

Personalized Safety Plan

The following represents my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for further domestic violence. Although I do not have control over my unsafe person's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to them and how to best get myself (and my children) to safety.

Choosing my actions now may help me make quicker decisions in the moment.

Although some of the scenarios listed might not apply to my individual situation, I can complete this document to the best of my ability.

Safety During a Violent Incident

I recognize that during or right before a violent incident I might not be able to think as clearly as when I am planning. The best way to help myself is to practice and plan for what might happen during the violent incident. Below are some ideas of what I can plan for during a violent incident.

1. If I think there is going to be an argument or a violent incident, I will move to _____ (a room without weapons and that might have a door or a window to get outside. Try to avoid areas like the kitchen with knives or the bathroom/other rooms that only have one exit).
2. If I decide to leave, I will _____.
(I will practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells or fire escapes can I use? Try to plan for every room you might be in.)
3. I can keep my purse/wallet and car keys ready and put them _____ in order to leave quickly (make extra keys if possible).
4. I can tell the following people about the violence and request that they call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my home _____.
5. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the fire department.
6. I will use _____ as my code word/phrase/emojis with my children, friends, or family so they can call for help.
7. If I have to leave, I will go _____.
If I can't go there, I can go to _____.
Once I am there, I can conceal my vehicle as much as possible.
8. I can also teach some of these strategies to some or all of my children.
9. I can take self-defense classes. (Information regarding classes is usually available through the police departments, community centers, or local colleges.)
10. I will call ahead and verify that my 9·1·1 system is in place. I will verify that the law enforcement agencies have the exact locations and directions to my residence. I will call and verify the same for my place of employment if applicable.
 - a. You can place a “test” call to 9·1·1 by contacting the 9·1·1 call center and scheduling a test call. For McLennan County, 9·1·1’s call center non-emergency number is: **254-776-8911**

Reminder: You know your unsafe person best and can judge the situation.
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Safety When Preparing to Leave

Leaving an abusive relationship is the most dangerous time for the victim and those around them. The following are some ways that I might plan to keep myself and those around me safe:

1. I will leave money and an extra set of keys with _____ so I can leave quickly. (Cashapp cards can be locked until users are ready to use them if cash is not an available option.)
2. I will keep copies of important documents or keys at _____ (if taking original documents may arouse the suspicion of my unsafe person, I can make photocopies and keep them with a trusted person or in a safety deposit box at a bank).
3. I will open a savings or checking account in my name by _____ to increase my independence.
4. I will obtain a personal loan in my name to establish credit
5. I will obtain a credit card in my own name to establish credit. (I should try to have one to use in emergency situations and at least two gas cards with one that pays for car repairs at a service station. Additionally, I can get a credit card with a large-scale grocery store, like Walmart, to not only build my credit but to have access to everyday goods, groceries, gas, and some of my auto needs.)
6. I will locate all papers regarding insurance coverage of my residence, cars, and family's health so that I can understand them. I will look into the cash value of any life insurance policies and get a better understanding of any pension/retirement plans.
7. I will make an inventory of all assets and liabilities. (I know that accounts listing names separated by "or" are joint and that accounts listing names by "and" require two signatures.)
8. I will get my own post office box. When I'm ready, I will begin forwarding my mail there.
9. I will establish my own transportation by _____.
10. The local domestic violence program's hotline number is 1-800-283-8401. I can seek emergency shelter or information on available outreach services by calling this hotline.
11. I will be cautious about keeping any information about crisis intervention agencies, hotlines, shelters, or counseling dealing with domestic violence at my residence. My unsafe person may become upset upon finding any of this information that may indicate that I plan to leave the relationship. They may attempt to prevent my leaving or retaliate against me.
12. I can obtain a prepaid phone. I understand that my unsafe person may be able to see numbers that I call if they have access to my phone bill. Additionally, I can have a friend allow me to use their phone, though I will be cautious as phones can be traced.
13. If I share my home with my unsafe person, I will be careful in using my phone or computer knowing that my unsafe person can use technology to find out where I call and what sites I visit.
14. I will check with _____ and _____ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.

