

Personal Safety Plan

A checklist for living free from domestic violence

Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition

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Safety with a Protection Order

- Keep your protection order on you at all times. Give a copy to a trusted friend, family member, or clergy person. Keep a copy in the glove compartment of your car.
- Call the police if your batterer violates the protection order.
- Think of other ways to keep safe until law enforcement arrives.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors, or your physician that you have a protection order.
- If you think that you no longer need the protection order or that it has decreased your safety, ask the court to remove it.

Safety in Public or at Work

- Tell your co-worker(s), boss, and/or office or building security about your situation. Provide a picture of your batterer if possible. Devise a code word to use to communicate that you need assistance.
- Arrange to have an answering machine, caller ID, or co-workers screen your telephone calls if possible.
- Devise a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone escort you to your car or bus and wait with you until you are safely on your way. Vary your routes home if possible. Think about what you would do if something happened while going home.
- Change your routine. Go to different grocery stores, businesses and banks if possible.

Safety While Using Technology

- Create new email accounts. There are many free accounts available. To increase your privacy, choose an email name that is different from your actual name. Do not create or check this new account from your home computer in case it is being monitored.
- If your abuser sends you threatening messages on your email or through instant messaging, save and print them out. They can be used as proof of continued harassment.
- It is virtually impossible to clear where you have been on a computer. In fact, trying to clear the history could actual tip off your abuser to your plans. Try to use a safer computer at a library, community center, or other public place to find needed resources.
- Protect your email and voice mail passwords and PIN numbers. Change them often.
- Minimize the use of cordless phones for sensitive conversations. Older models can be intercepted rather easily with a scanner or baby monitor.
- Be careful using cell phones since the bill could reveal who you have called. Also, call your service provider or check your settings to find out if the location service is activated on your phone. If so, be aware your abuser could use it to find you at any time.
- Do not give your social security number out unless it is absolutely necessary to do so.

Safety for Your Pets

If you are staying at home...

- Keep emergency provisions for your pet if your abuser withholds money from you.

- Keep the phone number of the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary clinic.
- Establish ownership of your pet by creating a paper trail (e.g., obtain a pet license, have a vet put records in your name and have a copy of your pet's medical records).

If you are planning to leave...

- Obtain the name of a safe emergency shelter for your pet.
- Pack a bag for your pet that includes the pet's food, medicine, documents of ownership, medical records, leash, toys and bedding.

If you have left...

- Keep the pet indoors as much as possible and don't leave it outside alone.
- Pick safe routes and times to walk your pet and if possible, don't walk your pet alone.
- Explain to your veterinarian or kennel the importance of absolute confidentiality regarding the location of you and your pet. If necessary for your safety, change veterinarians and/or kennels.

Checklist Important Things to Take When You Leave

Identification

- Drivers license or other form of identification
- Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Work Permits/VISA
- Passports

Financial

- Money and/or credit cards
- Bank books & checkbooks
- Public Assistance documentation
- Tax return from previous 3 years
- Pay stubs for both you and your abuser
- Loan information

Other Important Papers

- Your Protection Order

- Lease, rental agreement, or house deed
- Car title, registration and insurance papers
- Health and life insurance papers
- Medical and vaccination records for you and children
- Divorce & custody papers

Other items

- House and car keys
- Medications, glasses, hearing aids
- Address Book
- Phone cards
- Family photographs
- Children's toys
- Change of clothes for you and the kids.
- Pet items

Safety if Living in a Home Where Violence May Occur

- Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which door, window, elevator, or stairwell would be best.
- Have a packed bag ready and keep it at a relative's or friend's home in order to leave quickly. Use the checklist in this brochure to decide what you need to take with you.
- Identify one or more neighbors who you can safely disclose the violence to and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word or signal to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.
- If you believe an argument/incident is going to occur, leave if possible. If not, try to move to a room where you have access to an exit and/or a phone. Stay away from any room without an outside door or window or a room with items that could be used as weapons such as a kitchen or garage.

- Use your own instincts and judgment. If the situation is very dangerous, do whatever is necessary to be safe. This may mean giving the abuser what he/she wants to calm him/her down.
- If necessary, call “911” or “O” for help.

Remember — You Do Not Deserve To Be Hit, Threatened, or Live In Fear!

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, and clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- Determine who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- Keep the phone number of the 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline close at hand and keep some change or a calling card on you at all times for emergency phone calls.
- Review your safety plan to plan the safest way to leave your batterer.

Remember—Leaving Your Batterer Is A Very Dangerous Time!

Safety if Living Alone

- Change the locks on your doors and buy new locks and safety devices for windows.
- Discuss a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Tell your children’s school and/or child care who has permission to pick them up.
- Notify your neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see him/her near your residence.
- Do not place outgoing mail in an outside mailbox where your abuser could get to it. If you have a locked mailbox, change locks.

Important Numbers

Fill-in the following local numbers and keep this brochure with you at all times. The phone number for the closest domestic violence/sexual assault program is: **308-436-HELP** or, call the following toll-free numbers:

DOVES 24-Hour Hotline

1-866-95-DOVES (36837)

Spanish 24-Hour Hotline

1-877-215-0167

National Hotline

1-800-799-7233

Other important numbers:

Police: 911 or _____

Sheriff: _____

Victim-Witness Unit: _____

County Attorney: _____

Clerk of District Court: _____

Probation Dept.: _____

My Attorney: _____

My Veterinarian: _____

Other: _____