



Safety Planning Checklist

While the suggestions below are presented as a “checklist,” not every suggestion will be relevant nor safe for each victim. As you would in any supportive services you provide to victims, use the victim’s own knowledge of her/his situation to guide the discussion around safe courses of action.

After gathering information from the officer, establishing rapport with the victim, and reiterating how dangerous her/his situation is (see **Short Conversation Guide**), ask:

1. What are you most concerned about right now?

The victim’s response to this question, coupled with her/his responses to the Lethality Screen, will help you and the victim *work together* to come up with a unique safety plan that factors in the victim’s level of danger and specific safety concerns. **REMEMBER: The safety-plan elaborated in this brief, 10-minute phone-call should primarily focus on the victim’s safety in the next 24 hours.** More intensive, longer-term safety-planning can take place at the follow-up call, and/or when the victim comes in for services.

Also ask:

2. Do you have some place safe to stay for the next 24 hours?

This question will help you tailor a safety plan for victims who would like to remain with the abuser, would like shelter, will be staying with a friend/relative, in a hotel, etc.

3. What do you feel will make staying safe in the next 24 hours difficult?

This question will keep the victim’s unique barriers to safety and access to services at the forefront of your mind throughout the conversation.

	Personal safety	Safety of others	Financial	Legal	Social support	Technology/ privacy
<p>SAFE AND TOGETHER</p> <p>Victims who want to stay with the abuser (but might consider leaving at some point)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare and safely store a bag of important items <input type="checkbox"/> Think about where you could stay for a night if you needed to (if shelter, family, or friends are not an option, think of 24-hour establishments: food, retail) <input type="checkbox"/> (After educating about cycle of violence): Identify your partner's "triggers," and strategies that work to diffuse tension. Employ these strategies when tensions rise. <input type="checkbox"/> Lead arguments into parts of the house with at least one escape route (a door to outside, or an easily open-able window). <input type="checkbox"/> If weapons are in the home, try to hide them (unless hiding them would further jeopardize your safety). <input type="checkbox"/> Make a habit of backing your car into your driveway, and try to always have gas. Keep an extra key to your car with you or easily accessible at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop an emergency plan with your children (teach them to call 911, stay in their room during an argument, teach them "code words," etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Think about a safe place for your pet to stay if need be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Open a bank account in your name, and use the address of a trusted friend. <input type="checkbox"/> Save small, undetectable amounts of money as often as you can. <input type="checkbox"/> Have your workplace siphon portions of your paycheck to a separate account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Explain your program's legal services as relevant to the victim's situation (restraining order, child custody questions, etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Keep a journal of all violent incidents, noting dates, events, and threats made in a safe place. <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph corresponding injuries, property damage or abusive and apology e-mails/text messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider people (friends, relatives, pastors, co-workers, neighbors, etc.) you could tell about the abuse. <input type="checkbox"/> Join a community or faith-based social group. <input type="checkbox"/> Seek relationships that help you feel valued and supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider picking up a 911 cell phone from the DV agency (if available). <i>Try to have a cell phone accessible at all times.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Be aware that settings or posts to social media could allow the abuser to track your movements. <input type="checkbox"/> Use "safe" computers—ones that abusers do not have access to—for Web browsing and private communications. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider changing passcodes and security questions on computers and cell phones. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask law enforcement or a mechanic to perform a search on your vehicle to check for hidden GPS devices. <input type="checkbox"/> Turn Bluetooth and location services settings to "hidden," or "off."
<p>SAFE AND SEPARATE</p> <p>Victims who want to leave their abusers, or who have left and desire to limit or prohibit contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider changing your locks, keeping your windows locked, and installing a security system. <input type="checkbox"/> Change your regular travel habits. Try not to frequent the same stores/businesses you did with the abuser. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the DV agency's Address Confidentiality Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If the exchange of children is necessary, arrange a safe, neutral place, perhaps using a visitation center, and bring someone trusted with you (probe whether other family members could be co-participant in abuse). <input type="checkbox"/> Notify your children's school about a protective order or any special custody arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider speaking with a case manager about financial management, job/vocational training, benefits programs, crime victim's compensation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If you think it would not put you in more danger, <i>strongly</i> consider getting a protective order. <input type="checkbox"/> If you have a protective order, keep it on you at all times and keep a copy with the police, at your children's school, at your work, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider individual/group counseling and case management services through the DV program. 	

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This project was supported by Grant No. 2011-TA-AX-K111 and Grant No. 2013-TA-AX-K003 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.