

Safety Strategies for Battered Women and Their Children

If You are Living in a Battering Situation

- Be prepared to call 911 anytime.
- Keep a 24-hour crisis line number with you.
- Talk to a domestic violence agency (*under emergency numbers) about your situation to find out what your options are.
- Tell someone you trust (a friend, a neighbor) about your situation. Arrange a signal to let them know when you need help.
- Plan where you can go to be safe. Options for places to stay include friends, relatives, neighbors, domestic violence agency shelters, clergy, and the police.
- If you can, stay clean and sober, this will help you make safer decisions.

Developing an Escape Plan

- Figure out other ways out of the house in case doors are blocked.
- Keep a spare set of house and car keys in a safe place.
- Keep important papers in a safe place where you can get them quickly, or with a friend. This may include: drivers license, social security cards, immigration papers, medical insurance and records, birth certificates, school papers and bank books and credit cards.
- Keep a bag packed with spare clothing money, medicine, diapers, formula and emergency food. (A laundry bag can be inconspicuous).
- Tell someone you trust about your situation and your plan.
- Keep change for pay phones.
- Choose a safe time to leave. When your abuser is at work or out for the night. If you have to return to the house to get your things and you are afraid your batterer will be there, you can ask the local police to protect you. This is called a "civil standby".

To Stay Safe Where You Are

- Consider getting a Restraining Order. This is a legal paper authorized by a judge to keep someone from being near you physically, telephoning, or harassing you. You can get help filling out forms from a domestic violence agency (*under emergency numbers). Your local police may be able to give you an Emergency Protective Order, which is good for 5 working days.
- Change the locks on your doors if the abuser has keys.
- Consider changing your telephone number (the first time is free).
- Let your neighbors know what is going on and how you want them to

help. If they see the batterer near your house, do you want them to call the police? Let you know? Confront the batterer?

- Consider having friends stay with you or go with you when you leave home. If the abuser follows you on the street, you can go into stores and ask for help.

Your Children

- Plan a safe place for your children to go if violence occurs: a room with a lock, a neighbor's house. Reassure them that their job is to stay safe, not to protect you.
- Limit what you tell them if they can be forced or bribed by the abuser to tell.
- If necessary and only if safe (i.e., the batterer does not have access) arrange for family or friends to have the children for a few days.
- Teach your children how to use the telephone to call 911 in an emergency. If you don't have a phone, tell them to use a safe neighbor or friend's phone.
- Teach them their telephone number, address, their full name and your full name.
- Consider having them receive counseling (Parents Center, Youth Services, Domestic Violence Agencies can give referrals).
- Tell your children's school, daycare workers, babysitters, and the children themselves how you want them to respond if the abuser attempts to contact them. You may need a Restraining Order to limit access.