

Damaging property

A perpetrator of domestic and family violence may engage in a range of behaviours so as to exert control over or induce fear in the victim. Damaging property may intersect with other behaviours such as [emotional or psychological abuse](#) [Mouzos et al 2004], [economic abuse](#) [Sanders 2015], [physical violence or harm](#), and [sexual or reproductive abuse](#) to produce a [complex pattern of violence](#), the seriousness of which may intensify as the behaviours combine and escalate [Canada DV BB 2020]. For example, victims experience significantly higher levels of physical violence where the perpetrator has also damaged property [Mouzos et al 2004].

Instances reported in Australian research demonstrate the various ways perpetrators seek to control, intimidate, threaten, injure, demean or isolate victims by interfering with property, which may in some cases include [abuse of pets](#) and [assistance animals](#). They may steal, damage or destroy personal property that is shared between the victim and perpetrator, owned by or in the possession of the victim, or otherwise used or enjoyed by the victim or the victim's children or other family members. For example, the perpetrator may steal the victim's ATM or bank account access card and empty the victim's account of funds to prevent the victim from leaving the abusive relationship. The perpetrator may cut the telephone cord while the victim attempts to call police; or vandalise or wreck household furnishings or personal effects (including mobile phones and other digital devices) and clothing that the victim has paid for or are sentimental to the victim. The perpetrator may steal, or immobilise or tamper with the victim's car, or use the car as a weapon, for example to run the victim over so as to injure them or hinder their escape. The perpetrator may also attack the victim's home by breaking windows, chopping holes in the roof, or driving a vehicle into a wall [Klein et al 1992-1993].

Damaging property may be one aspect of a complex pattern of behaviours engaged in by perpetrators in order to control another person, sometimes referred to as [coercive control](#).