

## PROTECTION ORDER SAFETY

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Keep your protection order with you at all times.

Inform authorities immediately if your partner violates the order.

Avoid areas where the abuser has access to you or your children.

If you live out of state, register your order in the state where you currently reside.

If you need assistance obtaining a protection order of any kind, contact WomenSafe's court advocacy program via COPEline at 1-888-285-5665.

### WHAT TO TAKE IF YOU LEAVE

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- Identification
- Your birth certificate
- Children's birth certificates
- Social security cards
- School and vaccination records
- Money
- Checkbook, ATM card
- Credit cards
- Keys-house/car/office
- Driver's license and registration
- Medications
- Welfare identification
- Work permits
- Green card
- Passport(s)
- Divorce papers
- Medical records-for all family members
- Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
- Bank books
- Insurance papers
- Clothes
- Address book
- Pictures
- Jewelry
- Children's favorite toys and/or blankets
- Items of special sentimental value

### If you are in an abusive relationship remember:

You cannot make your partner change. You can let your partner know what changes he needs to make, but it is up to your partner to make the changes. You are not responsible for your partners' actions. If your partner is abusive, changing your behavior will not make the abuse stop. It is not your fault. Abuse is NEVER deserved. Abuse is dangerous and often escalates in frequency and severity over time. You are not alone.

For more information about safety planning, community resources or domestic violence services contact:

**WOMENSAFE, INC.**

P.O. Box 656  
Chardon, OH 44024  
Phone: (440) 285-2222 ext. 5680  
womensafe@netzero.net  
www.womensafe.org

24-hour Support and  
Crisis Management Hotline  
**COPEline 1-888-285-5665**  
TDD/TTY Use Ohio Relay 1-800-750-0750

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## Safety Planning



**WOMENSAFE, INC.**

Resources for Victims  
of Domestic Violence

# Safety Planning

Victims of domestic violence do not have control over their partner's behavior. However, you do have a choice about how to respond to the abuser. Leaving, while necessary, can be the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship. It is important to develop a safety plan. Safety planning focuses on your immediate needs and addresses the level or risk for danger. To develop a safety plan, you should consider:

## SAFETY IN THE HOME

1. Identify a variety of ways to get out of your home safely and practice your escape methods.  
Helpful hints:
  - During an explosive incident, try to stay in a room with access to an exit (except the kitchen).
  - Try to stay in a room with a phone to call 911.
  - Inform law enforcement if weapons are in the home.
2. Remember computer, Internet and phone use can be traced or monitored.
3. Pack a bag with medications, important documents, money, and keys and hide it.
3. Arrange a signal with neighbors to let them know when you need help.
4. Devise a code word to use with your children, grandchildren, friends or others to indicate that you need the police.
5. Plan where you will go if you have to leave.

## SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE

- Find somewhere safe you can stay. Call COPEline at 1-888-285-5665 to access WomenSafe's shelter.
- Open a bank account in your name only and have statements sent to a post office box.
- Leave copies of important documents, keys, extra clothes and money with a relative or in a safety deposit box.
- Keep the phone number for your local domestic violence shelter and emergency contacts with you.
- Discuss the situation and leaving with your children, friends and family.
- Practice your escape plan.

## SAFETY ON THE JOB & IN PUBLIC

- Inform your boss of your situation. Give your employer a copy of the protection order.
- Screen your calls at work.
- Have an escape plan and practice it. Have someone escort you to your car, take different routes home and tell someone you trust your work schedule.
- Provide security personnel with a photograph of the abuser.
- Carry a cell phone with you at all times in case of an emergency.
- Use a variety of grocery stores, banks and shopping malls.
- If you use public transportation, travel with a friend, take multiple routes and be aware of your surroundings.

## EMOTIONAL SAFETY

Talking to others is an important step in developing a support system. Choose someone who is a good listener, validates your feelings and is trustworthy. People near you may already have a sense the abuse is happening and are ready to help.



- Discuss a personal safety plan with someone you trust.
- Join a local support group. WomenSafe offers a 10-week free peer support group. Free childcare is provided.
- Develop new hobbies or interests outside of the home. Join a club or volunteer.
- Call an abuse hotline. WomenSafe offers support and crisis management via the COPEline at 1-888-285-5665.
- Educate yourself about domestic violence by reading magazines or books.
- Be positive toward yourself and others.

Create a  
personal safety plan.  
**Call COPEline**  
**1-888-285-5665**

All WomenSafe services are provided free of charge.



## DOCUMENT THE ABUSE

There are a number of ways you can begin to document the abuse. It is important to keep any evidence you collect in a safe place, such as with a trusted friend or family member, at your workplace or in a safety deposit box at a bank.

**Keep a Journal-** Keep a journal recording incidents, witnesses and any other evidence.

**Take Pictures-** Take pictures of any visible injuries you sustain as a result of the abuse. Photograph damaged property and weapons used by the abuser.

**Talk with witnesses-** If there were witnesses to the abuse, who either saw or heard what occurred, you may want to find out how they could be reached should you need them to testify.

**Get Medical Treatment-** If you or your child suffer injury, seek medical treatment. Ask medical professionals to document the abuse on your chart.

**File a Police Report-** When domestic violence occurs, you may decide to inform the police and ask them to file a report. Police reports can be made without filing criminal charges against the abuser.