



24/7 CRISIS LINE: 303-343-1851

SAFETY PLANNING

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan to improve your safety, the safety of your children and your pets when experiencing abuse, preparing to leave an abusive situation, or after you leave.

Safety During an Argument

- Stay in an area with an exit and avoid letting the other person get between you and the exit.
- Practice getting out of your home safely.
- Avoid rooms with weapons, such as the kitchen.
- Have emergency 911 phones hidden throughout the home. Any cell phone has the capability of calling 911 – even if you are not paying for cell service. Be sure to keep it charged. Consider keeping old cell phones for this purpose.
- Tell trustworthy neighbors about the violence. Ask them to call the police if they hear or see any disturbance.
- Devise a code word or signal to use with your children, family, friends, and trustworthy neighbors when you need the police.
- Trust your instincts and judgment. You have the right to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

Safety When Preparing to Leave

- Establish your independence. Open savings and credit card accounts in your name only and specifically instruct institutions that your partner is not to have access.
- Leave money, extra keys, copies of important documents, extra medicine, and clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- Determine safe people you can stay with and plan leaving with.
- Familiarize yourself with local domestic violence shelters crisis line numbers. Gateway's will always be answered by a live person. Your call is confidential and free. Call 303-343-1851 any time any day of the year. Our caring advocates are always ready to talk and offer support, resources, and hope.
- Review and rehearse your safety plan.
- Keep a packed bag at a trusted relative's or friend's home.
- Plan where you will go if you must leave.

Safety in Your Own Home

- Change the locks on your doors. (Landlords are legally obligated to change locks within 24 hours if you are experiencing DV).
- Install locks on your windows. (Renters check with your landlord first.)
- Discuss and practice a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your children's schools or caregivers who has permission to pick up your children.
- Inform neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and to call the police if they see him or her near your home.

Safety with a Restraining Order

- **Always keep your protective order with you**, and give a copy to a trusted neighbor, friend, or family member.
- Call the police if your abuser violates the protective order.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond right away.
- Inform family, friends, neighbors, and health care providers that you have a restraining order in effect.

Safety on the Job and in Public

- Decide who at work you will inform of your situation, include building security.
- Provide a photo of your abuser for quick identification.
- Screen your telephone calls.
- Devise a safety plan for leaving work, such as exiting through the back door.
- Have someone escort you when leaving and wait with you until you are safely en route.
- Use a variety of routes to go home.
- Rehearse what you would do if something happened while going home, such as picking a safe place to go to.
- Create a safety routine when you arrive home: checking your house and property, checking in with someone to let them know you are safe, etc.

Your Safety and Emotional Health

- Identify who you can rely on for emotional support and feel confident in calling our Crisis Line at 303-343-1851.
- If you must communicate with your abuser, determine the safest way to do so and avoid being alone with them.
- Advocate for yourself and your needs. Find people and resources you can safely and openly talk to and ask for help. You are not alone, and you do not have to go through this by yourself.
- Look into **counseling and support groups** that directly address your experiences and needs. Gateway has a nonresidential counseling program for adults and children. More information is available by calling our crisis line at 303-343-1851.
- Find ways to care for yourself: exercise, make time to relax, create a safe environment, do things you enjoy, get as much support as you can.

Internet and Computer Safety

- Remember that all computer and online activity may be monitored.
- Abusers may monitor your emails and internet activity, if you are planning to flee to a particular location, do not look at classified ads for jobs and apartments, bus tickets, etc.
for that location.
- It is safer to use a computer in a public library, at a trusted friend's house, at an internet cafe, or any other public terminals.
- Abusers may also track your activity and whereabouts through your cell phone; if you think there a chance this may be happening, take your phone into your provider, Apple store, or Best Buy Geek Squad and have it thoroughly checked.
- If your phone has been compromised and you get a new one, do NOT update your phone from the cloud.

Safety for your Pets

Pets in abusive situations often experience violence similarly to people. As a result, as many as 65 percent of domestic violence victims are unable to escape abusive situations because they are concerned about what will happen to their pets. Taking steps to ensure your pet's protection will make it easier to bring them with you when you make the decision to leave.

- Take steps to prove ownership of your pets. Have them vaccinated and licensed in the place where you live, making sure the registrations are done in your name. Take steps to have them changed if necessary.
- If possible, avoid leaving pets alone with an abusive partner.
- If your pet is microchipped, make sure your abusive partner is not listed as a contact.
- If you are planning to leave, talk to friends, family, neighbors, or veterinarian about temporary care. If this is not an option, search for services that assist domestic violence survivors with safekeeping for their pets. Gateway's Emergency shelter is home to the Bailey Project that allows survivors to bring their family pets with them to shelter. For more information, call 303-343-1851.
- If you choose to leave, plan to bring extra food and medications for your pets, copies of their medical records and you veterinarians phone number with you.
- If you are planning to get a protective order, check to see if your state allows pets to be included in the orders.
- After leaving, consider changing veterinarians and avoid leaving pets outside alone to ensure their long-term safety.
- If you have had to leave your pet behind with an abusive partner, consider seeking assistance from local services like animal control to see if they can intervene and check on your pet.

Checklist: What You Should Take When You Leave

Legal Papers

- Restraining order/stalking order
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed
- Car registration
- Health and life insurance cards
- Divorce papers
- Custody papers

Other

- House and car keys
- Medications
- Valuables, photos, etc.
- Address book
- Phone card/safety cell phone
- Clothes, blankets, small toys for children
- Clothes, hygiene necessities, etc. for yourself

Identification

- Driver's license
- Children's birth certificates
- Social security card
- Self-sufficiency/disability identification

Papers

- Medical records for you and your children
- Work permits/green card
- VISA

For questions or help preparing a safety plan, call Gateway's 24/7 Crisis line at 303-343-1851.

Information gathered from The Domestic Violence Resource Center & The National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Gateway Domestic Violence Services

www.gatewayshelter.org

Administration: 303-343-1856

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