

Facebook App Safety Guide for Survivors of Tech Abuse

Compiled by Tech Safe BC



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This document is a guide of in-app safety strategies to combat common tech abuse that may be perpetrated by a current or former partner on Facebook. Facebook does not endorse or sponsor this digital resource. This may look like receiving harassing and threatening messages, having harmful or inappropriate content made about you, or experiencing identity impersonation. It may also include monitoring or controlling behaviors, such as locking you out of your account, pressuring you to delete or post certain content, or having your account accessed without consent.

By following this guide, you can learn how Facebook's in-app features can support your safety. But remember, making changes to your account could increase risks to your safety if your current/former partner is notified or recognizes the changes. If you are concerned, consider consulting with a support worker at an anti-violence organization beforehand.

If something in this guide is no longer up to date and/or difficult to understand, please reach out to techsafe@bcsth.ca with your concerns. If you are having trouble with any of these safety steps, go to [Facebook's Safety Centre](#).

Symbols and What They Mean In This Guide:



Course of action may be visible to your former or current partner.

You may want to consult with a staff of an [anti-violence program in your community](#) before removing your former or current partner's access.



Evidence documentation checkpoint. Take [screenshots](#), pictures with a different device, or [screen recordings](#) of your former or current partner's unauthorized access.

Definition of Words in This Guide:

Friend: Someone that you have added and has also added you back.

Story: A video or photo your friends can see for 24 hours on your account.

Meta: The parent company of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.

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

If You Suspect There is Unauthorized Access to Your Account



Reviewing Log-Ins

Review your log-ins if you suspect someone has logged in to your account without your consent.

To review your log-ins

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Account settings', tap **Password and security**.

5. Under 'Security checks', tap **Where you're logged in**.
6. Under 'Accounts', tap on **Your Profile**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Safety Tip:



Be sure to take [screenshots/recordings](#) and [documentation](#) of the unauthorized log-ins.



Before removing unauthorized access, consult with a support worker as it could notify your former/current partner and potentially increase risk to violence.

Changing Passwords



If your former/current partner is logged into your Facebook account, changing your password can log them out of the account on their device. You will need to know your current password to change to a new password. **If you do not know your current password**, refer to [Account Recovery](#).

Safety Tip:



If your former/current partner has access to the email that is connected to your Facebook account, an email will be sent to the connected email account stating that your Facebook account has changed password. You may want to consult with a support worker as it could notify your former/current partner and potentially increase your risk to violence. To make a secure password, refer to [How to Create and Maintain Strong Passwords](#).

To change your password

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Account settings', tap **Password and security**.
5. Under 'Login & recovery', tap **Change password**.
6. Tap on your account.
7. Change your password.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

□ Account Recovery

Account recovery is a way to access your account through either your email or mobile phone number when you have been locked out. If your former/current partner has access to the email or mobile phone number connected to your account, account recovery will notify them. If you aren't sure which email/mobile phone number is secure, it may be safer to create a new account using a different email/mobile phone number that only you have access to.

If your former/current partner has access to your email or your mobile phone number's messages, a code will be sent to those accounts in order to give you recovery access back to your account. It will notify them that your Facebook account is requesting a verification code. Similarly, changing your account password will also notify the connected email which can alert your former/current partner of these changes if they have access to the email that is connected to your account.

To recover your Facebook account while logged in, refer to [Changing Passwords](#).



Safety Tip:



When following the next steps to recover your Facebook account, a password reset code will be sent to the email connected to your Facebook account from Facebook (security@facebookmail.com). If your former/current partner has access to this email, they could be notified that you are requesting to change your Facebook password which is why you are recommended to set up a Facebook Account with an email or mobile phone number that only you can access. Once you change your password, it will also send an email to the connected email stating this change.

If you are unable to send a password reset code to the connected email, try a connected phone number if applicable. If you cannot access either the connected email or phone number, use this [Facebook Help Center resource to recover your Facebook account another way](#).

