

IF VIOLENCE ESCALATES...

If you are home and an argument becomes dangerous:

- If you believe you are in danger, leave your home and take your children, no matter the time of day or night. Go to a friend or relative's house or a domestic violence shelter.
- Stay close to an exit and avoid bedrooms, bathrooms, or kitchen (unless there are exits that you can use to escape).
- If your abuser has lost control, you are the only one who can decide the best time to leave the home.
- If the situation becomes dangerous and you realize there's no way to get out immediately, do what the abuser wants, for that moment, until the abuser calms down. You must protect yourself until you are free of danger.
- Trust your own instincts and judgment. Whatever you need to do to survive is the best choice.
- If you have been injured, seek medical help and try to take pictures of your injuries.

SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

- Open a savings account in your own name to establish your independence. Give a safe address such as a post office box or work address.
- 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 AT HOME

- Change the locks on your doors; and, buy new locks and safety devices for windows. If you rent your home be sure to have the landlord's permission before making any changes.
- Discuss a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Notify neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call police if they see him/her near your residence.
- Do not place outgoing mail in an outside mailbox. If you have a locked mailbox, change the locks.
- If you have a protection order, keep it with you at all times; and, call the police immediately upon violation of that order.
- If the protection order covers the children, give a copy to the school/daycare; and, let them know who has permission to pick them up.
- Change your phone number. Call the phone company and ask for an unlisted number. Do not call the abuser from your phone.
- Keep a diary detailing any contact, threats, messages, or letters. Save phone messages, emails, and text messages.

SAFETY WHILE USING TECHNOLOGY

- Create new email accounts. 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 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 actually tip off your abuser to your plans. Try to use a safer computer at a library, community center, or other public place.
- Protect your email and voice mail passwords and PIN numbers. Change them often.
- Minimize 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 that 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.

SAFETY OUTSIDE THE HOME

- Change your travel routes often.
- Shop in different locations.
- Cancel all joint bank accounts and credit cards; and, open new accounts in your name only. Try to choose different banks and credit card companies if possible.
- Keep your protection order and emergency phone numbers with you at all times.
- Tell co-workers, boss, and/or office 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-worker screen your 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. Think about what you would do if something happens while going home.

THINGS TO TAKE WHEN YOU LEAVE

Identification

- Driver's license or ID
- Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Work Permits/VISA
- Passports

Financial

- Money, credit cards, checking and bank books
- Public Assistance documentation
- Tax returns from previous three years
- Pay stubs for both you and your abuser
- Loan information

Other Important Papers

- 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 your children.
- Divorce and custody papers
- Police reports/documentation of abuse

Other Important Items

- House and car keys
- Medications, glasses, hearing aids
- Address book
- Phone cards
- Family photos
- Children's toys and clothing
- Pet items

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE (72333)

800-787-3224 TTY

(assistance available in over 140 languages)

Nebraska Statewide Domestic Violence

Hotline

800-876-6238

Local Domestic Violence Program:

LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA

AccessLine®

877-250-2016

Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm

Friday 9am-12pm

Elder AccessLine® (60 and over)

800-527-7249

Monday-Thursday 9am-12pm, 1pm-3pm

Friday 9am-12pm

Farm Program Hotline

800-464-0258

Native American AccessLine®

800-729-9908

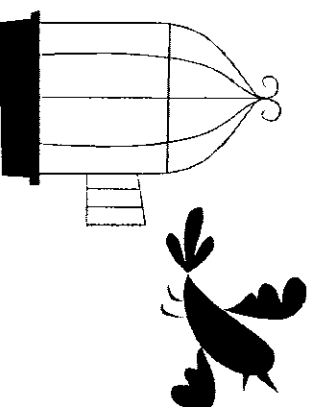
Monday-Friday 9am-12pm

All times c.s.t.

Personal

Safety

Plan



A checklist for
living free from
domestic violence

Credits: Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Omaha Police Department, National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence, and YWCA



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