

Your Safety Plan

When leaving abusive situations

Stay safe by following these steps:

All or some of the following information may be helpful in planning for your safety. For a personalized safety plan, please contact an Emergency Shelter for assistance.

For Emergency Shelters contact Victim Link BC at 1 800 563-0808.

You may wonder whether to tell your partner/caregiver that you are leaving. In cases where there has been physical abuse or extremely controlling behaviour, telling the abuser can seriously endanger you and any children and/or pets you may have. Abusers can become increasingly violent when they fear their partner is leaving or they are losing control.

A Standard Safety Plan for Leaving an Abusive Situation:

1. If possible, pre program emergency shelter numbers into your phone (i.e. 911)
2. Keep a phone in your room you can lock from the inside.
3. Plan an escape route out of your home. Teach and practice it with your children.
4. Try to put away a little money at every opportunity, even enough for a phone call.
5. If possible, try to keep an extra key to a vehicle hidden.
6. Gather important papers (both your own and your children's), such as birth certificates, social insurance numbers, citizenship and immigration papers, BC Health Care cards, immunization records, etc. Put these in a safe place, preferably outside your home, such as a safety deposit box or with a trusted friend.
7. Put together a suitcase of essential items such as clothing and medicines and store them in a safe place. If you have a pet gather the following and place with your essential items: vaccination and medical records, collar and identification tags (if your animal doesn't wear one), license or papers that prove you are the owner, leashes or cat carriers (a pillow case will work in an emergency), medications, bowls, bedding, food, favorite toys or blanket, grooming supplies, and an information sheet on feeding schedules, likes and dislikes, and any possible behavior problems.
8. Make a plan for the care of any pets you are unable to take with you. Have a list of shelters and phone numbers accessible but hidden. If you are ready to leave, keep checking to see if there is space for you and your children. If possible, check to see if the shelters are barrier free for your needs.

9. Ensure that some form of emergency transportation is available upon request. This may be through a trusted friend or community supports, such as Victim Services.
10. Work out a code word that can be used on the phone with a person that is trusted. The code could mean to contact the police or to inform them that you are leaving. It may also be important to develop signals or codes for neighbours to call the police, such as banging on the floor or wall in case of emergency.
11. Look at options for safe places (i.e. a friend, a neighbour, a relative, motel, or emergency shelter). If you can do so safely, contact the people in advance.
12. Whenever calling a shelter or other resources, phone another number or press several numbers randomly immediately afterwards, so that your partner/caregiver cannot press the redial button and find out whom you were speaking with.
13. Whenever searching the internet for resources (including this web site) remember to delete your web site history so that your partner/caregiver can not view the safety plan, shelter numbers, etc. Deleting your browser's history.
14. If you have a support person that your partner/caregiver is not aware of, keep that person's name and address confidential.

If you have left the abusive situation or relationship, you need to:

1. Call the police immediately if the abusive person tries to contact you.
2. Develop an escape plan and practice with your children.
3. Change your locks, add dead bolts, if possible install motion sensor lights in the yard or install a security system. Ensure all entrances are well lit and keep doors and windows securely locked. Ask for your landlord's assistance if possible.
4. Keep a telephone in a room that locks from the inside. If possible, purchase a cellular phone and keep it nearby (i.e. purse, pocket, etc.) or in an accessible hiding place.
5. Obtain a private or unlisted telephone number. If possible, pre-program emergency numbers (i.e. 911) into the telephone's directory.
6. Consider renting a post office box for mail. Your address may be listed on legal orders and police reports and can be accessed by the abusive person. Develop signals or codes for neighbours and friends to call the police, such as banging on the floor or wall in the case of an emergency.
7. Have a safety plan for the children. Teach your children not to let the abusive person in the home. Prepare the children to respond to the abusive person who comes to their school or day-care centre. If a protection order includes provisions about the children, give a copy to the children's school or childcare facility.

8. If it is not a safe where you live, choose a safe place to go (i.e. trusted friend or relative, motel, emergency shelter, etc.) Check to see which shelters are barrier free for you and if they have accessible support that you require. Do not go to a friend's or relative's house if the abusive person is likely to find you there. This can be dangerous for both you and those trying to assist you.
9. Keep a copy of all protection orders and custody orders with you at all times.
10. Change any appointments the abusive person was aware of (i.e. medical or dental appointments).
11. Shop at different stores and frequent different social spots so that the abusive person will be less to find you.
12. Call the telephone company and ask about "Caller ID"; so that you can identify the telephone number of anyone attempting to call you. Ask that your phone number be blocked, so that if you make the phone call, no one will be able to get your new, unlisted phone number. In some areas, you can press *67 before dialing, which will block your phone number from appearing on the phone you are calling.
13. Review your safety plan monthly.



For assistance contact:

***Delta Police Victim Services
604 940-5019***

***Domestic Violence Helpline/Victimlink BC
1-800-563 0808***

Or visit the following web sites for more information:

www.domesticviolencebc.ca
www.help.endviolence.ca