To recover your Facebook account **when you are logged in**, but do not know your current password

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Account settings', tap **Password and security**.
5. Under 'Login & recovery', tap **Change password**.
6. Tap on your account.
7. Tap **Forgot your password?**
8. Tap **Send code via email** and tap **Continue**.
9. Open your email to find the 6-digit 'password reset code' email from Facebook.
10. Enter the 6-digit 'password reset code' in the Facebook app and tap **Continue**.
11. Change your password.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

To recover your Facebook account **when you are logged out** and do not know the password

1. In the App, tap **Forgot password?**
2. Under 'Find your account', either:
 - a. Enter your mobile phone number then tap **Continue**.

OR

- b. Select 'Search by email instead' and enter the connected email address or tap **Send code via email** then tap **Continue**.
 - i. Open your email to find the 6-digit 'password reset code' email from Facebook.
 - ii. Enter this code in the app and tap **Confirm**.
3. Refer to [Changing Passwords](#).

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

How to Secure Your Account from Your Former/Current Partner



If you currently have shared an account with your former or current partner, you can delete the account and/or create a new separate account. This would also include removing identifying information, such as your email address, your phone number, or your name on the account. Your former/current partner may realize immediately or quickly if you make these changes. If you are concerned that this will increase any risks to your safety, we

recommend that you consult with a support worker at your transition home or a support organization beforehand.

Turning On Two-Factor Authentication (2FA)



Turning on Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) can protect your account from future unauthorized logins. Check this [resource](#) to understand why 2FA is important.

Safety Tip:



Before enabling 2FA, make sure the password to your account is secure, and that you are the only one who has access to the email and/or mobile phone number connected to your account. If 2FA is enabled on an account your current/former partner has access to, they will be notified of attempted logins through verification codes.

To enable 2FA



1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Account settings', tap **Password and security**.
5. Under 'Login & recovery', tap **Two-factor authentication**.
6. Tap on your account and follow the email/password/mobile phone number prompt, which involves checking your email for an 8-digit security code and entering code into the app, to continue.
7. Tap a 2FA Notification Method (options: Authentication app, SMS or WhatsApp, or Security keys).
8. Follow the next steps to verify 2FA.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

☐ Check Your Accounts' Trusted Devices

This function is only available if 2FA is enabled. You will see a list of devices that won't require 2FA to your Facebook account since they are trusted devices. Checking your account's trusted devices can protect your account from possible pre-existing logins that are unauthorized.

To check your account's trusted devices

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Account settings', tap **Password and security**.
5. Under 'Login & recovery', tap **Two-factor authentication**.
6. Under 'Authorized logins', tap **Trusted devices**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Safety Tip:



If there is unauthorized access, be sure to take [screenshots/recordings](#) to document the unauthorized log-ins.



Before removing unauthorized access, consult with your support worker as it could notify your former/current partner and potentially increase your risk to violence.

☐ Sharing Across Profiles

Sharing across profiles is a feature that links external Meta accounts (e.g., an additional Facebook or Instagram account) to your current Facebook account. If your former/current partner has their own Instagram or Facebook profiles connected to your Facebook account, they can access your account content such as controlling stories or posts.

Safety Tip:





If there is unauthorized access, be sure to take [screenshots/recordings](#) to document the connected accounts.



Before removing unauthorized access, consult with your support worker as it could notify your former/current partner and potentially increase your risk to violence.

To view which external accounts are connected to yours

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Connected experiences', tap **Sharing across profiles**.

Source: [Meta Help](#)

☐ Viewing Which External Accounts Have Access to Your Account

If you have other Meta Instagram or Facebook profiles connected to your current Facebook account, you can view which Meta accounts have login access to yours and which other accounts you can log into.

Safety Tip:





If there is unauthorized access, be sure to take [screenshots/recordings](#) to document the unauthorized connected accounts.



Before removing unauthorized access, consult with your support worker as it could notify your former/current partner and potentially increase your risk to violence.

