

# Safety Plan

## Safety during a violent incident:

In order to increase safety during a violent incident, you may use a variety of strategies. Some strategies for you to consider are:

1. What are the possible escape route(s) from my home? What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes could I use?

\_\_\_\_\_

(I will take the time to practise how to get out safely.)

2. Where can I keep my purse/wallet and keys so I can locate them easily if I need to leave in a hurry?

\_\_\_\_\_

(I can also have a second set of keys made in case my partner/ex takes the first set)

3. If it's safe, who could I tell about the violence? I can ask them to call the gardai if they suspect I am in danger.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The code word I will use with my children or other family members if I need to call for help is:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Safe places I can go if I need to leave my home:

To use the phone: \_\_\_\_\_

To stay for a few hours: \_\_\_\_\_

To stay for a few days: \_\_\_\_\_

6. During an abusive incident, it's best to try and avoid places in the house where I may be trapped or where weapons are readily available e.g. the bathroom or kitchen. Bigger rooms with more than one exit may be safer.

Rooms to avoid: \_\_\_\_\_

7. I may need to consider survival skills such as claiming to agree with the abuser even when I don't in order to increase safety. I must be careful if retaliating as this could lead to me being arrested.

8 Calling the gardai.

9. Given my past experience, other protective actions that I have considered or employed are:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Safety planning if you are preparing to leave:

If you're thinking about leaving (or might do in future) these are some protective actions you may wish to consider.

1. It may not be safe to inform my partner that I am leaving.

2. Should I need to leave quickly, I will leave emergency cash, an extra set of house and car keys, and extra clothes with:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. I can keep copies of important documents such as immigration papers or birth certificates with:

\_\_\_\_\_



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4. I can open a savings account to increase my freedom to leave. I should make sure to tell the bank not to send any post to my home address.

5. The local Domestic Abuse Helpline number is:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. I can get legal advice from a solicitor who understands domestic abuse. My local Domestic Abuse Service may be able to recommend someone.

7. I must be careful when using my mobile or home number because my partner or ex might be tracking me. To keep telephone communications confidential, I can use a pay phone, a friend's phone or a pay-as-you-go mobile that my partner or ex is unaware of.

8. These are people that I could ask for assistance with:

Money: \_\_\_\_\_

Childcare: \_\_\_\_\_

Attending appointments: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. If I need to return home to get personal belongings, I may be able to ask the garda for an escort to stand by and keep the peace. To do this, I call my local garda station and ask them to meet me somewhere close to my home. They will stay while I pick up my own and my children's personal belongings.

10. Other protective actions I have considered are:

\_\_\_\_\_

11. When leaving an abusive partner, it's important to take certain items with you. Items with asterisks (\*) are the most important, but if there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the home. Keeping them in one location makes it easier if you need to leave in a hurry.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identification for myself*     | <input type="checkbox"/> School and vaccination records*             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's birth certificates* | <input type="checkbox"/> Bank cards/cheque books/cards*              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any legal papers/files         | <input type="checkbox"/> Any medical records*                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My birth certificate*          | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation papers*                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration papers*            | <input type="checkbox"/> House lease/mortgage/insurance documents*   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport/s*                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license and car ownership details* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money*                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures/photos                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keys-house/car/office*         | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's favourite toys/blankets          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Address book*                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewellery                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medications*                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Items of special sentimental value          |

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12. Telephone Numbers I Need to Know (it may be necessary to keep these telephone numbers hidden, but accessible and/or memorise the numbers):

Local Garda Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Domestic Abuse Help Line (24 hours): \_\_\_\_\_

Solicitor: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety in my own home

The following are some suggestions regarding safety measures in your own home that you may wish to consider (some of these safety measures cost money).

1. If financially possible I could:

- Change the locks on my doors and windows\*\*
- Install a peep hole in the door
- Replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors
- Install window bars and poles to wedge against doors
- Install an electronic alarm system

Purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from second floor windows

Install smoke detectors and purchase fire extinguishers for each floor in my house/apartment

Install a motion sensitive lighting system outside that lights up when a person comes close to my home

Leave the lights on at night and when I am away from home

\*\*You may have to check out the legalities of changing your locks and inform your landlord and others.

2. If I have custody and access issues, I can inform all the people who provide childcare for my children about who has permission to pick up my children and who doesn't.

3. I can give these people copies of the custody and access order to keep with them and a picture of the abusive partner. The people I will inform about pick up permission include:

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Nursery staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Other childcare: \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday school teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Relatives: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. I could inform the following people that I am separated and ask them to call the police if my partner or ex is seen near my residence:

Neighbour: \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord: \_\_\_\_\_

Friend: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety with an Order

You can apply for an Order from the District Court and they are part of the Domestic Violence Act. If granted by the court, these aren't active until served to the respondent. An applicant can apply for an interim order without notice to the respondent, but this is dependent on specific factors, including the timeline of the last incident. However, the respondent (perpetrator) will be given notice of another hearing whereby they have the right to 'respond'/'object to' the order. Orders are part of Civil Law and ONLY become a criminal matter if the perpetrator breaks it. The Court may order that any orders are served by the gardai to the respondent if the court believes the respondent may avoid doing what the order says, or for any other good reason.

