

PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

Name: _____ Date: _____

Review date(s): _____

It is very important that your abusive partner not find out about your safety plan. Be sure to keep this document and your safety plan in a safe location unknown to the abuser.

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I can plan and think about how to respond to him and how to best keep myself and my children, grandchildren or other dependents (such as older persons or persons with disabilities who may be living with me) safe. I will ensure this safety plan is stored in a safe place.

Step 1: Safety during a violent incident.

I cannot always avoid violent incidents. In order to increase my safety, I can use a variety of different strategies. I can use some or all of the following strategies:

A. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes would you use? Consider your physical stamina and abilities as well as the health status of anyone who may need to leave with you.)

B. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them _____
(place) in order to leave quickly.

C. I can tell _____ and _____
about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.

D. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police in case of an emergency.

E. I will establish and use a code word with my children or my friends so they can call for help.

F. If I have to leave my home, I will go _____.

If I cannot go to the location above, then I can go to _____ or _____.

G. I can also teach some of these strategies to some/all of my children.

H. When I expect we are going to have an argument, I will try to move to a space that is lowest risk, such as _____.
(Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, and kitchen, near weapons or in rooms without access to an outside door.)

Step 2: Safety when preparing to leave.

Women who have experienced domestic violence frequently leave the residence they share with their abusive partner. The level of risk increases for the woman when the abuser believes that she is leaving the relationship. Leaving must be done with a careful plan in order to ensure safety.

I can use some or all of the following safety strategies:

A. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly.

B. I will keep copies of important documents at _____.

C. I will open a savings account by _____ (date), to increase my independence.

D. If I require immediate financial assistance for basics like food, shelter or medical assistance I can contact the BC Employment and Assistance Program at 1-866-866-0800 to see if I qualify for benefits.

E. The provincial domestic violence helpline number is 1-800-563-0808 (VictimLink BC). VictimLink BC is TTY accessible. Call 604-875-0885; to call collect, dial the Telus Relay Service at 711. I can seek shelter and counselling by calling this helpline as well as get immediate crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I can also contact my local transition house directly at _____.

F. I can keep change for phone calls on me at all times or I can purchase a telephone calling card or get a cell phone. To keep my telephone communications confidential, I must either use coins or a telephone calling card.

G. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

H. I can leave extra clothes with _____.

I. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence. _____ (support worker or friend) has agreed to help me review this plan.

J. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.

K. If I have a disability, I may need to set up an emergency care plan if my abuser is also my caregiver. I can contact _____ to make a plan for an emergency care provider.

Step 3: Safety in my own residence after leaving the abuser.

There are many things that I can do to increase safety at home. It may be impossible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Safety measures I can consider include:

A. I can change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible.

B. I can replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors.

C. I can install security systems including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an alarm system, etc.

D. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows if I am physically able.

E. I can install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment.

F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my house.

G. I can contact _____ to help with purchasing these items and _____ to help with installing.

H. I will teach my children how to use the telephone to make a collect call to me and to _____ (friend/family member/other) in the event that my partner takes the children.

I. I will teach my children how to not disclose our address and phone number to: the abuser and the abusers family/friends including _____, _____, _____, and others including _____, _____, and _____.

J. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my partner/ex-partner is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:

_____ (school),
_____ (day care),
_____ (babysitter),
_____ (teacher),
and _____ (others).

K. If my child goes missing I will call the police. I can also contact Child Find BC at 1-888-689-3463 and/or MissingKids.ca at 1-866-KID-TIPS (543-8477) to help me.

L. I can inform _____ (neighbours), and _____ (friends) that my partner no longer resides with me and they should call the police if my partner is observed near my residence.

M. If I need to call the police, I will give them the following information about the abuser: his birth date _____, his physical description including height _____, weight _____, hair colour _____, facial hair _____, tattoos and/or scars _____, the type of vehicle he drives _____, and his license plate number _____.

N. I can take steps to assure the confidentiality of certain documents by using a PO Box or alternate address, or setting up a password with certain institutions to assure only I can access my personal information. The documents I will change include: _____ bills, _____ utilities, _____ car registration, _____ taxes, and _____ bank accounts.

Step 4: Safety with a protection order.

