

# *Safety Planning*





The following steps are a plan for increasing your safety and helping you prepare for the possibility of violence. Sometimes it can help to write out a plan for your own safety. Memorizing this plan may help you get out of an abusive situation more quickly. Although you do not have control over your partner's violence, you do have choices about how to respond to your partner and how to best get yourself and your children to safety.

Remember that thinking about and working through these steps can be hard work. It is OK to take breaks, and only do what is comfortable each time you work on it.

You might want to work through this Safety Plan with a Victim Services worker, friend, relative, counsellor, health care professional or someone else you trust.

## **YOUR IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

You can have the emergency numbers in your area ready by writing them out.

RCMP (911) \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Women's Shelter/Designated Safe House \_\_\_\_\_

Victim Services \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Services \_\_\_\_\_

Lawyer/Legal Aid \_\_\_\_\_

Taxi (or call Yukon Women's Transition Home at 668-5733

and they may arrange a taxi) \_\_\_\_\_

## CHECKLIST FOR SAFETY KITS:

### Pre-Prepared Items for Safety Kit:

- money, bank books, credit cards
- house keys, car keys
- identification, important papers (birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce or separation agreements First Nation status card)
- copies of protection orders
- health cards for you and the children
- documents, if any, relating to the custody of your children
- copies of your lease, mortgage, or other deeds
- car registration, driver's license, car insurance
- immigration/citizenship papers, passports
- any medicine you or your children may need
- your address/phone book

### Items you use daily or come back later for:

- clothes for you and the children for a few days
- pets, if possible
- the children's favourite toys and books
- your favourite possessions/books/photos (things that give you comfort)

It's probably a good idea to get legal and other advice now, even before there is an emergency.

# STEP 1: WHAT YOU CAN DO BEFORE A VIOLENT INCIDENT

Prepare your Checklist.

If you believe your partner may be violent, there are a number of things you can think about in advance. Abusive partners often strike back when they believe the woman is leaving the relationship. You can prepare to leave by doing some of the following things:

You will keep this Safety Kit \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ where you can get to it quickly and easily and where your partner will not find it (at the home of a friend, with a support worker or hidden). In it, you will keep the checklist for your safety plan.

You can keep your purse, wallet, personal identification, keys and other emergency items \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in case you have to leave suddenly. So you can leave quickly, you can also leave money, an extra set of keys, extra clothing and important documents with \_\_\_\_\_ .

You can open a separate bank account in your name at \_\_\_\_\_ . You will request that any statements be sent to \_\_\_\_\_ so that your abuser doesn't see them.

If your abuser knows your account or PIN number, you will \_\_\_\_\_ .

You can locate a women's shelter or check with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let you stay with them or lend you some money.

You can teach your children the number of the RCMP \_\_\_\_\_ and other emergency numbers such as \_\_\_\_\_ .

You can rehearse your escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with your children. You will review your safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ .

## STEP 2: SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

Women cannot always avoid violent incidents, but they can do a number of things to increase their safety during violent incidents.

1. If you decide to leave, you can get out of the house by \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors or windows will you use?)
2. You can go to \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. In order to be able to leave quickly, you can keep your wallet and vehicle key ready by putting them \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. You can tell \_\_\_\_\_ (neighbours) about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from the house.
5. You can teach your children how to use the telephone to contact the police and to get help in an emergency.
6. You can use \_\_\_\_\_ as your code word with your children and/or friends when you are in danger, so they will call for help.

7. When you expect an argument, you can try to move to \_\_\_\_\_, a safer space in the house (near an outside door in a room with no guns, knives or other weapons - usually bathrooms, garages and kitchens are dangerous places).
8. Leaving may not always be the safest option. You can use your judgment and intuition to protect yourself until you are out of danger.
9. You can call the police when it is safe, and you can get a protective order from the court. You can ask Victim Services or a supportive friend to go with you to the police to make a statement. Victim Services can help you with a protective order.



**STEP 3: SAFETY IN YOUR HOME  
(IF YOUR PARTNER IS NO LONGER THERE)**

There are many things that a woman can do to increase safety in her home. It may not be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step.

1. You can inform \_\_\_\_\_ that your partner no longer resides with you and they should call the police if they are seen at your residence.
2. You can change the locks on your doors and windows as soon as possible.

#### **STEP 4: YOUR CHILD(REN)'S SAFETY: CHILDREN WHO ARE EXPOSED TO ABUSE**

Children who are exposed to abuse may be experiencing abuse themselves.

Children often see and hear more than we think. They have probably seen or heard the violence, and likely it will have affected them.

