

Staying Safe After You Leave An Abuser

Recommendations for protecting yourself and your family while establishing independence

Utilize Restraining Orders

- Keep a certified copy of your restraining order with you at all times.
- Inform friends, neighbors and employers that you have a restraining order in effect.
- Give copies of the restraining order to employers, neighbors, and schools, along with a picture of the offender.
- Call law enforcement to enforce the order if necessary.

Protect Your Contact Info

- Change your phone number and request your new number be unlisted. Be careful who you share the new number with, and screen unfamiliar numbers.
- Protect your mail. If you don't want a PO Box, check your mail every day, and shred mail with identifying information (bank statements, pre-approved credit cards or appointments)
- Send outgoing mail from the post office instead of your home.

Adjust Your Routine

- Change your work hours (if possible) and usual route to and from work.
- Change the route taken to transport children to and from school.
- Alert school authorities of the situation.
- Consider changing your children's schools.
- Reschedule appointments that the offender is aware of.
- Use different stores and frequent different social spots.

Protect Your Home

- Change your locks, even if they have returned the key.
- Check all window locks and ensure they are locked. (Even on the second floor of your home)
- Install an alarm system and cameras if possible.
- Keep the outside of your house well lit.
- Trim bushes, trees, and other shrubbery to eliminate blind spots.
- Replace wooden doors with steel or metal doors.
- Install a motion sensitive lighting system.



Establish Support Systems

- Alert neighbors and request that they call the police if they feel you may be in danger.
- Talk to trusted people about the violence.
- Tell people you work with about the situation and have your calls screened by one receptionist if possible.
- Tell people who take care of your children who can pick them up. Explain your situation to them and provide them with a copy of the restraining order, if you have one.