To viewing which external accounts have access to your account

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Meta', tap **Accounts Center**.
4. Under 'Connected experiences', tap **Logging in with accounts**.
5. Choose which accounts can log into other accounts.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)



If You Suspect You're Being Monitored Through the App



Turning Off Location Tracking

Facebook can use your precise location for tagging locations in posts or updating your whereabouts through the 'Check-in' function. You can disable Facebook's ability to track your precise location with the following steps; however, it is important to keep in mind the photos/videos you share on your account as it could reveal recognizable locations.

To turn off location tracking

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Your activity', tap **Device permissions**.
4. Under 'Device permissions info', locate the **Location** heading.
5. Tap the **See info** on the right side of the **Location** heading.
6. Scroll to the bottom of the location pop up and tap **Update settings**.
7. Tap **Open device settings**:
 - a. If you're using an Apple device:
 - i. Tap **Location Services**.
 - ii. Change to **Never**.
 - b. If you're using an Android device:
 - i. Tap **Permissions**.
 - ii. Under 'Allowed', tap **Location**.
 - iii. Tap **Deny**.



Source: [Facebook Help](#)

When you choose to turn off your location services for Facebook, the app will still collect information to estimate your general location called your "Primary Location". Your Primary Location is determined through your IP address as well as interactions with Facebook's products/information which allows them to find information about the network you're connected to. While this information should be private if you have secured the account, it is useful to be aware of the ways in which Facebook may still be collecting information about your location.

□ Reducing the Information of Your Account Biography

This feature allows you to control specific content to only be accessible to specific people on Facebook. After going through the following instructions, you will have a list of different information you can display on your account biography.

To reduce the information of your account biography



1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Profile details**.
4. If you already have personal information under each category, you can change the privacy of who can access this information by tapping the **pencil icon** on the right of each heading.
5. From there you can remove the content or change the audience who can view the specific content to Public, Friends, Friends of Friends, or Only me.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

□ Turning Off Activity Status

Turning off this feature hides when you are and last were active on your Facebook account to those who you follow as well as those you have messaged before on Messenger.

To turn off activity status



1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. 'Under Audience and visibility', tap **Active status**.
4. Tap the button slider to turn off the **Show when you're active** feature.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

☐ Hiding Your Birthday On Your Profile

When it is your birthday, Facebook will announce it to your friends.

To hide your birthday on your profile



1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Profile details**.
4. Under 'Birthday', tap the **Pencil Icon** on the right side.
5. In both drop-down menus for your birthdate and year, tap **Only me** and **Done**.
6. Tap **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

☐ Turning Off the Feature to Suggest Your Account to Others

Turning off this feature limits how easily your account can be found by those who do not follow you but have either your email or your mobile phone number.

To stop suggesting your account to others

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **How people find and contact you**.
4. Under 'Who can Facebook suggest your profile to based on your phone number or email address?':
 - a. Tap **People with your email address**.
 - i. Tap **No one** and then **Save**.
 - b. Tap **People with your phone number**.



- i. Tap **No one** and then **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Making Your Posts Visible Only to Specific People

You can customize your privacy settings on your posts so that only specific people can view your content when you post. If you prefer not to block, report, or remove your former/current partner's account, this function allows you to share content to only those you choose.

To make your posts visible to only specific people



1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Posts**.
4. Tap **Who can see your future posts?**
5. Tap **Specific friends**.
6. Select the accounts you'd like to be able to see your posts then tap **Done**.
7. Tap **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Making Your Stories Visible Only to Specific People

You can customize your privacy settings on your stories so that only specific people can view your content when you post. If you prefer not to block, report, or remove your former/current partner's account, this function allows you to share content to only those you choose.

To make your stories visible only to specific people



1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Stories**.
4. Tap **Who can see your stories?**
5. Tap **Friends except...**
6. Select the accounts you want to hide your stories from then tap **Done**.
7. Tap **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Making Your Reels Visible Only to Specific People

You can customize your privacy settings on your reels so that only specific people cannot view your content when you post. If you prefer not to block, report, or remove your former/current partner's account, this function allows you to share content to only those you choose.

