



**Checklist:**  
What you need to take  
with you when you leave

Identification

- Driver's license or other photo ID
- Social security card
- Birth certificates (all family members)
- Green card or Passport

Financial

- ATM card or credit cards
- Check book or cash
- Other financial information

Legal Papers

- Car title and registration
- Medical records (all family members)
- Copy of protection or restraining order
- Insurance papers
- Benefits or other assistance information
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed
- Custody orders
- Work permits
- Divorce papers or Marriage certificate

Other

- Medications (all family members)
- Cell phone
- House and car keys
- Address book
- Pictures
- Small toys or items for children
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## For More Information

**Contact DSS:**  
Department of Social Services  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501

**Email:** [VictimsServices@state.sd.us](mailto:VictimsServices@state.sd.us)

**Web:** [dss.sd.gov/keyresources/victimservices](http://dss.sd.gov/keyresources/victimservices)

**SD Domestic Abuse Hotline**  
1.800.430.SAFE (7233)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline**  
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)  
1.800.787.3224 (hearing impaired)  
**Web:** [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

Contact a Victims' Services Agency  
near you for more information and  
to see what type of assistance is  
available to you in your situation.

**Web:** [dss.sd.gov/keyresources/victimservices/  
resourcedirectory.aspx](http://dss.sd.gov/keyresources/victimservices/resourcedirectory.aspx)

# Domestic Violence Program

A guide to developing a  
safety plan for victims of  
domestic violence.

**DSS**   
Strong Families - South Dakota's Foundation and Our Future

## Safety During an Explosive Incident

- ✓ If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit and not in the bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near dangerous items.
- ✓ Practice getting out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator or stairwell are best.
- ✓ Have a packed bag ready. Keep it hidden in your home or leave the bag with a friend or family member or even at work, if possible.
- ✓ Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask that they call police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- ✓ Decide on a code word to use with your children, family, friends and neighbors when you need the police.
- ✓ Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- ✓ If an abusive incident seems imminent, trust your own judgment. Sometimes it is best to leave; sometimes it is best to pacify the abuser.

## Safety When Preparing to Leave

*Leaving your batterer is the most dangerous time.*

- ✓ Open a savings account in your own name to establish or increase your independence.
- ✓ Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents and extra clothes with someone you trust so you can leave quickly.
- ✓ Determine who would let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- ✓ Keep the shelter phone number on hand as well as a cell phone for emergency phone calls.
- ✓ Review your safety plan as often as possible in order to plan the safest way to leave your batterer.

## Safety in Your Own Home

- ✓ Change the locks on your doors. Buy additional locks and safety devices to secure your windows.
- ✓ Discuss a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- ✓ Tell your child's school and/or day care provider about who has permission to pick up your child.
- ✓ Tell neighbors and a landlord your partner no longer lives with you and they should call police if they see that person near your home.
- ✓ Never call the abuser from your home. If your abuser has caller I.D., locating your residence can easily be done.
- ✓ Some domestic violence shelters may be able to provide you with a cell phone specifically used to call 911 in case of emergencies.

## Safety with a Protective Order

- ✓ Keep your protective order on you at all times. When changing your purse, this should be the first thing that goes in it.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Tell your family, friends and neighbors that you have a protective order in place.

## Safety on the Job and in Public

- ✓ Decide who to tell at work about your situation. This should include staff security in your office building. If possible, provide a photograph of your batterer.
- ✓ If possible, arrange to have someone screen your phone calls.

- ✓ Prepare a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone walk you to your vehicle or other mode of transportation. Use a variety of routes to go home.

## Safety and Technology

- ✓ Clear your browsing history as frequently or use a public computer if possible.
- ✓ Create a new email account that your abuser is unaware of and make your password something no one will be able to guess.
- ✓ Get a new phone if your current one is provided by your abuser. Try to turn off the GPS location service on the phone.
- ✓ Do a quick search of your name in major search engines (like Google or Yahoo) since they may have links to your contact information.
- ✓ Routinely check both inside and outside of your car for any suspicious objects such as GPS Tracking devices if you think you are being stalked.

## Safety and Emotional Health

- ✓ If you are thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, discuss an alternative plan with someone you trust.
- ✓ Determine the safest method of communication if you have to communicate with your partner.
- ✓ Have positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs.
- ✓ Attend a victims' support group to gain support from others and learn more about yourself and the relationship.
- ✓ Contact a counselor for more support or advice about your particular situation.
- ✓ Contact your local domestic violence victims' services program to receive additional information about a safety plan and planning ahead for certain situations.