

The Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program FAQ

Helping Survivors Live with Confidence and Confidentiality Since 2001

✚ What is the Safe at Home Program?

The Vermont legislature established the *Safe at Home* address confidentiality program within the Office of the Secretary of State in 2001. The goal of the program is to help victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking who have relocated or are about to relocate, to keep their perpetrators from finding them. *Safe at Home* has two components: a substitute address service and a protected records service.

✚ What is Substitute Address Service?

Each *Safe at Home* participant is granted the use of a Montpelier post office box address. The substitute address has no relation to the participant's actual address. All participants use the same post office box as designated by the program. First-class mail and service of process is sent to the post office box and then forwarded at no cost to the participant's actual location.

✚ What is Protected Records Service?

Safe at Home allows participants to use the substitute address when creating records with state or local government agencies. Program participants can vote (as a blind ballot absentee voter), obtain a driver's license, get married, and register births without fear that those records will put them at risk of being located by their perpetrator.

✚ How does voting work?

Victims have the opportunity to become a "Blind Ballot" absentee voter. It is a unique method of voting that allows you to vote in the town in which you reside, without having public voter lists reflect your name or address. Only the Blind Ballot number, which is assigned by the *Safe at Home* office, appears on the public lists. Individuals cannot be located through your town's public voter list and still maintain their constitutional right to vote. The ballot is mailed to the *Safe at Home* post office box and forwarded to you. You will vote and send your ballot directly to the Town Clerk. All Blind Ballot voting must be done by absentee ballot. You are not allowed to place a voice vote at your town's public meetings.

✚ How to Register for a Blind Ballot

You must complete a **Vermont Application for Addition to the Checklist** form which the Safe At Home program will send you – along with a filled-out sample, to assist you. For information, contact the *Safe at Home* Coordinator. **IMPORTANT NOTE: This year, 2018, these forms need to be sent to the Safe At Home program on or before October 7th, 2018.**

✚ How to Vote in Future Elections:

In order to be sure to vote at every possible election, victims who are enrolled in the Safe At Home program must ask for a blind ballot every two years.

Questions? Contact the Safe At Home Coordinator

(800) 439-8683 or (802) 828- 0568