



Safety Plan Guide

The following information serves as a guide about how to create a safety plan. A sample safety plan is also available from the STAR Central office. All of this information may not apply to you, but please take a moment to read the entire document. You may find valuable information in certain sections that may not necessarily apply to your situation. Call 911 if you are in any immediate danger.

Safety During an Argument or Violent Incident

- Before you are in an escalating situation, devise a plan where you will go if you leave home and practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which exits seem to be the best.
- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to move to a room or area that has access to an exit or phone. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen, or anywhere near weapons.
- Have a bag packed and ready, but keep it in an undisclosed location or with a neighbor or relative in case you need to leave quickly.
- Identify a neighbor that you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.
- Use your own instincts and judgment. If the situation is very dangerous, do whatever is necessary to be safe. This may mean you have to give in to your abuser.
- If necessary and accessible, dial 911 or 0 for help.

Safety When Preparing to Leave

- Open a savings account and/or credit card in your own name.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents, extra medicine, and clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- Determine who would let you stay with them and/or lend you money temporarily.
- Keep a shelter or hotline number close at hand with some change or a calling card for emergency phone calls.
- Review your safety plan often to plan the safest way to leave. **Leaving an abuser is a very dangerous time.**

Safety at Home

- If you remain in the home, get the locks changed as soon as possible. The abuser will most likely have copies of the keys for the old locks. Buy additional locks and safety devices for your windows and doors.
- Discuss a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Tell your children's school, day care, etc. specifically who has your permission to pick up the children.
- Notify your neighbors and landlord that your partner is no longer living with you and that they should call the police if they see him/her near your residence.

Safety with a Protection Order

- Keep your protection order or a copy of it with you at all times, in your car, purse, at work, etc.
- Give a copy to a trusted neighbor, friend, or relative.
- Call the police if your abuser violates the protective order.
- Think of alternative ways to stay safe until the police arrive.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, employers, and doctors that you have a protection order.

Safety at Work and in Public

- Decide whom at work you will inform of your situation. Always include security personnel and your supervisor. Close coworkers should also be informed. If possible, give a photograph to the security personnel.
- Arrange to have a coworker or answering machine screen your calls if possible.
- If the abuser attempts to contact you at work, save all voice mail, email, or messages.
- Devise a safety plan for when you go in and leave work. Have someone escort you to your transportation. If possible, vary your route home. Think about what you would do if something happened while going home.
- Vary your routine. Go to different grocery stores, businesses, and banks if possible. If this is not possible, vary the times and days you do these errands.

Information adapted from The Aurora Center for Advocacy and Education of the University of Minnesota and the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership (1-800-9-LAW AID or www.arlegalservices.org)

STAR Central – Office of Support, Training, Advocacy, & Resources on Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence
a program of



Updated: June 2006