

# Planning for Safety

## **Crime Victims Assistance Center, Inc.**

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## **SAFETY AT HOME**

- Make an extra copy of the house/car keys and keep them in a secret place, preferably outside your home. I can keep my purse and car keys ready and put them (location) \_\_\_\_\_ in order to leave quickly.
- Tell \_\_\_\_\_ (family member, friend, neighbor or co-worker) about the violence and request they call the police if any suspicions arise.
- Teach your children how to call the police if they feel they are in danger. (911)
- Teach your children to be safe by developing their own plan (i.e. stay in their bedroom during arguments, leave the house and go to a neighbor's/friend's house, call 911 and/or tell a relative).
- Develop a code word or signal with your children, friends, and/or neighbors so they can call for help. Our code word and/or signal is \_\_\_\_\_.
- During an argument, try to avoid rooms with no outside door or those containing potential weapons.
- Call the police (911) and if possible, get an automatic dial or cellular phone. CVAC can provide you with a 911 capable cell phone for free.
- If you have to leave, identify where you can go \_\_\_\_\_.

## **SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE**

- Save a little money each week and put it in a place only you know about (secure & hidden).
- Open your own savings account for emergencies in a different bank. *\*Make sure bank statements are mailed somewhere else.\**
- Locate the closest telephone to your house. If it is a pay phone, always have change available in the house or hidden outside.
- Identify the domestic violence shelter closest to your house and have the phone number close at hand (or memorize it).
- Arrange for a safe place to stay anytime of the day or night.
- Pack some personal belongings for you and your children such as clothing, favorite toys, medicine, personal hygiene products, important addresses and phone numbers, jewelry, pictures and possessions of sentimental value and place them in a safe place (with friends, family or at work).

- Gather and organize important papers and documents (marriage license, birth certificates, passports, social security cards, immunization records, insurance cards, bank statements, deeds and contracts related to property, car title, etc.) and put them in a place you can easily get to.
- Inform babysitters, school professionals, medical facilities, parents of your child's friends, etc. that the child is not to leave with the abuser.
- Rehearse your escape plan and, if appropriate, practice it with your children.
- Change ALL passwords and pin numbers for your cell phone, e-mail, voicemail, online banking, and social networks.

## **SAFETY WHILE LIVING ALONE**

- Change the locks on doors and windows.
- Install security mechanisms, such as window locks, better lighting, window locks, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers.
- In rural areas where only the mailbox may be visible from the street, cover the box with brightly colored paper or paint so that police can more easily locate the home.
- Obtain an Order of Protection (you will need a police report), keep it with you at all times. Even if you have left the state where the order was originally granted, the unexpired order is valid in any state in the country.
- Call the police if your abuser violates the Order of Protection.
- Minimize the use of cordless phones or baby monitors. These devices are notoriously easy to crack.
- Get a private mailbox (PO box) in order to minimize the amount of people with your physical address.

## **SAFETY AT WORK**

- Decide who at work you will tell. This should include security personnel (or the person at the front desk). Provide a photo of the perpetrator to be used for identification.
- If you have an Order of Protection, you may want to make sure that your employer and/or security at your job has a copy.
- Arrange to have someone screen your phone calls if possible.
- When you leave work, have someone escort you to your car. Use different routes to go home from work.
- Also vary the times, and use different routes to go places you visit on a regular basis, such as church, the grocery store, school, etc.

