

A Plan For Your Safety



Name: _____

Date: _____

Review Dates: _____

The following steps represent your plan for increasing your safety and preparing in advance for the possibility of further violence. Although you do not have control over your partner's violence, you do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get you, and your children to safety. **Write the names of people that you would consider safe to help you or other key information that is more specific to your situation beside each statement.**

Step 1: Safety During an Emergency or Violent Incident.

It is not always possible to avoid violent incidents. In order to increase safety, a variety of strategies may be helpful. You can use some or all of the following strategies:

- Ø Move to a room or area where I have access to an exit if an argument seems unavoidable. Try to stay away from the bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or anywhere else where weapons might be available.
- Ø Practice how to get out of my home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairwell would be best.
- Ø Have a packed bag ready and keep it at a relative's or friend's home in order to leave quickly.
- Ø Identify one or more neighbors I can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from my home.
- Ø Devise a code word to use with my children, family, friends and neighbors when I need the police.
- Ø Teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
- Ø Decide and make a plan for where I will go if I have to leave home (even if I don't think it will be necessary).
- Ø Use my judgment and intuition. If the situation is very serious, I can give my partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. I have to protect myself until I/we are out of danger.

Step 2: Safety When Preparing to Leave.

Leaving the residence shared with an abusive partner is a complicated and difficult decision. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to increase safety. Batterers often strike back when they believe their partner is leaving a relationship. You can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- Ø Leave money, and an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, extra medicines and clothes with someone I can trust so that I can leave quickly.
- Ø Open my own post office box so I can privately receive checks and letters to begin my independence.
- Ø Open a savings account and/or a credit card in my name to establish credit or increase my independence.
- Ø Keep change for phone calls on me at all times or I can purchase a telephone calling card. I understand that if I use my telephone *credit* card, the following month the telephone bill will tell my batterer those numbers I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or a telephone *calling* card. I may also get a friend to permit me to use his/her telephone credit card for a limited time when I first leave.
- Ø Determine who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me money.
- Ø Review my safety plan frequently in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
- Ø Have a crime victim advocate or a friend review my safety plan with me.
- Ø Rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Step 3: Safety in Your Own Home.

There are many things that can be done to increase safety at home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. You can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

- Ø Change the locks on the doors and windows as soon as possible. Buy additional locks and safety devices to secure the windows.
- Ø Replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.
- Ø Install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, and electronic alarm system, etc.
- Ø Purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
- Ø Install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.
- Ø Install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to the house.
- Ø Teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to _____ (friend/clergy/other) in the event that my partner takes the children.

- Ø Tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

_____ (school),
_____ (babysitter),
_____ (Sunday School teacher),
_____ (teacher),
_____ (others).

- Ø Inform _____ (neighbor), _____ (clergy), and _____ (friend) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.

Step 4: Safety with a Protective Order.

A Temporary Protective Order (TPO) is a civil remedy that has the same components as a divorce except that it is effective for only 6 months. You do not have to be married to get a TPO. Issues such as child custody, support, and possession of home are also covered in this order. It would be important to do the following:

- Ø Keep my protective order on me at all times. (Always keep it on or near my person. If I change purses, that's the first thing that should go in.)
- Ø Give my protection order to police departments in the community where I work, in those communities where I usually visit family or friends, and in the community where I live.
- Ø Inform family, friends, neighbors and my physician or health care provider that I have a protective order in effect.
- Ø Obtain another copy of the protective order if my partner destroys it. (I can get another copy from the courthouse by going to the Superior Court Clerk's Office.)
- Ø Report violations of the protection order by calling the police and reporting a violation. I can also contact my attorney, call my crime victim advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation.

Step 5: Safety on the Job and in Public.

You must decide if and when to tell others about your experience as a victim of domestic violence and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help to protect you. Consider carefully which people to invite to help protect your safety. You might do any or all of the following:

- Ø Inform my boss, the security supervisor and co-workers at work of my situation.
- Ø Ask my job to help screen my telephone calls at work.
- Ø Devise a safety plan for when I leave work. Have someone escort me to my car, bus, or taxi and wait with me until I am safely on my way.
- Ø Use a variety of routes to go home if possible. Consider shopping and banking at different locations.

