



SAFETY PLANNING

Leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for the survivor. Take all threats of harm seriously and take precautions if and when you are leaving or ending the relationship.

When Preparing to Leave:

- ❖ Save and hide money. If possible, open a checking or savings account in your own name.
- ❖ Leave emergency supplies—money, an extra set of keys to your house and car, copies of important documents, and an extra set of clothes—in a safe place or with a trusted family member or friend.
- ❖ Re-direct your mail. Get your own post office box if possible.
- ❖ Identify a safe place to go—a friend or family member’s house or a shelter—and someone who can lend you money.
- ❖ Get rid of all weapons in the home.
- ❖ If you have pets, make arrangements to take them to a safe place where they will be cared for.
- ❖ Do NOT go to couples counseling.
- ❖ Build a support system with friends, family, church members.
- ❖ Contact a local domestic violence agency for counseling, information, and support.
- ❖ Always keep the shelter phone number and some change or a calling card on you for emergency phone calls.

During an Explosive Incident:

- ❖ Avoid being cornered in a room with no exits.
- ❖ Avoid going into a bathroom, kitchen, or other area that may contain weapons (knives, glass, guns).
- ❖ Know the escape routes from your home—all doors, windows, elevators, stairwells.
- ❖ Establish a code/code word to alert your child(ren), family, friends, and neighbors that an emergency exists and that you need the police.
- ❖ Use your instincts and judgment. In a dangerous situation, give the abuser what he wants to calm him down.

In Your Own Home/Apartment:

- ❖ In your home, lock your doors and windows and change the locks.
- ❖ Never tell your abuser where you live.
- ❖ Request an unlisted/unpublished number from the telephone company.
- ❖ Develop an escape plan with your child(ren). Be honest with them and let them know what is happening and that they are not responsible for the abuser or the abuse.

When You Share Children with Your Abuser:

- ❖ Investigate legal options to enhance safety in custody and visitation arrangements, including safe exchanges and supervised or restricted visitation.
- ❖ Notify your children's school(s)/daycare center(s) about custody arrangements. Provide them a copy of your protective order and custody order.
- ❖ Find out about getting counseling for your child(ren).
- ❖ Contact the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program with the State Department at 888-407-4747 and request to be notified if a passport application is being processed for your child(ren).

With Technology:

- ❖ Create a new email account.
- ❖ Do not use your home computer. Instead go to a public library, community center, or internet café.
- ❖ Change all of your passwords and PIN numbers. Create new passwords that are not easily guessed; avoid using your and your child(ren)'s birthdays and initials.
- ❖ If possible, do not use electrical devices that have GPS devices. They can be used to track your location. Use a donated or new cell phone or public phone to make your plans.
- ❖ Do not use websites like My Space or Facebook. They can be used to track your current location.

On the Job and In Public

- ❖ Inform someone at work of your situation. Include the security officers at work and provide them with a photo of your batterer.
- ❖ If possible, have someone screen your phone calls for you.
- ❖ Request an escort to and from your car or bus.
- ❖ Vary your route home.

Checklist of What You Will Need to Take When You Leave

Identification

- Drivers License/Student ID/Consular ID
- Birth Certificates—yours and your child(ren)'s
- Social Security Cards

Financial

- Money and/or credit/debit cards (in your name)
- Checking and/or savings account books (institution name and address and account numbers)

Legal Papers

- Passport(s)—yours and your child(ren)'s
- Work Permit/Green Card/Visa
- Protective Order

- Divorce/Custody Orders
- Police reports
- Marriage License
- Car Registration and insurance papers
- Lease/rental agreement or deed to house
- Health and life insurance papers
- School records
- Medical records for you and your child(ren)
- Award letters—TANF, Medicaid, Food Stamps

Other

- Medications/written prescriptions
- House and car keys
- Recent photos of yourself and your child(ren) and sentimental items
- Children’s toys/books
- Address book

Your Emergency Contact List

Police/Sheriff—Emergencies	911
National Domestic Violence Hotline	800-799-7233 or TDD 800-787-3224
Texas Women’s Advocacy Project Hotline	800-777-3247
Your Nearest Houston Police Department Family Violence Unit and number	_____
District Attorney’s Office Intake Division—Protective Orders	713-755-5800
Houston Area Women’s Center Hotline	713-528-2121
Your AVDA Advocate’s Name and number	_____