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15. I can leave extra clothes and personal items with/at _____.
I may start scouting around for a safe storage facility.
16. Other things I can do to increase my independence include: _____
_____.
17. I will sit down and review my safety plan every _____ in order
to plan the safest way to leave my residence. _____ has agreed to
help me review this plan.
18. I will rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children. I can use
a stopwatch to time how long it takes me to enact this plan and adjust according to how
much time I might have.
19. If I have pets and animals in my care, I will make plans for them to be placed with others
I trust to care for them if I am unable to bring them with me. I can leave explicit
instructions to prevent my unsafe person from picking them up or taking them.
20. I will be careful in keeping my paper trail I have begun in documenting the abuse in my
relationship by taking photos of my injuries and collecting written observations from
medical professionals when I seek health care. I can talk with people who are safe about
the abuse that they have witnessed or the injuries they observed about helping me later
on if I choose to use the legal system in pursuing future safety measures. I understand
that if I do choose to use the legal system, these things are very important to create a
paper trail, particularly if I am not reporting the abuse to police. I can also use apps
(SmartSafe+, Calculator#, Positive Pathways, Mental Note) to collect and hide the
evidence that I am collecting.

Items to Think About Taking or Keeping with a Trusted Person:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Cell Phone/Tablets | • Work Permits |
| • ID Card or Driver's License | • Passport |
| • Birth Certificates for Me and My Children | • Weapons |
| • Social Security Cards | • Insurance Papers |
| • School Records | • Jewelry |
| • Medical Records | • Marriage License and any Legal Papers Regarding Divorce, Property, Child Custody, Etc. |
| • Car Title/Registration/Proof of Insurance | • Medications |
| • Credit/Debit Cards | • Financial Documents |
| • Lease/Rental Agreement or Deeds | • Income Tax Returns |
| • Keys – House/Car/Office | • Sentimental Items |
| • Journals or Diaries | • _____ |
| • Photos | • _____ |
| • Children's Favorite Toys and/or Blankets | • _____ |

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Safety with a Protective Order

Having a protective order can deter many unsafe people; however, some unsafe people will not care about my protective order. I recognize that I may have to contact the police and the courts to have my protective order enforced to keep me safe. Even with a protective order, I still need to be aware of my safety. The following are some ways that I further my safety with my protective order:

1. I will keep a copy of my protective order with me at all times. Additionally, I will keep copies of my protective order _____.
2. I will make sure that my protective order is filed with either the District or County Clerk, and I will know how to get a certified copy if needed. If I move to a different county, I will register my protective order with that county and local law enforcement.
3. If I frequently travel to different counties, I will inform those law enforcement agencies that I have a protective order in place.
4. I will inform my employer, close friends, children's schools, and others that I have a protective order in effect, and I will provide them copies when necessary.
5. If my unsafe person destroys my protective order, I can get another copy from the courthouse by going to the office of the County or District Clerk.
6. If my unsafe person violates the protective order, I can call the police and report a violation, contact my attorney, call my advocate, and/or advise the court of the violation by contacting the prosecuting attorney handling the case or the county victim assistance coordinator. I can report ANY violation, and I will follow-up to make sure that each incident is documented.
 - a. I can also record by video or photo any violation of my protective order. I can give this evidence to the police to document the violation, even if I choose not to contact the police in the moment.
7. If the police do not help me in a time of crisis or refuse to respond to a violation of my protective order, I can contact my advocate, the county victim assistance coordinator, or the attorney or prosecutor who handled my case and will file a complaint with the chief of the police department.
8. I can contact a supervising officer of the law enforcement agency that failed to respond in order to file a criminal complaint of the violation that occurred or with the prosecutor's office. I can charge my unsafe person with a violation of the protection order and all the crimes that they commit in violating the order. I can call my advocate or county victim assistance coordinator to help me with this.

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Safety When Going to Court

After having left the unsafe relationship, I may have to attend court date for either charges that I have pressed or child custody hearing. I can prepare myself emotionally with the “Safety and My Emotional Health” section of this safety plan. Additionally, I may use some or all of the below when attending the courthouse.

1. I can arrive to the courthouse early to avoid potential interactions with my unsafe person.
2. I can ask the bailiff to be seated in my court early.
3. I can ask the bailiff to escort me to my car after the hearing/trial to ensure that I get to my car safely. After doing so, I can drive to the police station to ensure that I am not being followed before heading on my way.
4. I can request court accompaniment from the Family Abuse Center (if I am in McLennan, Bosque, Falls, Hill, Limestone, or Freestone counties in Texas. Otherwise, I can check with local domestic violence shelters to see if anyone provides a similar service). I will need to make this request in advance

Victim Assistance Coordinators

County	Name	Phone #	Email
Falls	Jessica Ehlers	254-883-1416	fallscountyvac@co.falls.tx.us
Freestone	Rachael Morris	903-389-3977	rachealm@co.freestone.tx.us
Hill	Katie Cole	254-582-4077	kcole@co.hill.tx.us
Limestone	Glyn Sloan	254-655-1331	glyn.slone@co.limestone.tx.us
McLennan	Ella Davis	254-757-5084	
McLennan	Pam Sellers	254-757-5084	
McLennan	Sandra Hernandez	254-757-5084	
McLennan	Shana Berrington	254-757-5084	
McLennan	Traci Villadevall	254-757-5084	traci.villadevall@co.mclennan.tx.us