## Different types of Interdicts:

1. **Barring order:** this stops the perpetrator from being violent, or threatening to be violent to you and/or your children. This order means that the perpetrator must leave the place where you live together for a certain length of time. It can also stop the perpetrator from following you, communicating with you (including by phone or other technology) or entering the place where you live. The end date of the order is usually stated by the court.

2. **Safety order:** this stops the perpetrator from being violent or threatening to be violent to you and/or your children. This order can also forbid the perpetrator from coming to the place where you live if you do not live together. It can also forbid the perpetrator from following you or communicating with you (including by electronic means). The end date of the order is usually stated by the court.

3. **Collaborative Law:** where a perpetrator has legal guardianship of a child, this law can be used to limit his access to the children (for instance stating where the child should live, what contact he is allowed to have (or not have) with them. The court could also rule that his guardianship can be removed, if there is enough proof that this is in the best interests of the children. Decisions in these cases must be made a Rule of Court in order to be legally binding. A mother can only have her guardianship of children removed if her children are adopted.

4. **Undertaking:** This is essentially a 'promise' to the court by the perpetrator that they won't do anything bad. This happens when either there is not enough evidence to grant an order, and/or the perpetrator objects to it. There is no power of arrest with this however if the perpetrator 'breaks' their promise to the court they are in 'contempt of court'. The applicant must inform the court and likely a non molestation order will then be granted.

The following are some steps that I can take to help support the enforcement of my order.

1. It is important to know the specifics and limitations of the order. I will find out the conditions and what they mean for my safety.
2. I can call the garda station to ensure that the protection order is registered on the garda computer system.



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3. If my ex violates an order, I can call the gardai and report the violation. If the gardai don't help, and depending on the type of order, I can also contact my ex's probation officer, my solicitor and/or my advocate. (It is important to report every violation of the order to the gardai).

4. If the gardai don't help, I can call the Garda Sergeant immediately at the garda station and express my concern. If I have one, I can also contact my advocate, my ex's probation officer, or my solicitor, as well as filing a complaint with the police.

5. I will keep my order document(s) (originals, if possible) in this location:

\_\_\_\_\_

It is beneficial to keep the document(s) on or near me. It may also be helpful to keep a copy in a second safe location.

6. If my partner destroys the interdict paperwork, I can get another copy from the court, my lawyer, or:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. If it's safe to do so, I can inform the following people that I have an interdict in effect:

My employer: \_\_\_\_\_

My friend: \_\_\_\_\_

My family: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety at work and in public

Each woman must decide when or if she will tell others that her partner has abused her and that she may be at continued risk. Friends, family and co-workers may be able to help protect women. Each woman should consider carefully which people to recruit to help secure her safety.

1. If I feel able, I can inform the following people at work of my situation:

My boss: \_\_\_\_\_

The security supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. According to how comfortable and safe I feel, I can ask the following person to help screen my telephone calls at work:

\_\_\_\_\_

It could be of assistance to me if they document these calls

3. If it is comfortable to do so, and I feel it would be supportive to me and my situation, I could discuss the possibility of having my employer call the gardai if I am in danger from my partner or ex.

4. Some safety suggestions regarding arriving or leaving work:

- Let someone know when you'll be home.
- Walk with someone to your car.
- Scan the parking lot.
- If your partner is following you, drive to a place where there are people to support you, e.g. a friend's home, garda station.
- If you are walking, take a route that is populated.
- Take different routes home.
- If you see your partner on the street, try to get to a public place e.g. a shop.

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- You can also call attention to yourself and request help.
- Purchase a personal alarm device.
- You can use different supermarkets/shopping centres and shop at different times than you did before to reduce the risk of contact with your partner or ex.

## Safety and Drug or Alcohol Consumption

Many people consume alcohol or mood-altering drugs. Much of this consumption is legal. Some isn't. In legal situations, disclosing the use of illegal/legal drugs can put a woman at a disadvantage to her abusive partner. In addition, the use of alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from the abusive partner. The use of alcohol or other drugs by the abuser may be used as an excuse for violence.



## Safety and My Emotional Health

Being subjected to abuse by a partner is exhausting and emotionally draining. Survival requires much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to support myself in hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

1. If I have left the relationship and I am experiencing loneliness or manipulative tactics from my abusive partner, I can take care of myself by:

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2. When I have to communicate with my partner in person or by telephone, I can emotionally prepare by:

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3. When I face potentially difficult times like court cases, meetings with solicitors etc., I can prepare by doing the following

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Helplines and organisations for safety planning can be found here: [www.safeireland.ie](http://www.safeireland.ie)

