



SAFE AT HOME

WISCONSIN'S ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

- The law governing *Safe at Home* goes into effect April 1, 2017.
- "Actual Address" means the residential street, school or work address of a program participant.
- "Mail" means first class letters and flats delivered by the U.S. Postal Service, including priority, express and certified mail.

Overview

Safe at Home is a statewide address confidentiality program that provides victims of actual or threatened domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, and trafficking with a legal substitute address

to be used for both public and private purposes. The intent of Safe at Home is for those who fear for their safety to be able to maintain a private, confidential home, work, or school address and gain some peace of mind.

Safe at Home participants are responsible for notifying entities that they are enrolled in the program and updating their records to reflect the substitute assigned address. All entities, both public and private, must accept the substitute assigned address as a program participant's legal address. Entities may verify an individual's participation in the program by requesting to view their Safe at Home provided Authorization Card, or if necessary, state and local government agencies may contact Safe at Home directly.

Safe at Home is governed by Wis. Stat. § 165.68 and administered by the Department of Justice Office of Crime Victim Services. Please feel free to contact Safe at Home directly at safeathome@doj.state.wi.us with any questions or concerns.



Participant Eligibility

A person is eligible to participate in Safe at Home if he or she attests to ALL of the following:

1. That he or she is a resident of Wisconsin.
2. That at least one of the following applies:
 - a. He or she is a victim of an act or threat of abuse, a parent or guardian of a person who is a victim of an act or threat of abuse, or a resident of a household in which a victim of an act or threat of abuse also resides.
 - b. He or she fears for his or her physical safety or for the physical safety of his or her child or ward.
3. That he or she resides or will reside at a location in Wisconsin that is not known by the person who committed the abuse against, or who threatens, the applicant or his or her child or ward.
4. That he or she will not disclose his or her actual address to the person who committed the abuse against, or who threatens, the applicant or his or her child or ward.

- Many states have similar address confidentiality programs.
- Participants are issued a authorization card to document status as a Safe at Home participant.

Mandatory Safety Planning

Individuals intending to enroll in Safe at Home must first participate in free, mandatory safety planning with an Application Assistant. Application Assistants are trained and designated by Safe at Home to provide individualized safety planning and education about meaningful participation in the program. Application Assistants may be victim advocates, Victim/Witness professionals, or employees of the Department of Justice.

Once an individual participates in safety planning, they may complete and submit an application to enroll themselves and/or their child/ward in Safe at Home.



How the Program Works

After receiving and reviewing an application, Safe at Home will send a new program participant an Enrollment Packet with information about additional steps they may need to take to protect their actual address and an authorization card. The authorization card contains the Safe at Home participant's name, assigned address, and enrollment expiration date. Program participants are instructed to use the assigned address at all times after enrollment and provide their authorization card for verification whenever they update their address or are asked for their address.

When a program participant's mail is sent to their assigned address, it will automatically reroute to Safe at Home. Safe at Home then forwards the program participant's mail to their actual address within 1-2 business days. Program participants can expect a 5-10 day delay in the delivery of their mail.



Public & Private Record Confidentiality

Unlike most other states, Wisconsin law requires both public and private entities to accept a program participant's assigned address.

No person who receives notice of an individual's participation in Safe at Home may refuse to use the assigned address, may require the participant to disclose his or her actual address, or may intentionally disclose the actual address of a program participant. If a Safe at Home participant makes a written request to a county clerk, register of deeds, clerk of court or municipal clerk to keep his or her actual address private, the clerk may not disclose any record in his or her possession which would reveal the actual address, except pursuant to a court order.

Safe at Home participants should be aware that their actual address may be disclosed by the program under very limited circumstances. Safe at Home may disclose a participant's actual address to law enforcement for official purposes or pursuant to a court order. If the participant's actual address is disclosed, Safe at Home will notify the participant and request the court keep any record containing the actual address sealed and confidential.