



## **DocuSAFE Documentation & Evidence Collection App: Information for Professionals Working with Survivors**

Developed by the Safety Net Team at The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), The DocuSAFE Documentation & Evidence Collection App is free for anyone experiencing technology abuse and is available for download. The information below is intended to assist you in explaining how the app works and assess, together with the survivor, the safety risks associated with its use.

### **What is the purpose of this app?**

DocuSAFE assists survivors in collecting, storing, and sharing evidence of abuse; such as domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, online harassment, or trafficking. Survivors can log individual incidents through photos, screenshots, or video documentation of threatening messages, harassing social media posts, unwanted, repeated phone calls, or online impersonation, among other behaviors. DocuSAFE can be especially helpful for pro-se litigants who are trying to navigate a complex court system by helping them organize documentation.

### **How can I work with the survivor in assessing whether this app is safe for a them?**

It may not be a safe option if the abusive person is monitoring the activity of the survivor's devices, either physically or remotely, or has access to their iOS or Goggle cloud account (the app connects to the user's account to back-up the documentation). Assist the survivor in thinking through the abusive person's access to their device to determine whether using this app would be safe. While the app requires a PIN to open and view content, the app icon will be visible on the device once downloaded. As with any process for documenting abuse, the original versions of the evidence (original email or message) may still be necessary for an investigation so it remains important to discuss safety planning and

possible requirements for court. Visit [TechSafety.org](https://www.techsafety.org) and use our [Survivor Toolkit](#) to learn more about Technology Safety Planning.

### **Who can the survivor share their document(s) with and is it secure?**

Survivors may want to share their documentation with friends, a family member, law enforcement, an attorney, or court personnel if seeking legal assistance. It's important to let survivors know that advocates should not be collecting or holding evidence, as this raises potential issues with the authenticity of the evidence and/or the advocate being called in as a witness.

Before a survivor shares their documentation from the app, they should be sure that the recipient is a trusted individual who knows they will be receiving the document(s). Documentation will be shared via a secure, encrypted link. The survivor will also have to share an unlock code to allow the recipient to open the link and view the document(s). This two-step process adds an additional layer of privacy and security in the event someone unintended accesses the link.

### **What documentation will be accepted into court?**

It's important to note that use of the DocuSAFE app does not guarantee that documentation will be accepted in court. This app was designed to assist survivors in collecting documentation of abuse in a way that could help with the court process, if that's what the survivor chooses to do. However, jurisdictions vary widely in their procedures around evidence. Some courts will review evidence on the device itself, for example, while others will only accept hardcopies of the evidence. Help survivors prepare by learning what is required in your jurisdiction.

These are a few things to consider when working with a survivor who is considering using DocuSAFE. If you have other questions regarding DocuSAFE, please reach out to the Safety Net team at [safetynet@nnev.org](mailto:safetynet@nnev.org).

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