The individuals in these positions may have changed since the time of printing

Texas’ Recording Laws (Texas Penal Code Section 16.02 and Section 21.15)

- You can record a conversation that you are a part of without violating wiretapping laws, so long as the other person is also in a “one party consent” state.
- You can record a conversation you are not a part of as long as you have the permission of one of the participants.
- You can record a conversation when in a public setting if those people do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- It is almost always illegal to record a phone call or private conversation you are not a part of if you do not have consent from at least one person in that conversation or could you not naturally overhear the conversation.

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Safety on the Job and in Public

I get to decide who I tell about my experience with domestic violence and my unsafe person. If I believe that my unsafe person to be a continued risk, I will inform my trusted friends, family, and coworkers to help keep me safe. The following are some ways that I can plan for my safety either at my place of work or out in public:

1. I can inform my boss, the security supervisor, and _____ at work of my unsafe person.
2. I can ask _____ to help screen my telephone calls at work.
3. When leaving work, I can _____.
4. I can try to work it out with my employer or supervisor to alternate the time I arrive and depart from work.
5. I can keep my cell phone handy to help ensure my safety as I travel to and from work.
6. If problems occur when driving home, I can _____.
7. If I realize that I am being followed as I am driving, I can go to the local law enforcement station and press the horn continuously for immediate assistance. I can call ahead to notify the police of my situation.
8. If I use public transit, I can _____.
9. I can use different grocery stores and shopping malls to conduct my business and shop at hours that are different than those I used when residing with my unsafe person.
10. I can use a different bank and take care of my banking at hours different from those I used when residing with my unsafe person. I can make sure that the bank understands NOT to let my unsafe person have access to any of my accounts.
11. I can contact all banks and credit card services regarding my situation to ensure my credit safety.
12. I can develop a code word or hand signal to warn friends and family members either to come to my aid when my unsafe person comes around me or to get help by calling the police or others to protect me.
13. I can also _____
_____.

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Safety with Drug and Alcohol Use

Many people in various different cultures use alcohol and many use mood-altering drugs, some of this use is legal and some of it is not. The legal outcomes of using illegal drugs can be very hard on a victim of domestic violence, may hurt parental relationships with one's children, and put the victim at a disadvantage on other legal actions with their unsafe person. Therefore, victims should carefully consider the potential cost of using illegal drugs. The use of alcohol or other drugs can reduce a victim's awareness and ability to act quickly. Use of alcohol or other drugs by the unsafe person can give them an excuse to use violence. If drug or alcohol use has occurred in my relationship with my unsafe person, I can enhance my safety by some or all of the following:

1. If I am going to use or misuse, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
2. I can also _____.
3. If my unsafe person is using, I can _____.
4. I might also _____.
5. To safeguard my children, I might _____.

Safety After Leaving an Unsafe Relationship

I will consider the following ways to increase my safety:

- Changing locks or install additional ones
- Changing passwords on all accounts
- Turning off GPS/location services on all devices
- Making sure all windows and doors are secure
- Having an outside lighting system with motion sensors
- Installing a security system
- Keeping my cell phone easily accessible
- Informing neighbors/friends to call police if unsafe person is seen around residence
- Potentially seeking a protective order
- Giving my workplace a photo of my unsafe person
- Changing store locations or public places that I frequently visit
- Talking to an advocate about how to keep my address confidential, including enrolling in the Address Confidentiality Program, if necessary
- _____
- _____
- _____

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Safety Measures in Protecting My Children

If I choose to leave my relationship with my unsafe person, there may be safety concerns regarding their access to my children. I also understand that my unsafe person's may use the excuse of contact with my child/ren to have contact with me. I understand that without custody agreements or protective orders in place, daycares/schools cannot withhold access of my child from their biological parent (Texas Family Code 151.001).