## **DIGITAL SAFETY PLANNING**

*Technology can be very helpful, but it is important to think about how it may be used against you!*

### **Things to consider:**

- What kind of phone do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you have wireless or internet access from home? **Yes/No**

- How comfortable is your partner using different types of technology? (scale of 1-10) \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you ever felt like your partner knows too much about your day to day activities? **Yes/No**  
*\*Trust your instincts! It is always possible that your email, text messages, calendar, etc. are being monitored. \**
- Does your partner have access to your e-mail & social networking accounts? **Yes/No**
- Please check the social networking services in which you are currently active:  
 Facebook    Instagram    Tinder    Snapchat    Other (list below)  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you utilize privacy settings in all of your social networks? **Yes/No**
- Does your partner have access to your e-mail or cell phone? **Yes/No**

**Discussion Points:**

1. Does the person monitoring you seem to know where you go, even when you don't have your cell phone? **Yes/No**
  2. What does the person (perpetrator) seem to know?
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1. Has the person monitoring you, or someone they know, had access to your cell phone? **Yes/No**
2. Does the person have access to your wireless carrier's account? **Yes/No**
3. Are you using location-based apps on your phone? (If possible, check and see) **Yes/No**
4. Are your friends or family using social media and sharing your location? **Yes/No**
5. Do you feel like you know how to change your security settings? **Yes/No**
6. Do you notice unusual activity on your phone? **Yes/No**

*\*Excessive battery drain on your phone or a spike in data usage can be an indicator that additional software or spyware is running on your phone. If possible, re-formatting your phone will allow you to change your phone back to factory condition (meaning all previously downloaded apps and programs would be deleted)*

**Safety Tips:**

**General tech safety strategies:**

- Lock your cell phone with a pass code and don't share the passcode with anyone.
- Consider turning off the GPS on your phone OR leave it on 911 only. Be aware that some phones may limit this capability and some apps will not work with the GPS turned off.
- Some apps will allow you to opt out of it gathering location information; if an app will not give you that option, consider not downloading the app. For apps that do allow you to opt out, turn off the location feature and check regularly to ensure that your preference doesn't get changed during an update.
- If you have apps connected to online accounts on your cell phone, do not stay logged in. **Log off after each use.**

- After checking e-mail you should log off each time (g-mail can follow you from location to location).
- **Turn off the Bluetooth** on your cell phone when it is not in use.
- Check your cell phone account every now and then through your wireless carrier's website to ensure that you know all the features that are running on your phone.
- Run anti-virus and security software on your phone & computer. Some phone software will even list all the programs that are running on your phone.
- Avoid purchasing a "jail-broken" iPhone or "jail-breaking" your iPhone (removing the manufacturer and carrier's restrictions) since these phones are much more vulnerable to spyware and malware

***Strategies if you feel you are being monitored.***

- If you can, replace your current phone.
- You can get a donated phone through CVAC.
- You can purchase a pay-as-you-go phone, one that isn't connected to any accounts that the perpetrator might have access to. Make the purchase with cash to avoid the phone being connected with your personal information.
- If you purchase a new phone with a traditional carrier, considering switching carriers and phone number. Ask that you are the only authorized account holder and check to see what type of notifications you will receive if any features get added or removed.
- Think about your safety when getting rid of the monitored cell phone. *\*\*Some perpetrators may escalate their abusive behavior if they think that the survivor is removing their control and access.\*\**
- If you cannot leave the cell phone but don't want the person monitoring you to know where you are going, you can turn off the phone and take out the battery.
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***Safety strategies for GPS devices.***

- If you feel your location is being monitored, narrow down what might be used. If it is a GPS device that is in the car, you could ask a trusted mechanic or law enforcement to go through the car to see if they can find the device (they can be very small)
- Be thoughtful about identifying and removing the device. Keep in mind that the person monitoring you might also know that you visited a mechanic or law enforcement and may escalate his/her abusive behavior if he/she suspects that you may be removing his/her access and control.
- GPS devices (and hidden cameras) can also be hidden in gifts either to you or to family members. Look through anything that's new or was given as a gift.
- GPS monitoring can be passive or active; if it is passive, the person monitoring will need to extract the data from the GPS device to see where the GPS device traveled. If it is active, then the device is sending out a signal that is communicating where the GPS device is traveling.

**Rise Shelter: (607) 748-5174**

**A New Hope Center: (607) 687-6866**

**CVAC Crisis Line: (607)722-4256**