To make your reels visible only to specific people

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Reels**.
4. Tap **Who can see your reels?**
5. Tap **Friends except....**
6. Select the accounts you want to hide your reels from then tap **Done**.
7. Tap **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

□ “Taking a Break” From Your Friends

You can limit your privacy settings so that friends that you choose to “Take a Break” from cannot see posts on your account, any content they tag you in will be hidden from the public, and shared content will be hidden or deleted. If you prefer not to block, report, or remove your former/current partner’s account, this function allows you to hide and choose the extent how much posted content is hidden from your former/current partner.

To turn on the “Take a Break” feature

1. In the app, open and view the account profile you’d like to “take a break” from.
2. Below the account name, tap the **Friends** button.
3. Tap **Take a break**.
4. Tap on each category and select the privacy setting you want.
 - a. For each category and privacy setting, tap **Save**.
5. Tap **Done**.



Source: [Facebook Help](#)

□ Privating Who Can View the People or Pages You

Follow

When you follow different people or pages, Facebook saves them to your profile where those who follow you have the potential to view who and what you follow. Privating (i.e., making private) the people and pages that you follow allows you to keep this content private.

To change who can view the people or pages you follow

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 

3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Followers and public content**.
4. Tap **Who can see the people and Pages you follow?**
5. Tap **Friends except...**
6. Select the accounts you don't want knowing about the people and pages you follow.
7. Tap **Done**.
8. Tap **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

If You're Receiving Harassing or Threatening Messages





Control Who Can Message You

This function allows you to control which Facebook profiles can contact you and whether you are able to see the messages in your Chats inbox.

“**Chats**” means that the messages will automatically enter your messages inbox.

“**Message requests**” means you will have to accept the chat request before it enters your messages inbox, and “Don't receive requests” means that you will never be able to see the message.

To change who can message you

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **How people find and contact you**.
4. Under 'How you get message requests', tap on each category and select the privacy setting you want.

□ Removing Friends

Removing a friend limits their Facebook profile to be able to view the information on your account. Make sure to review the earlier sections on this document to control how much the public (Facebook profiles that aren't your friends) can view information on your profile. Removing a profile does not notify the owner, however, your former/current partner may notice they have been removed which could potentially increase any risks to your safety, we recommend that you consult with a support worker at your transition home or a support organization beforehand.

To remove friends

1. In the app, open and view the account profile you'd like to remove.
2. Tap **Friends**.
3. Tap **Unfriend**.
4. Tap **CONFIRM**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Safety Tip:



If your former/current partner makes a new account after you have blocked their account, review [If You Suspect You're Being Monitored Through the App](#) to help to hide your content from those who do not follow you.

□ Blocking Accounts

Blocked accounts are unable to message you, tag you in a post, add you to events and groups or be able to find your account through the search function. Keep in mind that blocking accounts removes their messages and comments from your account. Therefore, remember to [document evidence](#) of harassment or inappropriate content through

[screenshots](#), pictures, or [screen recordings](#). You can also refer to [Reporting Accounts](#) to report problematic content the blocked account uploaded.

Safety Tip:



Blocking an account does not notify the owner, however, they may notice they have been blocked which could potentially increase any risks to your safety, we recommend that you consult with a support worker at your transition home or a support organization beforehand.

To block an account

1. In the app, open and view the account you would like to block.
2. Under their name on the right side, tap the **More Options Icon** (three dots). •••
3. Tap **Block**.
4. Tap **BLOCK**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Safety Tip:



If your former/current partner makes a new account after you have blocked their account, review [If You Suspect You're Being Monitored Through the App](#) to help to hide your content from those who do not follow you.

Reporting Comments


If you are seeing harmful or unwanted comments, you can report comments on yours or anyone's Facebook posts. This can anonymously notify Facebook to review the comment and take action if it violates the app's guidelines.

Safety Tip:



Before reporting the harmful or unwanted comment, you may want to take [screenshots](#), [screen recordings](#), and [documentation](#) as you will not have access to the comments once the company responds to the report.

