# Using Safety Tools in Online Play

The TTRPG Safety Toolkit (Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk)

### Intro

With the rise of new technology and platforms, it’s even easier to play TTRPGs online with friends remotely from all across the world. This two-page guide is here to help you find ways to implement safety tools into your online games, and make sure that your games are safer and more supported, no matter the platform or technology you use.

### What are safety tools?

Sometimes games have content or situations where a player or GM may feel stressed out, unsafe, or otherwise not having fun. Safety tools are a way for players and GMs to communicate and check-in before, during, and after a game in order to make sure everyone is still having fun, and to provide the right support when needed.

You can learn more about safety tools, what they are, and which ones are widely available for your table with the [TTRPG Safety Toolkit Quick Reference Guide](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gEjo_PAh2R4qhr3vLIiwKqkciK_RMVol).

### Why use them in online play?

Other than the reasons outlined above, it’s even more important to implement them in online play because it may be harder to read body language, facial cues, or other indicators of discomfort/stress when you’re not playing in the same space.

As well, if your game is an actual-play being streamed or otherwise recorded, there is an added pressure to maintain “continuity” and performance that can cause people to be more reluctant to use safety tools, and therefore it’s more important than ever to uphold them and make them easy to use.

### How to use them in online play

The most important part of using safety tools in online games is that everyone agrees as to what tools the virtual table is using and how they will be implemented. Make sure to discuss with everybody what tools best suit them, and which method you’ll be implementing them into your games.

As well, lean into the remote nature of online play - foster an open door policy where people can get up/leave for any reason, build in breaks from the game and computer, do more check-ins, and establish pace.

#### Physical cards

If the safety tool you’re using takes the form of cards and you’re using cameras in your online game, you can use physical cards that you hold up to the camera whenever you’re invoking them. Test to make sure that the text/symbol for the safety tool is clear and legible on camera, and make sure everyone will be focused on the video feed so that no one will miss a card being used.

Printable cards can be found in the TTRPG Safety Toolkit [here](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1mxXVdPdl4oVi8B4Aaf61FuDy3T3LdKGS), or [here](https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/281432/Safety--Calibration-Cards) by dTwelves.

#### Discord emojis

If you are playing on Discord, you can add custom safety tool emojis in a server, which you can then use in Discord chats to invoke them. You can also use built-in Discord emojis, as long as everyone is on the same page as to not using those Discord emojis elsewhere and the meaning for each emoji is clear. It’s recommended that you have a channel dedicated to describing what each emoji means for quick reference.

An example of Discord safety emojis made by [Abe Mendes](https://twitter.com/abemendes) can be found [here](https://seaexcursion.itch.io/reverie-cycle).

A tutorial on how to add custom emojis into your Discord server can be found [here](https://support.discordapp.com/hc/en-us/articles/207619737-Adding-Emoji-Magic).

#### Chat

You can use the chat function in the video conference software (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Google hangouts), messengers (e.g. Discord, Facebook messenger), and/or virtual tabletop (e.g. Roll20, Fantasy Grounds, Astral Tabletop) to type out the safety tool you are invoking. Pick one or two chatting avenues, make sure people are able to both send messages to the whole group and to each other privately (e.g. just to the GM, to another player), and that those chat functions will be open and checked frequently throughout the game so no one will miss a tool being used.

An example of this would be typing an “X”, “N”, “O”, “O?” in the chat when using the [XNO safety tools](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gEjo_PAh2R4qhr3vLIiwKqkciK_RMVol).

#### Virtual tabletops

You can use the functions of a virtual tabletop (e.g. Roll20, Fantasy Grounds, Astral Tabletop) to build in ways to invoke safety tools. You can have a virtual set of cards, have a map or another dedicated layout space that people can ping, use macros for easy quick-button push, use an extra unassigned character sheet so that safety tool invocation will be anonymous, and more. Explore ways that your virtual tabletop can support easy use of safety tools. A tutorial on how to implement safety tools into a Roll20 game by creating macros can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vHGvd4PQzb38Gd2au0E9ZJ-gtB-iQsuHO-_xfuwfr6A/edit?usp=sharing). An extension for Fantasy Grounds can be found [here](https://www.fantasygrounds.com/forums/showthread.php?54029-TTRPG-Safety-Toolkit-Extension).