

Domestic Violence Evidence Checklist

Your safety comes before any evidence. Gather only what you can gather safely, and store it where the abusive person cannot find or reach it.

Safety first. In danger? Call 911. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788 (thehotline.org). A local advocate can help you make a safety plan and seek a protective order. If your phone, computer or accounts may be monitored, use a safer device. This checklist could also be found; keep it somewhere safe.

Incident record

- ☐ A log of incidents: date, time, place, what happened, injuries, witnesses, police report number
- ☐ Write entries soon after events; keep the log somewhere safe (with an advocate, a trusted person, or a secure account only you can open)

Physical evidence

- ☐ Dated photos of injuries (and follow-up photos as they change)
- ☐ Photos of damaged property
- ☐ Medical records and doctor or emergency-room visits

Messages and contact

- ☐ Threatening or harassing texts, emails, voicemails and social media messages sent to you (save and back up; don't reply in anger)
- ☐ Call history showing repeated calls
- ☐ Recording laws vary by state; some require everyone's consent. Check before recording.

Official records

- ☐ Police reports and incident numbers
- ☐ Protective or restraining orders, and records of any violations
- ☐ Court records from related cases

Other forms of abuse

- ☐ Financial control: bank statements, account access changes, debts taken in your name
- ☐ Stalking or monitoring: a log of unexpected appearances or knowledge of your location (talk to an advocate before removing any tracking device or app, since removal can alert the other person)

People

- ☐ Witnesses who saw incidents or injuries
- ☐ Professionals who know: doctors, counselors, teachers, advocates

Never. Don't log into the other person's phone, email or accounts, install tracking or spyware, or break any court order to collect evidence. It can be illegal and can put you at risk.

General template for organizing your own information. It is not legal advice and not a court-approved form. Court rules and required forms vary by state and county, so check your court's local rules and self-help center. Doing this by hand takes hours: Custody Commander organizes evidence, builds your timeline and exports court-ready PDFs — free tier and a 14-day free trial at custodycommander.com.