

PARTNER VIOLENCE: SAFETY PLANNING

It's important to know what to do if you are in or planning to leave an abusive relationship. Many times the abuse becomes more violent when an abuser suspects his or her partner is leaving and after he or she has left. It's also important to consider a workplace safety plan. Planning ahead may help you reduce the risk of violence.

If you are living with an abusive partner:

- › Avoid rooms with no exits, or rooms with potential weapons (like the kitchen).
- › Be aware that your partner may attempt to track you electronically (checking web history, calls, text messages, etc.).
- › Hide documentation of abuse in a safe place. Consider storing with a friend, relative, or in a place the abuser can't access.
- › If you have contact with law enforcement, get the name and badge number of the officer(s) you talk to.

If you are planning to leave:

- › Know how to get into a shelter or other safe place before you go.
- › Go to a hospital or police station if a family member's home or shelter is not an option.
- › Collect important phone numbers you'll need.
- › Keep an extra set of car keys.
- › Safely store medical records, pictures, journals or police reports that document the abuse.
- › Try to put aside emergency money.
- › Pack a bag of clothes to take with you.
- › Teach your children about escape routes.
- › Practice getting out safely.
- › Open a bank account in your name only.
- › Keep a phone hidden inside a room in your home that locks from the inside.
- › Program emergency numbers into your phone(s).
- › Make an arrangement with a family member or friend to call them at a certain time each day.
- › You may want to store all items you want to take with someone you trust a few days before you go.

Consider taking the following items when you go:

Identification

- › Driver's license / passport
- › Social security card / birth certificate
- › Insurance information

Financial information

- › Credit cards/ATM cards
- › Checking / savings account information
- › Savings bonds
- › Partner's employer information

Legal documents

- › Copies of protective order, if you have one
- › Records of prior abuse
- › Medical and school records
- › Separation/custody records
- › Marriage license
- › Rental agreement/deed to home
- › Power of attorney/will

Other

- › Medications/prescriptions
- › Keys to home and vehicles
- › Pictures, clothes, toys and valuables

If you are planning to leave - continued:

Other precautions may help ensure the safety of you and your family after you leave. You may want to:

- › Try to change your routines.
- › Get advice from professionals to plan on how you will handle a confrontation with the abuser.
- › Consider carrying pepper spray to protect yourself.
- › Contact your wireless carrier to disable tracking and block calls.
- › Give the post office your change of address.
- › Get an unlisted phone number.
- › Change the locks on your doors. Add dead bolts or a security system.
- › Look into getting protection order. If you have one, file charges if the order is violated.
- › If the abuser doesn't have legal rights to see your children, you may want to:
 - Give copies of legal documentation to your children's caregivers and/or school.
 - Give school/caregivers pictures of the abuser.
 - Educate children on what to do if the abuser shows up at their day care, home, activities or school.

References

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (n.d.). Planning ahead. Retrieved from <http://ncadv.org/learn-more/get-help/planning-ahead>

In the workplace:

If you are being abused by your partner or ex-partner, you may be in danger even at work. A workplace safety plan is wise. You may decide who will be involved and what information will be shared. Consider including a supervisor, human resource manager, company and/or building security and/or employee assistance counselor.

Every situation is different. Consider what might be helpful and possible at your workplace. None of these steps can guarantee safety, but they may help:

- › Ask your leadership the best steps to take to ensure your safety at work. You will want to loop in security.
- › If you are threatened at work, bring immediately it to the attention of your manager.
- › Give your security department a description of the abuser's vehicle and license plate number. A photo of your partner or ex-partner is also helpful.
- › Park in a space that is well-lit, out in the open and close to the entrance door(s).
- › Look for your abuser before leaving the building and before parking or turning off the car.
- › Arrange for someone, preferably a security guard, to walk with you to and from your car.
- › If possible, arrange your work hours so that you are coming and leaving work at different times. Not everyone can do this, but do try to change up your routines.
- › Keep all threatening e-mails, voicemails, letters, and texts. They may be proof a protection order is being disobeyed.
- › If possible, ask to move your workspace to a less visible spot. Try not to be in an area where you can be seen from the street or parking lot.
- › Transfer any calls from your partner or ex-partner to security, if you can. Ask if your number can be changed or routed differently. Find out if your workplace can screen your calls.
- › Make sure your workplace is listed on any protection order if you have one. Your employer, security and receptionist should all have copies.
- › Contact your employee assistance program for confidential resources and referrals