1. I will consult with an attorney to legally establish clear boundaries in terms of custody and visitation rights of my children.
2. I will give a copy of any protective order to my children's school or daycare, babysitter, and after-school program workers and instruct these individuals how to use this to protect my children.
3. I will teach my children how to use the phone to call me, 9-1-1, or _____ in the event that my unsafe person takes my children. I will always keep a current picture available (and a set of fingerprints for each child if possible).
4. I will tell people who take care of my children which people have permission to pick up my children and that my unsafe person is not permitted to do so. The people I will inform about pick-up permission include:
 - a. School: _____
 - b. Daycare Staff: _____
 - c. Babysitter: _____
 - d. Coach: _____
 - e. Extracurricular Activity Staff Member: _____
 - f. Other: _____
5. I can make use of a code word in order to protect my children making sure that my child knows not to share it with anyone. I can request that the caretaker verify the code word and write down the license plate number of the individual picking up my child.
6. I can enroll my children in self-defense classes that are appropriate for them or an awareness program that addresses how to deal with abusive or uncomfortable behavior.
7. If my unsafe person is allowed to visit with my children, and I am wary of their coming to my home, I will make other arrangements such as transporting the children to and from a neutral, public site for set visitation times.
8. If visitation with my children by my unsafe person is to be supervised, I can check into supervised visitation programs to protect my children.
9. I will develop a network of people that I trust to care for my children if my safety or their safety becomes compromised. These are people that I would rely on to respect my decisions and not allow my unsafe person to influence them into having access to my children.
10. Other things I can do to ensure the safety of my children are _____
_____.

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Safety and My Emotional Health

The experience of being physically and emotionally abused by an unsafe person is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of building a new life for myself takes much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources, and to avoid hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

1. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can _____.
2. When I want to feel love or acceptance, I can _____.
3. When I feel anger about the abuse I experienced, I can _____.
4. When I feel overwhelmed and stressed, I can _____.
5. When I think negative thoughts about myself, I can _____.
6. To prevent myself from falling back into old patterns that will cause harm to me, I plan to _____.
7. When others ask me for help that I cannot give without it causing harm to me, I plan to _____.
8. To care for myself and my children in a loving and accepting way, I will _____.
9. When I have to communicate with my unsafe partner, I can do so by phone or email. I can do so in a public place with other people I trust to protect or intervene on my behalf. I can also _____.
10. I can try to use "I can..." statements with myself to be assertive with others.
11. I can tell myself _____ whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
12. I can read _____ to help me feel stronger.
13. I can call _____, _____, and _____ as other resources to be of support to me.
14. Other things I can do to help me feel stronger are _____, _____, and _____.
15. I can attend workshops and support groups to gain support and strengthen my relationships with other people. Some support groups in my area are _____.
16. I can exercise, take up a sport, or participate in self-defense classes to improve my self-esteem and confidence in interacting with others.
17. I can continue or establish new social relationships or participate in activities outside of home or work. I can go back to school or build on my education. I will not allow myself to become isolated.
18. I can create a space that feels safe and accepting for me and fill it with things that make me feel stronger and more at peace.

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Safety and Technology

Technology is an ever-growing part of my daily life. It can also be another way for my unsafe person to get in contact with me, track me, or control me. The following are some ways that I can further protect myself when it comes to technology:

1. I can create a log of all experiences of technology-facilitated violence, including information such as the time, date, unsafe person, evidence gathered, and other useful information.
 - a. I can take screenshots or recordings of the abuse.
 - b. I can keep the original emails, texts, pictures, etc. as they contain metadata that can be useful later on.
 - c. If the abuse was posted by someone else, I can capture it before they have a chance to delete it.
 - d. I can store copies of the evidence in a secure location and have it backed up in at least one more location along with having printed and electronic copies.
2. I will make a list of any intimate images or videos that may exist.
 - a. If it is safe to do so, I will ask my unsafe person to delete the images or let them know that there is no consent to share them and then document this exchange.
 - b. I will consider alerting family, friends, and coworkers who may receive the images to reduce harm.
 - c. If the image or video has been shared without my consent I can see Cyber Civil Rights Initiative to get content taken off the internet:
<https://www.cybercivilright.org/online-removal/>
3. I can set up a Google alert for my name to alert me if my name is mentioned online.
4. I will make note of all devices and accounts that my unsafe person has access to and consider changing passwords/locks on these devices – including my home Wi-Fi.
5. I can make alternate accounts that my unsafe person will not have access to.
6. I can check “Account History” on Gmail to see if any unusual IP address or device has been used for my account.
7. I will consider changing passwords into unique passphrases that my unsafe person would not be able to guess (a passphrase is a sentence that is easy to remember but would not be easy to guess – adding symbols or numbers for letters:
P@\$phras\$e\$@reH@rdT00Gues\$)
8. I will not use the same password or passphrase for every account.
9. I will sign out of accounts when I am not using them.
10. I will not use social media accounts to sign into other accounts (“Sign in with Facebook” or “Sign in with Google”).
11. I will consider blocking or unfriending my unsafe person (and other people who support my unsafe person) on my devices and accounts (after ensuring that I have collected all evidence on those accounts before doing so).
 - a. I will consider whether doing so will escalate the situation.