To report a comment

1. In the app, tap on the post with the harmful comment.
2. At the bottom middle of the post, tap **Comment** (speech bubble)  to open the comments.
3. Tap and hold the harmful comment until a pop-up appears.
4. Tap **Report Comment**.
5. Under 'Why are you reporting this comment?', select the reasons.
6. Tap **Submit / Done**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Deleting Comments on Your Posts



If you are seeing harmful or unwanted comments, you can delete comments from your Facebook posts.

Safety Tip:



Before deleting the harmful or unwanted comment, you may want to take [screenshots](#), [screen recordings](#), and [documentation](#) in case you need evidence later.

To delete comments on your posts

1. In the app, on the top right, tap your profile picture or the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. Under 'Menu', tap on your profile name.
3. Find the post with the problematic comment.
4. At the bottom middle of the post, tap **Comment** (speech bubble)  to open the comments.
5. Tap and hold the harmful comment until a pop-up appears.
6. Tap **Delete**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

Changing The Commenting Privacy on Certain Posts



If you are seeing harmful or unwanted comments from accounts on your profile photos/videos, cover photos, feature photos, or bio edits, you can modify these commenting settings. Facebook doesn't have an option to turn off commenting on all your posts, however, you can limit who can view your posts under [Making Your Posts Visible Only to Specific People](#), allowing only those who can view your posts to be able to comment.

Safety Tip:



If there is already harmful or unwanted comments on your post, you may want to take [pictures](#), [screen recordings](#) and [documentation](#) of the comment.

To change your commenting privacy on your profile information

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under "Audience and visibility", tap **Followers and public content**.
4. Tap **Public profile info**.

5. Select the who can like or comment on your profile information.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)



If You're Having Harmful Content Made About You or Being Impersonated



Changing Who Can Post On Your Profile

By default, your friends can post on your timeline which are events or updates on your profile. However, you can change the privacy feature so that only you can post on your timeline.

To change who can post on your profile

1. In the app, on the top right, tap the **Menu Icon** (triple bar). 
2. On the top right, tap the **Settings Icon** (gear icon). 
3. Under 'Audience and visibility', tap **Profile and tagging**.
4. Under 'Viewing and sharing', tap **Who can post on your profile?**
5. Tap **Only me**.
6. Tap **Save**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

□ Reporting Posts

If there is harmful content made about you, or you see inappropriate content related to nudity, impersonation, hate speech, or misinformation, you can report the post. This can anonymously notify Facebook to review the post and take action if it violates the app's guidelines. Posts that are videos and reels are unified in Facebook.

Safety Tip:



Before reporting the post, you may want to take [screenshots](#), [screen recordings](#), and [documentation](#) of the post as you will not have access to view the post once the company responds to the report.

To report a post

1. In the app, open and view the post you'd like to report.
2. Tap the **More Options Icon** (three dots). •••
 - a. For posts that are reels (i.e., videos), the **More Options Icon** (three dots) ••• is on the bottom right of the reel.
 - b. For posts that are photos, the **More Options Icon** (vertical dots) ⋮ is on the top right of the photo.
3. Tap either **Find support or report reel** or **Report photo**.
4. Under 'Why are you reporting this video?/photo?', select the reasons.
5. Tap **Submit / Done**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

□ Reporting Accounts

If there is an account impersonating you, or is repeatedly making harmful content, related to nudity, hate speech, or misinformation, you can report the Facebook profile.

Safety Tip:



Before reporting the account, you may want to take [screenshots](#), [screen recordings](#), and [documentation](#) of the profile as you will not have access to view the account once the company responds to the report.

To report an account

1. In the app, open and view the account profile you'd like to report.
2. On the top right of the account profile, tap the **More Options Icon** (three dots). •••
3. Tap **Report profile**.
4. Select the reasons.
5. Tap **Submit / Done**.

Source: [Facebook Help](#)

If you are experiencing tech abuse, you are not alone. Find support in your community by connecting with a [BC Society of Transition Houses Member Program](#) or check out our other safety resources at techsafebc.bcsth.ca.