



Survivor Safety and Connected Cars

Newer cars now run with computer systems, and may even be connected to the internet. In addition, there are older techniques used to stalk or track vehicles that are still used today. When someone else monitors the location of a car, or can control features like volume, speed, alarms, or locks, this can be a risk for survivors.

This resource includes information about how to find out if your car is being monitored or controlled remotely, and what the options are to increase your privacy and safety.

Safety first. Before taking these steps, think about your safety. Some people may escalate their abusive behavior when devices or accounts are secured, or monitoring is cut off. You can [talk with an advocate](#) about safety planning.

Trust your instincts. If it seems like someone else knows too much about you, they might be monitoring your devices, accessing your online accounts, tracking your location, or gathering information about you online. If you suspect someone else is monitoring you, consider using another phone or device such as a friend's phone, or a computer at a library, school, or work. Read more about [phone safety and privacy](#).

Get more information. Navigating violence, abuse, and stalking can be difficult and dangerous. Advocates can help you figure out options and local resources and help you create a plan for your safety. You can [contact a national helpline](#) to be connected with local resources.

How Your Car Could Be Tracked

- Older cars might have a navigation system built-in or added later, such as OnStar or Garmin.
- There are devices that can be installed that either track information to be downloaded later, or transmit data in real time. These are similar to devices used by insurers in their “safe driver” discount programs, or for parents to monitor teen drivers.
- Newer, more expensive cars offer people who sign up as owners very detailed information including location, speed, driving habits, and even the ability to control some things remotely like volume, speed, or locks.
- Abusive people and stalkers have also hidden other devices like feature phones, GPS trackers, and now smaller Bluetooth trackers such as AirTags, Tiles, SmartTags, or trackers meant to be attached to pets’ collars in case they get lost, to gather information including location. Read more about [Location Tracking](#).
- Remember that your phone could also be used to track you. Read more about [phone safety and privacy](#).
- Publicly-placed cameras, for example at tollbooths, borders, and other checkpoints, or private surveillance cameras connected to national data systems (e.g. [Flock](#)) could also make it possible for someone else to find out where your car has been.

Options to Increase Privacy and Safety

If you have reason to think someone is tracking or controlling your car, you can try to find out how. If you want to report to law enforcement, first ask them to look. If they can’t or won’t, or if you don’t want to involve law enforcement, then you could ask a mechanic or private investigator to look.

If you do find out that someone else can monitor or control your car remotely, you have a few options. First, try to document the tracking before you remove or disconnect anything. Also, because some abusive people will escalate their abuse if their ability to monitor or control you is cut off, you may want to [talk with an advocate](#) about safety planning.

- If the tracking is happening through a device like GPS, a Bluetooth tracker, or an added-in navigation system, you could remove it.
- If the tracking is via a navigation or safety service, you could try to get control of the account, or have the service discontinued.
- If the tracking is built into the car, and someone else signed up as the owner, you may need to prove that you now own the car or that there is abuse in order to discontinue their access.
- If the other person ever had access to a WiFi hotspot connected to your car, then they might be able to access information shared through that connection. Read more about [WiFi security](#).

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