I recognize that I may need to ask the police and the courts to enforce my protection order. The following are some steps that I can take to help the enforcement of my protection order:

A. If I have any questions about protection orders, or how I can get one, I will contact _____.

B. I will keep my protection order _____ (location).
(Always keep it on or near your person. If you change your purse, your protection order is the first thing that should go in.)

C. British Columbia has a Protection Order Registry (POR) that all police departments can access to confirm a protection order within minutes. I can check to make sure that my order is in the registry by calling VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-0808.

D. I will inform my employer, my closest friend and _____ and _____ that I have a protection order in effect.

E. If my partner destroys my protection order, I can get another copy from the courthouse located at _____.

F. If my partner violates the protection order, I can call the police and report a violation. I can also contact my lawyer and/or call my support worker.

K. I will inform and provide a copy of my protection order to people who have contact with my children. The people I will inform about my protection order include:

_____ (school),
_____ (daycare),
_____ (babysitter),
_____ (teacher),
and _____ (others).

L. If the abuser is involved in the criminal justice system, I can register with the provincial Victim Safety Unit (VSU) to get ongoing information about the status of the abuser, including whether or not he is in provincial jail, what community he may be in, and what conditions he may have to follow. To register for the victim notification services I can contact the VSU at 1-877-315-8822.

Step 5: Safety at work and in public.

Women who have experienced domestic violence must decide if and when to tell others about the violence and that they may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and co-workers can help.

You should consider carefully which people are supportive and helpful.

I might do any or all of the following:

A. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor and _____ at work of my situation.

B. I can ask _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.

C. When leaving work, I can _____
_____.

D. When driving home if problems occur, I can _____
_____.

E. If I use public transit, I can _____
_____.

F. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls and shop at hours that are different than those that I used when residing with the abuser.

G. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with the abuser.

H. I can also _____.

Step 6: Safety and drug or alcohol use.

If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with the abuser, I can enhance my safety by doing some or all of the following:

A. If I am going to use, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are supportive.

B. I can also _____.

C. If my partner is using, I can _____ and I might also _____.

D. To safeguard my children, I will _____ and _____.

Step 7: Safety and my emotional health.

The experience of domestic violence is exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of moving forward takes much courage and energy.

To conserve my emotional energy and resources, I can do some of the following:

A. If I feel down and want to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can

_____.

B. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can

_____.

C. I can tell myself - " _____ " - whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.

D. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.

E. I can call _____ and _____ for support.

F. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____, _____ and _____.

G. I can attend workshops and support groups or _____, _____ or _____ to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people.

Step 8: Items to take when leaving.

If you leave your abusive partner it is important to take certain items with you. You may also give extra copies of documents and an extra set of clothing to a friend just in case you have to leave quickly.

Items with an asterisk (*) on the following list are the most important to take. If there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home. These items might best be placed in one location, so that if you have to leave in a hurry, you can grab them quickly. Check off items on this list as you make your plans.

When I leave, I should take the following items for myself and my children:

* Birth certificates	* Social Insurance Card (SIN Card)
* Driver's licence and registration	* School and vaccination records
* CareCards (Health Cards)	* Passports
* Money	* Chequebook and Bankbooks
* Debit and Credit Cards	* Transit pass
* Keys – house/car/office	* Medications and prescriptions
* Court orders, protection orders and custody documentation	* Citizenship or immigration documents or Certificate of Indian Status
* Work permits	Medical records
Lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage papers	Assistive devices (i.e. glasses, dentures, walkers, canes, hearing aids)
Insurance papers (car, home, health)	Address/telephone book
Divorce papers, marriage certificate	Children's favourite toys and/or blanket
Pictures of abuser and children/grandchildren	Valuable or sentimental items such as jewellery

Contact information I need to know:

In the event of an emergency I will immediately call 911 or police.

If I need immediate crisis support or a referral to a program or service I can contact VictimLink BC at 1-800-563-0808 anytime of the day or night.

I can fill out the table below with service providers in my community that can help me.

Service Provider	Contact Person	Phone Number and/or Email Address

This resource was adapted as part of the Online Domestic Violence Safety Planning Training course co-funded by BC Housing and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Government of British Columbia.

Adapted with permission from the U.S. based National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), www.nnedv.org.