

Safety Planning

While at home with your abuser:

- Try to hide or remove from the home all guns and ammunition.
- Consider taking a Self-defense class: for info on free/ low cost classes call: (206)323-HOME
- During an abusive incident, avoid the kitchen, bathrooms or other areas where sharp objects and large glass surfaces, fire, caustic chemicals or boiling water are present
- Attempt to create a "temporary safe area" inside the home and if possible, keep a phone in the temporary safe area; a cellular phone is ideal since the wires cannot be cut or jerked out of the wall.
- Try to arrange a "signal" that will alert your neighbors to call the police (maybe a blind pulled up and down or a scarf hung out a window) and ask them to call the police if they hear sounds of violence
- If it is safe to do so, teach your children to call the police when an abusive incident is in progress (they must learn to tell their address). Arrange a code word to signal them to make the call
- Identify cues and warning signs that your abuser may exhibit prior to becoming violent and practice an escape route from the home; how would you get out, where would you go?
- Never park your car so that it can be blocked in and try to keep it at least half filled with gas at all times.

Keep with you at all times:

- Change to make calls and some emergency cash if possible
- Emergency phone numbers (police, DV hotline, DV shelter, friends)
- If you have one- your Protective Order
- The keys to your car and a cell phone

WHEN ESCAPING FROM THE HOME - HAVE a small packed bag in a safe place outside the house where you can retrieve it quickly, include:

- A change of clothes for yourself and your children
- Toiletries, eyeglasses, necessary medicines and prescriptions
- A spare set of keys (house, car, office)
- Irreplaceable items of sentimental value and extra cash if possible
- Identification - including birth certificates for you and your children, School and medical records (especially vaccination records for the children); medical reports documenting any prior abuse of you or the children.
- Social Security cards; driver's license, registration and auto insurance card; welfare, Medicaid, food stamp identification; passports, green cards/work permits
- Legal papers - divorce, custody and restraining orders; police reports of prior abuse; lease/rental agreement or house deed; insurance papers; wills.
- Financial records & bankbooks, recent tax returns; pay stubs; statements from banks, brokerage firms and other proof of income and assets.
- Other - address book; diary of previous abuse & police reports.
- Credit & ATM cards (remember if the cards are issued jointly to you both, he can report them lost or stolen and have them canceled) he can also use receipts to track your movements.

AFTER LEAVING THE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP - if you are remaining in the home you shared with the abuser:

- Change all locks, including locks to garage and sliding doors and keep everything locked
- Never park car so that it can be blocked in
- Make sure any alarm system access code is changed and be sure to delete all previous access codes
- If the abuser has keys to your car, change the locks on the car; Always check the front and rear passenger areas before entering the car and then lock the doors
- Consider installing steel doors, window bars, alarm systems, outside lighting and other security features
- Never automatically open the door without first checking who is there, teach children the same and, if necessary, install a second lock high on the door so small children cannot reach it
- Cellular or cordless phones are easily picked up on a scanner. Use someone else's phone or a pay phone to make calls that must be kept confidential. Add a password to your voicemail and answering machine
- Set up a call-for-help signal with your neighbors, coworkers or family. It can be as simple as turning on a certain light in your home. You can also call a neighbor or friend every day at a certain time, or have them call you

Also…

At Work: alert your employers and co-workers to the situation and if applicable: give them a copy of your Protective Order and a photograph of your abuser - tell them to call the police if they see him. If there’s building security – inform them too;

At School: alert teachers, fellow students and school security to the situation and, situation and if applicable: give the Principal and school security a copy of your Protective Order and a photograph of your abuser - tell them to call the police if they see him;

If applicable, alert your children's day care or school that your Order of Protection restrains your abuser from taking the child(ren) from school. You should also give them a copy of the Order.

During visitation: If the abuser has visitation rights with the children, arrange for the children to be picked up and dropped off in a public place (such as inside a busy McDonald’s) or have other people present when the abuser picks up and drops off the children.

Vary your routes and routines - avoid using the same businesses/services regularly (bank, supermarket, dry cleaner, church etc)

AND MOST IMPORTANT

Review your safety plan with your DV Advocate regularly