



Safety Planning: Preparing to Leave

If you feel that you are not safe, you may want to prepare to leave the relationship and/or your shared home. Even if you don't want to leave permanently, you may want to prepare to leave for short or overnight periods to de-escalate situations. Here are a few things to consider before leaving for any period of time:

1. Consider financial security.

- a. Are you employed or do you have a personal source of income? YES or NO
- b. Do you have a joint account? YES or NO
If yes, can you transfer your assets? YES or NO
- c. Do you have a personal account that your partner is unable to access? YES or NO

What is the status of your savings in this account? _____

2. Who could you stay with should you decide to leave? List two or three people/locations:

3. If you decided to leave, to what transportation would you have easy access? How could you improve your transportation access?

4. Document any and all injuries you sustain or text/email threats you receive prior to leaving (and throughout the entire relationship, if possible). Consider the following approaches:

- a. Take or have someone you trust take pictures of your injuries and keep them in a safe place.
- b. Maintain a log of violent incidents, injuries, threats, calls to the police, and need for medical attention and keep it in a safe place.

5. Obtain the following documents to bring with you if/when you leave:

- Birth certificate, self and children
- Social Security card
- Documentation of abuse
- Checkbook/debit and credit cards
- Marriage license
- Driver's license and registration
- Keys to home and car
- Lease/rental agreements
- Health, home, and car insurance cards
- Copy of Protective Order
- Passport
- Prescription medications
- Cash, if connected through joint account
- Divorce and other legal papers
- Car title
- 1-94, work permits, and/or Green Cards
- Bills/mortgage statements

6. List any other items (e.g. sentimental items, child's favorite toys, etc.) you would want to take with you below:

7. Do you have a pet? If yes, what are your plans for the pet if/when you leave?*

8. If you are concerned about being monitored, consider opening a personal bank account, obtaining a safety deposit box, and purchasing a disposable cell phone to hide either in the home or with a trusted friend.

9. What will happen with your partner that will signal to you that it is time to leave?***

* The Tri-County Animal Shelter can care for your pets while you exit a dangerous situation! Contact the shelter at 301-932-1713 or 800-903-1992.

** Research shows that affirmative answers to the following questions predict increased risk for a lethal domestic violence incident.

- Has your partner ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
- Has s/he threatened to kill you or your children?
- Do you think s/he might try to kill you?
- Does s/he have a gun or can s/he get one easily?
- Has s/he ever tried to choke/strangle you?
- Is s/he violently or constantly jealous or does s/he control most of your daily activities?
- Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?
- Is s/he unemployed?
- Has s/he ever tried to kill him-/herself?
- Do you have a child that s/he knows is not his/hers?
- Does s/he follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?