- Ø Use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those that I used when residing with my battering partner.

Step 6: Safety and my Emotional Health.

The experience of being battered and verbally degraded by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve your emotional energy and resources and to avoid hard emotional times, you can do some or all of the following:

- Ø If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____

- Ø When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____

- Ø I can try to use “I can...” statements with myself and to be assertive with others.
- Ø I can tell myself – “ _____ ”
whenever I feel others trying to control or abuse me.
- Ø I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
- Ø I can call _____ , _____ and
_____ as other resources to be of support to me.
- Ø Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____ ,
_____ , and _____ .
- Ø I can attend workshops and support groups at the domestic violence program or
_____ , _____
or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships
with other people.

Step 7: Items to take when leaving:

When leaving abusive partners, it is important to take certain items with you. Give extra copies of papers and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case you have to leave quickly.

These items might best be placed in one location, so that if you have to leave in a hurry, you can grab them quickly.

When I leave, I should take:

- Ø Drivers License and car registration/insurance
- Ø Children’s birth certificates
- Ø My birth certificate
- Ø Social Security cards
- Ø School records or request them later
- Ø Money
- Ø Checkbook, ATM (Automated Teller Machine) card
- Ø Credit cards
- Ø Keys – house/car/office
- Ø Medications

- Ø Welfare identification
- Ø Work permits
- Ø Green card
- Ø Passport(s)
- Ø Divorce papers
- Ø Custody papers
- Ø Medical records – for all family members
- Ø Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- Ø Bank books
- Ø Health and Life Insurance papers
- Ø Address book
- Ø Phone Card
- Ø Change of Clothes
- Ø Toiletries
- Ø Children’s favorite toys and/or blankets

Important Telephone numbers:

- Ø Police Department – Home 911 or _____
- Ø Police Department – School 911 or _____
- Ø Police Department – Work 911 or _____
- Ø Victim’s Assistant Program 478-953-5675 _____
- Ø Work Number _____
- Ø Supervisor’s Home Number _____
- Ø Clergy _____
- Ø Other _____

- Ø National Domestic Violence Hotline.....1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
- Ø National Domestic Violence Hotline (TTY).....1-800-787-3224
- Ø HODAC’s Helpline Georgia Victim Assistance1-800-338-6745

- Ø Houston County Sheriff’s Office.....478-542-2080
- Ø Warner Robins Police Dept.....478-929-1170
- Ø Perry Police Dept.....478-988-2801
- Ø Centerville Police Dept.....478-953-4222
- Ø RAFB Security Police.....478-926-2111
- Ø RAFB OSI.....478-926-2141
- Ø RAFB Family Advocacy.....478-327-8398
- Ø RAFB Victim/Witness Program.....478-926-3961
- Ø Salvation Army Safe House.....478-923-6294
- Ø Rainbow House.....478-923-5923
- Ø Phoenix Center Adult Services.....478-988-1002
- Ø Phoenix Center Child & Family Services.....478-988-1222
- Ø Family Counseling Center (WR).....478-918-0663
- Ø Family Counseling Center (Macon).....478-745-2811
- Ø Pardons and Paroles.....478-329-4730
- Ø Houston County Health Dept.....478-218-2000
- Ø HODAC Superior Court Crime victim Advocates.....478-218-2248
- Ø HODAC State & Juvenile Court Crime Victim Advocates.....478-953-5675
- Ø Magistrate Court.....478-987-4695
- Ø District Attorney’s Office.....478-218-4810
- Ø Solicitor General’s Office.....478-542-2100
- Ø GA Legal Aid.....478-751-6261
- Ø Superior Court Clerk’s Office.....478-218-4740

Adapted from “Personalized Safety Plan,” U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office on Violence Against Women