violence Court)
902-563-3510 (Sydney)
902-424-7404 or HfxDVCP@novascotia.ca
(Halifax)

Special court that helps protect survivors of domestic violence and their families from future abuse. Programs to help people who commit abuse change behaviour and prevent



future abuse. Connects family members to services and supports near where they live

Transition Houses and Crisis Help

Transition House Association of Nova Scotia

902-429-7287 or call 2-1-1

thans.ca

They can help you find a shelter near you if you want to leave an abusive relationship. Shelters can also help with information, crisis support and safety planning, even if you do not want to live at a shelter. You do not have to give your name.

Bryony House (Transition House Association of Halifax)

902-422-7650 (crisis number)

902-423-7183 (shelter main number)

bryonyhouse.ca

Women in Halifax who are leaving domestic violence or abusive relationships can call any time of the day or night and any day of the year.

Autumn House Support Line

902-667-1200 any time of day or night.

Contact for women and men in abusive relationships. Men who abuse their partners who want help to change can also call this number, or **902-667-4500** during the day.

NS Mi'kmaq Crisis and Referral Line

902-379-2099

1-855- 379-2099 any time of day or night

eskasonimentalhealth.org

Province-wide support to Mi'kmaq people, provided by Eskasoni Mental Health.



Mental Health Mobile Crisis

1 888-429-8167, any time of day or night.

Help for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis.

Victim Services

Provincial Victim Services Program

Information, support, and help if you are a victim of crime, or the spouse or relative of a victim. Information about your case, help to write a victim impact statement, help to apply for money or counselling and get special help for child victims or a witness of a crime.

Halifax or Dartmouth or the South Shore: 902-424-3309

Annapolis Valley: 902-679-6201 or 1-800-565-1805 toll-free

Northern Nova Scotia: 902-755-7110 or 1-800-565-7912 toll-free

Cape Breton: 902-563-3655 or 1-800-565-0071 toll-free

Halifax Regional Police Victim Services

902-490-5300

Helps you in a crisis and after a crisis.

Emotional support and help to find services.

Help applying for a peace bond in the Halifax area.

Mi'kmaw Victim Support Services

1-877- 379-2042 (Cape Breton)

902-895-1141 (Mainland NS)

Victim support for aboriginal people dealing with the criminal justice system. Provided by Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network



RCMP Victim Services

1-888-995-2929

Information or emotional support after a crime. Call and leave a message. They call you back in 24 hours.

Sexual Assault Centres and Programs

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program

If you have been assaulted in the past five days, call and leave a message. A nurse will call you back right away. You can also go to an emergency department for medical help or go to the police to report the assault. You can also tell your family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Halifax: 1-877-880-7263

Guysborough, Antigonish, Pictou and Richmond Counties: 1-877-880-SANE (7263)

Sydney area: 1-844-858-8036

Yarmouth area: 1-833-577-SANE (7263)

Antigonish Women's Resource Centre and Sexual Assault Services Association

awrcsasa.ca

902-863-6221

Counselling for all genders

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre

avaloncentre.ca

902-422-4240

Counselling for women, trans and non-binary individuals

Colchester Sexual Assault Centre

colchestersac.ca



902-897-4366

Counselling for all genders

**New Start Counselling - Healing Narratives
(Dartmouth)**

newstartcounselling.ca

902-423-4675 or info@newstartcounselling.ca

Free counselling for men who have
experienced sexual assault

breakthesilencens.ca

Nova Scotia information, resources, and
training about sexual violence

**Independent Legal Advice for Sexual
Assault Survivors Program**

see Legal Help above.

**A Survivor's Guide to Sexual Assault
Prosecution**

[novascotia.ca/pps/publications/survivors-
guide-to-sexual-assault-prosecution.pdf](http://novascotia.ca/pps/publications/survivors-guide-to-sexual-assault-prosecution.pdf)

Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service
publication for sexual assault survivors
that explains each step of a sexual assault
prosecution, and what the survivor can expect
to happen in court.

Services for men who want to
stop hurting their partner

New Start Counselling (Dartmouth)

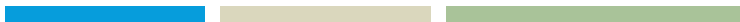
newstartcounselling.ca

902-423-4675 or info@newstartcounselling.ca

CornerStone Cape Breton (Sydney)

cornerstonecb.ca

902-567-0979 or connect@cornerstonecb.ca



New Directions (Amherst)

autumnhouse.ca

902-667-4500 or info@autumnhouse.ca

Freeman House's Alternatives Program (Bridgewater)

902-543-7444 or **1-877-882-7722** toll-free, or admin.fswns@bellaliant.com

New Leaf (Pictou County)

902-396-2440

Bridges (Truro)

bridgesinstitute.org

902-897-6665 or bridges@bridgesinstitute.org

Immigrant Services

African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes

adamns.com

Focuses on the needs of immigrants of African Diaspora descent

Salvation Army Atlantic Refugee and Immigrant Services Project

902-477-5393, extension **224**

Helps you fill out immigration forms and travel papers.

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

902-423-3607

isans.ca

Helps newcomers settle in Nova Scotia. Also helps permanent residents who have a crisis, like abuse in a relationship. Free interpretation is available.



Nova Scotia Interpreting Services

902-425-6604

902-425-5532 if you need help now

interpretingservices.ca

Interpretation services for 39 languages. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia

rainbowrefugeens.com

Privately sponsors, resettles, and advocates for LGBTQI+ refugees in Nova Scotia.

YMCA Centre For Immigrant Programs

ymcahfx.ca

Programs and outreach services for newcomers.

NOTE: If you have a legal problem, you should talk with a lawyer. This pamphlet gives general legal information. It does not give legal advice. We try to keep our materials up to date. However, laws do change. Check with a lawyer for changes to laws mentioned in this pamphlet.

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NOTES:

Ruled area with horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

LEGAL INFO
NOVA SCOTIA




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