

Safety Tips for Victims of Domestic Violence

Tips to Share with a Victim to Plan for Safety

- **Tell** your kids that, if there's violence, their job is to stay safe, not to protect you. Find a safe place for them to stay in case of violence, such as with a neighbor or in a locked room. Teach them to call 911 and what to say to the dispatcher.
- **Hide** money, spare keys and a small bag of clothes at work or at a friend's house. For small children, hide a favorite toy or stuffed animal that will comfort them.
- **Inform** your employer about the situation and develop a safety plan at work. Share a photo and description of the abuser with them and any pertinent legal documentation, such as a protection order.
- **Document** the abuse by taking photos of bruises and injuries, tell your doctor and get copies of your medical records; save threatening voicemails, notes and e-mails and write each incident down in a journal.
- **Gather** important documents or copies of documents such as passports, birth certificates, social security cards, insurance papers, work permits or green cards, ownership documents for car and/or house, checkbooks and bank account numbers. Hide these papers at work or at a friend's house. Know the abuser's social security number, birth date and place of birth.
- **Consider** obtaining a protection order. It directs the abuser not to contact, communicate with, attack, sexually assault or telephone you, your children or other family members. If you have a protection order, carry a copy of it with you at all times.

Safety Tips for Victims Planning on Staying – When You Are Afraid

- **Move** away from the kitchen, bathroom, garage or anyplace where there are dangerous sharp objects.
- **Plan** the easiest escape route. Decide on a door or window to exit quickly and safely. Make sure your kids know the route and practice it with them. Have a code word so they know when to call the law enforcement.
- **Don't** wear necklaces or scarves – these could be used to strangle you.
- **Always** make sure weapons are secured and that guns aren't loaded.

Safety Tips for Victims Who Have Left Their Abuser

- **Change** the locks on your doors. Install steel/metal doors, a security system, smoke detectors and an outside lighting system.
- **Get** Caller ID for your telephone so you can screen your calls.
- **Consider** getting a post office box for your mail or participating in a confidential mailing program (if available in your state).
- **Learn** about your legal rights and options. If you have legal papers, keep copies of them with you at all times.
- **Tell** neighbors, friends, landlords or coworkers that your abusive partner no longer lives with you. Share your safety plan with people you trust. Explain it to your children.
- **Tell** your employer/coworkers about your situation and ask them to screen your calls, move your desk, change your work schedule/hours or accompany you to your car.
- **Tell** the school or day care or others spending time with your children who can pick them up and who can't. If you have a protective order, make sure they know about it.
- **Vary** your routes to work, to school or day care, to the grocery store and other places you frequent.
- **Call** a friend or someone else who will be supportive, when you feel down and ready to return to an abusive partner.

Compiled and produced by



NATIONAL CENTER
on Domestic and Sexual Violence
training • consulting • advocacy

Tel: 512.407.9020 (voice and fax) • www.ncdsv.org