The best thing your children can do for you during a violent episode is to get away and protect themselves. You can tell them to \_\_\_\_\_ if they see you being abused.

If they cannot leave the house, you can teach them to pick a safe room like \_\_\_\_\_ preferably with a lock and access to a telephone. It is important to you and to them that they get out of the room where the abuse is occurring as soon as possible.

You can tell them their most important job is to keep themselves safe. You will explain it using words such as \_\_\_\_\_ .

You will teach them how to call for help. If they cannot safely get to a telephone in your home, you will talk to them about using your neighbour's ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) phone or the nearest payphone, which is located at \_\_\_\_\_ . You can teach your children how to use the telephone, in case your partner takes them, to make a collect call to you and to \_\_\_\_\_ (friend/family member/advocate/other).

You will make sure they know their own name and address if they need help. If you live out of town, you will teach them how to identify the location, including landmarks, or subdivision and lot number.

You can rehearse what your children will say when they call for help.

You will pick a safe place such as \_\_\_\_\_ to meet your children outside your home after the situation is safe for you and for them (so you can easily find each other). You will teach your children the safest route to the planned place of safety for them.

You can tell people who take care of your children which people have permission to pick up your children and that your partner does not have permission. The people you will inform about this are:

(school) \_\_\_\_\_

(day care) \_\_\_\_\_

(babysitter) \_\_\_\_\_

(teacher) \_\_\_\_\_

(sport/activity leaders) \_\_\_\_\_

(others) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 5: WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU ARE LIVING IN A NEW PLACE

You can increase security by \_\_\_\_\_ .

You may want to change the locks if you think your (ex) partner has a key. Consider other security features (security alarm, bars on the windows or a guard dog).

You will talk to your children and tell them to \_\_\_\_\_ if your (ex) partner shows up.

You will teach your children how to dial police or ambulance numbers. In your area, the number for police is \_\_\_\_\_ .

You will keep copies of any court orders with you at all times. You will give copies of these orders to (school, day care, police) \_\_\_\_\_ and tell them to call you if they see your partner. You will give these people copies of your partner's photograph so they can recognize him/her.

You can install a peephole your children can use. You will tell them to \_\_\_\_\_ if your abuser shows up.

You can get these features installed on your telephone (call blocking, call display, unpublished number, speed dial)

\_\_\_\_\_ to increase your safety.

If you have a very recognizable vehicle, you might want to store it in a friend's garage for a little while.

You can block email messages from your partner or switch Internet service providers. If your abuser can access your email password, you can \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

## STEP 6: SAFETY WITH A PROTECTION ORDER

Protection orders are available from the court. Many abusive partners obey protection orders, but some do not.

You may need to ask the RCMP and the courts to enforce your protection order. You can do some or all of the following to increase your safety:

1. You can keep a copy of your protection order with you at all times (in your purse/car, at work, with a friend, etc).
2. You can check with the RCMP to make sure your protection order is on record with them. If not, you will give a copy of your protection order to them.
3. You can tell those people you trust, (for example, your closest friends, your employer, your counsellor), and \_\_\_\_\_ that you have a protection order in effect.
4. If you misplace or your partner destroys your protection order, you can get another copy by going down to the Law Court building or phoning \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. If your partner violates the protection order, you can call the RCMP and report a violation right away. You should also call your lawyer, and a counsellor or social worker (if you have one).

## STEP 7: SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC

Each abused woman must decide for herself if and when to tell others about the violence. Friends, family and co-workers can help to protect her, and she needs to consider carefully who to ask for help.

You can do any or all of the following:

1. You can tell your boss, the security supervisor and \_\_\_\_\_ at work of your situation.
2. You can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen your telephone calls at work.
3. When you leave work, you can walk with \_\_\_\_\_ to your car or the bus stop. You can park your car where you will feel safest getting in and out of the car.
4. When traveling home if problems occur, you can \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. You can change your routines, and shop and bank at different hours than you did when living with your abusive partner.
6. You can also \_\_\_\_\_ .



## STEP 8: SAFETY AND DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE

Many people use alcohol and drugs. Using illegal drugs and abusing alcohol or prescription drugs can be very hard on an abused woman physically and emotionally, and may hurt her relationship with her children and put her at a disadvantage in court. As well, the use of alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from her abusive partner. When considering drug or alcohol use, a woman needs to make specific plans.

You can enhance your safety by doing some or all of the following:

1. If you are going to use, you can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and who will look out for your safety.
2. If your partner is using, you can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. To safeguard your children, you can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. You can also \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. If you are going to use, you can enhance your safety by reducing your consumption to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

See the Resource Card for information on support services for drug and alcohol addictions.





