

In an Emergency

If you are at home and you are being threatened or attacked:

- Stay away from the kitchen, bathroom, or other small spaces such as closets where the abuser can trap you.
- Get to a phone and call 911 or your local emergency number.
- Leave the house immediately and find a friend you can run to for help.
- Get medical help if you are hurt.
- Call a domestic violence program or shelter at 1.800.799.SAFE and ask them to help you make a safety plan.



Make sure to contact your local domestic violence program at 1.800.799.SAFE. They can help you get legal assistance, housing, and financial support.

How to Make Yourself Safer at Work

- Keep a copy of your court order at work.
- Give a picture of the abuser to security and friends at work.
- Ask everyone who answers phones not to give out any information about your work schedule, location, home address, and phone numbers.
- Ask a security guard to walk you to your car or to the bus.
- If the abuser contacts you at work, save voice mail and e-mail messages.

How to Make Your Children Safer

- Teach them not to get in the middle of a fight, even if they want to help.
- Teach them how to get to safety, to call 911, and to give your address and phone number to the police.
- Give the principal at school or the daycare center a copy of your court order; tell them not to release your children to anyone without talking to you first; use a password so they can be sure it is you on the phone; give them a photo of the abuser.
- Make sure the children know who to tell at school if they see the abuser.
- Make sure that the school knows not to give your address or phone number to anyone.

Produced by:

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims Committee of the Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Fairness

American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence

Safety Tips for You & Your Family



Whether or not you feel able to leave an abuser, there are things you can do to make you and your family safer.

How to Protect Yourself at Home

- Learn where to get help; memorize emergency phone numbers.
- Keep a phone in a room you can lock from the inside; if you can, get a cellular phone that you keep with you at all times.
- If the abuser has moved out, change the locks on your door; get locks on the windows.
- Plan an escape route out of your home; teach it to your children.
- Think about where you would go if you need to escape.
- Ask your neighbors to call the police if they see the abuser at your home.
- Pack a bag with important things you'd need if you had to leave quickly. Include cash, car keys, and information such as: court papers, passport or birth certificates, medical records and medicines, and immigration papers.
- Get an unlisted phone number and block caller ID.
- Use an answering machine; screen the calls.
- Take a good self-defense course.

How to Protect Yourself Outside the Home

- Change your regular travel habits.
- Try to get rides with different people.
- Cancel any bank accounts or credit cards you shared.
- Shop and bank in a different place.
- Keep your court order and emergency numbers with you at all times.
- Keep a cell phone and program it to 911 or other emergency numbers.

Protection from Abuse Orders

You can get a Protection from Abuse Order against a family member or intimate partner who has abused you. In a Protection from Abuse Order, a judge can:

- Order the abuser to stay away from you or your children.
- Order the abuser to leave your home.
- Give you temporary custody of your children and order the abuser to pay temporary child support.
- Order the police to go with you to get your personal belongings.
- Order the abuser to pay you back for things that were damaged or repaired, as well as for your medical expenses.
- Order the abuser not to call you at work.
- Order the abuser to give guns to the police.
- Order the abuser to pick up and return the children at a safe place other than your home.
- Order that visits with the abuser be supervised if the abuser has harmed or threatened the children.

Get a certified copy of the court order and keep it with you at all times. If you have to travel to another state for work or to get away from the abuser, take your protection order with you. It is valid everywhere.

To find out where to file for a Protection from Abuse Order in your area, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline

1.800.799.SAFE (1.800.799.7233)
1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

Criminal Proceedings

- Show the prosecutor your court orders.
- Show the prosecutor medical records about your injuries or pictures if you have them.
- Tell the prosecutor the name of anyone who is helping you such as a victim advocate or lawyer.
- Tell the prosecutor about any witnesses to injuries or abuse.
- Ask the prosecutor to notify you ahead of time if the abuser is getting out of jail.

Be Safe at the Courthouse

- Sit as far away from the abuser as you can.
- Bring a friend or relative with you to wait with you until your case is heard.
- Tell a bailiff or sheriff that you are afraid of the abuser and ask him/her to look out for you.
- When court is over, make sure you have a copy of your court order before you leave.
- Ask the judge or the sheriff to keep the abuser there until you have left the building, or wait until the abuser has left first.
- If you think the abuser is following you when you leave, call the police immediately.

Interpreter Services

If you know that you or someone involved in the case will need a language interpreter or a sign interpreter when you go to court, be sure to contact the court as early as possible and inform them of the language and dialect which you speak.

Servicios de Intérprete

Si usted o alguien involucrado en el caso necesita un intérprete de idioma o intérprete de lenguaje de señas cuando se presente en la corte, asegúrese de contactar a la corte tan pronto como le sea posible y les informe del idioma y dialecto que usted habla.