



MY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY PLAN

While you may not be able to predict or control your partner's violence, you can plan the most effective way to respond to such violence. You should review your safety plan periodically, and modify it according to your needs or circumstances.

Safety During a Violent Incident

1. If my partner and I are going to have an argument, I can try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____. {Try to avoid the bathroom, garage, kitchen, rooms with weapons, or rooms without access to an outside door.}
2. If it is not safe to stay, I can _____. {Practice getting out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes can you use?}
3. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them _____ so I can leave quickly.
4. I can tell _____ and _____ about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home.
5. I can use _____ as my secret code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.
6. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and fire department.
7. If I have to leave my home, I can go to _____ or _____.

{Decide this even if you don't think there will be a "next time".}

Use your judgment. If the situation is very serious, give your partner what he/she wants to calm him/her down. You have to protect yourself until you (and your children) are out of danger.

Safety When Preparing to Leave

1. I can leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.
2. I can keep copies of important documents or keys and some extra clothes with _____.
3. I can open a savings account to increase my independence. {Preferably opened in a separate bank than you and your partner use jointly.}
4. Other things I can do to increase my independence are _____.
5. The domestic violence hotline number is _____. I can keep change for phone calls with me at all times. I understand that if I use my telephone credit card, the following month's bill will tell my partner those numbers that I called after I left. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I can use change or get a friend's permission to use his or her calling card for a limited time when I first leave. I could also purchase a pre-paid calling card for this purpose.
6. I can check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
7. I can review my safety plan every week so I know the safest way to leave my home.
8. I can rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

Safety in My Home

1. If my partner does not live with me or no longer lives with me, I can take steps to ensure my safety and my children's safety in the home. Safety measures I can take include:
 - a. Changing the locks on the doors and windows.
 - b. Replacing wooden doors with steel or metal doors.
 - c. Installing security systems, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors ("charlie bars"), an electronic alarm system, etc.
 - d. Purchasing rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows.
 - e. Installing smoke detectors and purchasing fire extinguishers for each floor of my home.
 - f. Installing an outside motion-sensitive lighting system that activates when a person approaches my home.
2. I can teach my children to _____ when I am not at home.

3. I can teach my children to recite their names, addresses, home telephone number and parents' names.
4. I can inform _____ and _____ about who has permission to pick up my children.
5. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ in the event that my partner abducts them.
6. I can inform _____ and _____ that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if he/she is observed near my home.

Safety with EPOs and DVOs

An EPO is an Emergency Protective Order. It is good for only 14 days, during which time a hearing will be held on additional protection. In Jefferson County, you can obtain an EPO by going in person to the Hall of Justice at 6th and Jefferson Street – 24 hours a day. Tell one of the guards you need an EPO and they will direct you to the appropriate office.

A DVO is a Domestic Violence Order issued by the Court after a hearing. It is good for up to three years and can be renewed by the Court.

Neither an EPO nor a DVO is bullet-proof. That piece of paper cannot save your life! It can, however, empower the authorities to take your partner into police custody if he/she is threatening you or otherwise violating the EPO or DVO.

If you find yourself in a genuinely dangerous domestic violence situation with your partner, DIAL 9-1-1 and tell the operator:

"Domestic violence at _____!"
(Your address)

What else can you do to protect yourself from domestic violence?

1. I can keep a copy of my EPO/DVO _____ {Always keep it on or near your person. If you change purses, for instance, be sure that the first thing into the new purse is the EPO/DVO.}
2. If my partner violates the EPO/DVO, I can _____.

Adapted from Personalized Safety Plan prepared by Sarah Buel for the Harvard Battered Woman's Advocacy Project, reprinted in Stanley, "Understanding and Representing Adult Clients Who Are Victims of Domestic Abuse", 35 NH BJ 8, 17-19 (1994) and Domestic Violence: Practice & Procedure, Clark Boardman Callaghan Pub., 4/96.

3. If the police are not responsive, I can _____.
4. I can inform _____ and _____ and _____ that I have a EPO/DVO in effect.
5. If my partner destroys my EPO/DVO, I can get another copy from the _____.

Safety on the Job and in Public

1. I can inform _____ and _____ at work of my situation.
2. I can use voice mail, the receptionist or a coworker to help screen my telephone calls at work.
3. I can park my car in a visible, well-lighted area at _____.
4. When I am leaving work, I can walk out with co-workers or ask Security for an escort.
5. If problems occur while I am driving home, I can use my cellular phone to call for help, making note of my exact location.
6. If I have a problem while driving and do not have a cellular phone, I can exit to a well-lighted, heavily trafficked place such as a gas station or restaurant to ask for help.
7. If I use public transportation, I can make the driver aware of any threatening situation.
8. I can also _____.

Safety and Drug or Alcohol Consumption

1. If I am going to consume alcohol or other drugs, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
2. If my partner is consuming or using, I can be prepared to leave the home.
3. To protect my children, I can _____.

Remember that the use of alcohol or drugs can impair your judgment, awareness and ability to react quickly. Moreover, the legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be severe, and may hurt your relationship with your children. It may also put you at a disadvantage in other legal actions with your abuser. Therefore, carefully consider the potential consequences before using alcohol or illegal drugs.

Safety and My Emotional Health

To conserve my emotional energy and resources, and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

1. If I feel down and not ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____.
2. When I must communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can _____.
3. I can use positive self-talk with myself and be assertive with others. I can tell myself that I do not deserve to be beaten whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
4. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
5. I can call the police, my attorney or _____ as other resources to support me when I feel threatened.

Items to Take With Me When Leaving

1. Identification for myself
2. Driver's license
3. Children's birth certificates
4. My birth certificate
5. Money
6. Lease, rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
7. Bank books
8. Checkbooks and ATM cards
9. Credit cards
10. Insurance papers
11. Keys to the house, cars and office
12. Medication for myself and the children
13. Small saleable objects
14. Address book
15. Pictures
16. Medical records for all my family members
17. Social Security cards
18. Welfare identification
19. School records
20. Work permits
21. Green card
22. Passport(s)
23. Divorce papers
24. EPO/DVO
25. Jewelry
26. Children's favorite toys and blankets
27. Items of special sentimental value
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____

I can keep these items in one location. If I have to leave, I can grab these items quickly.

Important Telephone Numbers

1. Police department nearest my home: _____
2. Police department nearest children's school: _____
3. Police department nearest my office: _____
4. Domestic violence crisis hotline: _____
5. Shelter: _____
6. My attorney: _____
7. Other: _____

Other Important Numbers

Center for Women and Families (24 hours a day; domestic violence and rape crisis assistance)
 502-581-7200 [Collect calls accepted]

Crisis & Information Center of Seven Counties Services, Inc. (24-hour crisis counseling and referrals)
 502-589-4313 or 800-221-0446

Family & Children's Counseling Centers:
 Central (downtown) 502-583-1741
 East End 502-895-4671
 Southern Indiana 812-944-6120
 Southwest Louisville 502-995-3161
 West End 502-583-1741

We hope you will find completing this Safety Plan helpful if you find yourself in a domestic violence situation.

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