

# **Community Legal Aid**

A non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in central northeast Ohio



[www.communitylegalaid.org](http://www.communitylegalaid.org)

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## **Domestic Violence Safety Plan**

### **Safety During an Explosive Incident**

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area with an exit and not in the bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near weapons.
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator or stairs would be best.
- Have a packed bag ready and keep it in a secret but accessible place so you can leave quickly.
- Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends and neighbors when you need the police.
- Decide and plan where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- If the situation is very dangerous, use your own instincts and judgment to keep yourself safe. Call the police as soon as it is safe to do so.

### **Safety When Preparing to Leave**

- Determine who will let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- Always try to take your children with you or make arrangements to leave them with somebody safe.
- Leave money, extra keys, copies of important documents, and clothes with someone you trust.
- Open a savings account in your own name to establish or increase your financial independence.
- Keep the shelter numbers close by and keep change or a calling card with you at all times.
- Review your safety plan with a domestic violence advocate to plan the safest way to leave

your partner.

### **Safety on the Job and in Public**

- At work, decide who you will tell about your situation. This should include office or building security (provide a picture of your partner if possible).
- Arrange to have someone screen your telephone calls if possible.
- Devise a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone escort you to your car or bus. Use a variety of routes to go home, if possible. Think about what you would do if something happened while going home.

### **Safety with a Protection Order**

- When criminal charges are filed against your partner, be sure to let the police and court know that you want a protection order.
- You may qualify to get a “civil protection order” from the Domestic Relations Court. Only this kind of order can give you temporary custody of your children.
- Protection orders don’t last forever – make sure you know when yours expires.
- Keep your protection order with you at all times. Leave extra copies at work, with a friend, in your car, etc.
- Call the police if your partner breaks the protective order.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond right away. Inform family, friends and neighbors that you have a protection order in effect.
- Try to avoid places where your partner might go.

### **Safety in your Home**

- Inform neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see your abuser near your home.
- Rehearse a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your children’s school or day care about who has permission to pick up your children. (Give school authorities a copy of your protection order).
- Change/add locks on your door and windows as soon as possible.
- Change your telephone number.

### **Your Safety & Emotional Health**

- If you are thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, discuss an alternative plan with someone you trust.
- If you have to communicate with your partner, determine the best way to do so.
- Have positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs.
- Plan to attend a support group for at least two weeks to gain support from others and learn

more about yourself and the relationship.

- Decide who you can call freely and openly to give you the support you need.
- Read articles, books and poetry to help you feel stronger.

***ALWAYS REMEMBER*** – *you have the right to feel safe in your relationship. You are not alone. There are agencies that can help you.*

**Columbiana County**

Christina's House  
330-420-0036  
Alliance Area DV Shelter  
330-823-7223

**Mahoning County**

Sojourner House  
330-747-4040  
Alliance Area DV  
Shelter  
330-823-7223

**Stark County**

Domestic Violence  
Project, In.  
Canton 330-453-7233  
Massillon 330-393-  
1565  
Alliance Area DV  
Shelter  
330-823-7223

**Wayne County**

Every Woman's House  
330-263-1020 (24hr  
crisis hotline)  
1-800-686-1122 (toll  
free)  
330-263-6021  
Victim's Assistance  
330-262-2070

**Medina County**

Battered Women's Shelter  
1-877-414-1344 (24hr  
crisis hotline)  
330-723-3900 (crisis)  
330-723-961

**Summit County**

Battered Women's  
Shelter  
1-888-395-4357 (24hr  
crisis hotline)  
330-374-1111 (crisis)  
330-374-0740  
(business)

**Trumbull County**

Someplace Safe  
330-393-1565 or 330-  
393-3003

**Portage County**

Safer Futures  
330-673-2500

## Checklist

What you need to take when you leave:

- Identification
- Driver's license, car title & registration
- Children's birth certificates
- Your birth and marriage certificates
- Money, credit cards, ATM card, telephone calling card
- Protection order
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed
- Checkbooks, bank books & withdrawal slips
- Health insurance or medical card
- Insurance papers
- House and car keys

- Medications or prescripts
- Address book
- Pictures
- Medical records for all family members
- Social security card, for self & children
- Welfare identification
- School records
- Work permits
- Green card/immigration papers
- Passport, for self & children
- Divorce papers, including custody order
- Jewelry
- Children's small toys
- Pets (if you can)
- Other

*This article is meant to give you general information and not to give you specific legal advice.*

*Prepared by Community Legal Aid Services, Inc. Updated May 2012.*

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