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12. I will avoid posting images with my face, identifying marks (house numbers or license plates), or places (buildings or landmarks) that are identifiable.
 - a. Additionally, I can check to see if my picture's metadata has information I do not want to share and remove it if so.
13. I will cover the cameras on all of my devices when I am not using them.
14. I can use a different device or computer to search for information (the library or a trusted friend).
15. I can selectively delete internet search history or consider using "Incognito" options so the search history is not being recorded.
16. I will consider making my social media private or other privacy setting to make information harder to get.
17. I will turn off location functions on my devices when not in use and delete previously stored location histories.
18. I will search my belongings for GPS tracking devices or other recording devices, including examining any gifts or unusual items in my home.
19. I will look through my devices and delete any unfamiliar apps.
20. I can have law enforcement or an IT specialist check my device for spyware.
 - a. Signs that I might have spyware on my device:
 - i. Device running slowly
 - ii. Battery draining quickly
 - iii. Data being used up
 - iv. Device getting hot
 - v. Device lighting up when not in use
 - vi. Clicks or odd sounds on calls
 - vii. Takes a long time to shut down

How to take computer screenshots:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTTcGIzeJwA&ab_channel=KevinStratvert

How to set up a Google Alert:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhHtHpoRhFY&ab_channel=InternetServicesandSocialNetworksTutorialsfromHowTech

How to check Gmail Account History:

<https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-to-check-if-someone-else-accessed-your-google-account/>

How to check picture metadata:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBrq8gCqzv0&ab_channel=RichardByrne

How to remove picture metadata:

<https://blog.pics.io/how-to-remove-metadata-from-photos/>

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Phone Numbers List:

Organization	Phone Number	Description
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	988	Crisis Hotline
ACH Child and Family Services	817-335-4673	Children and Family Counseling
Cenikor Foundation (Waco)	1-888-236-4567	Rehabilitation Treatment Services
Compassion Waco	254-755-7640	Transitional Housing and Community Resources
Family Abuse Center, Inc.	1-800-283-8401	Domestic Violence Shelter
H.O.P.E.S. Waco	254-732-0482	Early Intervention Services for Children Under Age 5
Love Is Respect	1-866-331-9474	Domestic Violence Hotline and Resources
MCH Family Outreach (Waco)	254-750-1263	Family Preservation Services
Mission Waco	254-753-4900	Specialized Community Programs and Resources
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-7233	Domestic Violence Hotline and Resources
STARRY (Waco)	254-399-6552	Counseling and Parenting Services
Texas Advocacy Project, Inc.	1-800-374-4673	Domestic and Sexual Violence Victim Services
The Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children	888-867-7233	Crime Victim Counseling, Support, and Resources
The Cove	254-224-6095	Youth Homeless Shelter
Trevor Project	1-866-488-7386	LGBTQ+ Suicide Lifeline and Resources
Waco Family Medicine	254-313-4123	Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health Clinic

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Non-Emergency Police Numbers

Bellmead Police Department	254-799-0251
Beverly Hills Police Department	254-752-2584
Bruceville-Eddy Police Department	254-859-5072
Clifton Police Department	254-675-6620
Coolidge Police Department	254-786-4814
Covington Police Department	254-854-3073
Crawford Police Department	254-486-2678
Fairfield Police Department	903-389-3901
Groesbeck Police Department	254-729-3497
Hewitt Police Department	254-666-6272
Hillsboro Police Department	254-582-8406
Hubbard Police Department	254-576-3068
Itasca Police Department	254-687-2020
Kosse Police Department	254-375-2212
Lacy Lakeview Police Department	254-799-2479
Lorena Police Department	254-857-9614
Lott Police Department	254-584-2681
Marlin Police Department	254-883-9255
Mart Police Department	254-876-2462
McGregor Police Department	254-840-2855
Meridian Police Department	254-435-2255
Mexia Police Department	254-562-4140
Moody Police Department	254-853-2581
Oakwood Police Department	903-545-2172
Riesel Police Department	254-757-5222
Robinson Police Department	254-753-4357
Rosebud Police Department	254-583-7919
Teague Police Department	254-739-2553
Thornton Police Department	254-365-6204
Valley Mills Police Department	254-932-6300
Waco Police Department	254-750-7500
Walnut Springs Police Department	254-797-9631
West Police Department	254-826-5311
Whitney Police Department	254-694-2638
Woodway Police Department	254-772-4470
Wortham Police Department	254-765-3042

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