**Safety Checklist**

\*Keep this list in a safe place \*

*The best safety plan is designed based on the individual survivor’s specific needs and situation. The following list offers suggestions for ways to stay safe or get to safety, but it is up to the survivor to decide what will work best and what may not apply.*

**A Community of Care**

* Let neighbors who you trust know to call 911 if they hear fighting, shouting or noises.
* Have somewhere to go if you need to get out. Keep a separate list of phone numbers of family and friends in case you lose or cannot get to your mobile phone.
* Have your own mobile phone and plan (preferably prepaid) so that you can stay in touch with people and calls can’t be checked from the phone bill or call logs.
* Get an **escape plan** ready for when you feel that things might get out of control.

**Making an escape plan**

* Plan and practice quick emergency exit routes from all the rooms in your house/apt.
* If you are sure your partner will not find it, have a small **escape bag** somewhere with spare keys, important papers, a special toy for the kids and some spare cash in case you need to leave in a hurry. If you need prescription medicines, keep a spare script in your escape bag.
* Leave spare copies of keys, important papers, photocopies of bank cards and credit cards etc. with a family member, friend or someone you trust.
* If you have any mobility issues or disabilities, arrange in advance for a friend to pick you up if you call or text them. Some people use a code word, agreed on in advance. That way you can call even if the perpetrator can hear you.
* If it’s safe, keep a diary of abusive or frightening incidents. This may be helpful in court or if filing for a protective order.

**Collecting useful numbers**

* Consider gathering some useful addresses and numbers like:
  + Local taxi services (accessible taxi services, if you need them).
  + The crisis phone line in your state or county.
  + The address of the local police station.
  + Remember you can always call **1800-33-HAVEN** to be routed to the closest domestic violence service program.

**Safety after separation**

* If you have separated from your partner, get outdoor lights, extra window or door locks, or gates if you can.
* Change your mobile number and have it set on ‘private’.
* Ask government agencies, utilities companies, law firms, doctors, schools etc. to keep your details private.
* Get a PO Box for important mail or keep your home address private.
* Talk to a domestic violence advocate about getting a protection order if you don’t already have one.

**Safety in public or at work**

* Park your car in a busy public place. Avoid underground lots, or if you have to use them, get someone to walk you to your car.
* If you see your partner or ex, get into a public or busy place as soon as possible.
* If you have separated from your partner, ask your boss if you can have calls and visitors screened. If you work in a public space, such as a shopping center, talk to the security staff and show them your ex’s photo.
* If you have separated from your partner, try to change your routines regularly. Where possible, catch different buses or drive different routes, leave home or work at different hours, shop in different places or online.
* If you have a supportive boss or supervisor, consider telling them or security staff of any protection orders that prevent the abuser from coming near your work. Keep a copy of your order at work or in your bag.

**Safety on the Internet**

* Use a public computer (library, community center) or a friend’s computer that your abuser can’t access.
* Change or delete your Facebook account and your kids’ accounts, or review your privacy settings to restrict access. People can accidently give away details of where you are living or where you will be.
* Change your email account. Make it hard to trace – don’t use your name and birth year in the account name.
* Have a computer technician check your computer for spyware or keystroke logging programs.

**Helping kids**

* Help your kids to know when there are warning signs of danger.
* Keep the conversation practical like other safety conversations you might have around natural disaster planning, fire safety, etc.
* Practice emergency escape routes – talk about these at the same time as you talk through a fire or hurricane drill.
* Teach your children that it is not their responsibility to stop the abuser when they are angry or violent.
* Teach your children who they can call or where the can go in an emergency. This includes how to call 911 and ask for the police, and how to give their address.
* Tell schools or childcare centers about the violence, along with school parents you can trust. Give the school or childcare center a copy of your protection order, and a photo of the perpetrator so they know who to look out for.