

# **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SAFETY PLAN**

## **Safety During an Incident**

- Try to be in a room with an exit—a window or a door leading outside. Avoid the kitchen, bathroom, or places near weapons.
- Try to get to a room that has a phone, or have a cell phone handy if possible.
- Develop a code word with your children, family, or friends so they can call 911 or someone safe for you.
- Teach your children how to use the phone and whom to call for help.
- Keep your purse and car keys in the same place so they can be found quickly.
- Tell trusted neighbors to watch for signs of violence so they can call the police.
- Use your own instincts and judgment. The main concern is to protect yourself until you are out of danger.

## **Safety When Preparing to Leave**

- Plan where you will go if you leave your house and how you will get there. Consider trusted family, friends or the domestic violence program in your community.
- Open a savings account in a new bank in your name only.
- Set aside (with friends or at home) an extra set of keys, money, extra clothing, important numbers and paperwork so you can leave quickly.
- Consider getting a pre-paid, private cell phone that your abuser does not know about.

## **Safety With a Restraining Order**

- Consider whether you should obtain a restraining order. Your local domestic violence program can help you with the process. A restraining order can:
  - Order the abuser to stay away from you or your children.
  - Order the abuser to leave your home.
  - Give you temporary custody of your children and order your abuser to pay you temporary child support.
  - Order the police to come to your home while the abuser picks up personal belongings.
  - Order the abuser not to call you at work.
  - Order the abuser to give guns to the police.

### **Safety in Your Home After Separating**

- Change the locks on all doors. Install deadbolts and peepholes.
- Secure all windows and purchase an alarm system if possible.
- Install motion sensor lighting outside the house.
- Inform neighbors that your partner no longer lives with you and to call the police if he/she is seen at your home.

### **Safety Outside Your Home**

- Keep a charged cell phone with you at all times. If you do not have a cell phone, your local domestic violence program can provide you with a cell phone which calls 911 only.
- If you have a restraining order, keep a copy with you at all times. Inform your workplace, family, trusted neighbors and friends about the restraining order.
- Inform your children's school and daycare provider if you have a restraining order and whom you allow to pick up the children.
- Use a variety of routes to go to and from home. Consider changing the stores and bank you frequent.
- Park your car in well-lit, open areas.
- Seek support at your workplace if you are afraid your abuser may try to contact you there. Let your supervisor and co-workers know what the abuser looks like and ask for someone to escort you to and from the building.

### **Your Safety and Emotional Health**

- If you are planning to return to an abusive partner, talk with someone you trust about safety concerns.
- If you have to talk with your partner, find the safest way to do so—through a third party, by mail, or with a third party there.
- Keep a journal. This journal can be used to record restraining order violations or incidents of abuse. Keep the journal away from your partner.
- Attend a domestic violence support group or seek counseling.