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

**IN AN EMERGENCY**

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

* **Stay away from the kitchen** (the abuser can find weapons, such as knives, there)
* **Stay away from bathrooms**, closets or small spaces where the abuse can trap you
* **Get to a room with a phone** to call for help; lock the abuser outside if you can
* **Call 911** (or your local emergency number) **right away for help**
* Think about a neighbor or friend you can run to for help
* When a police officer comes, tell him what happened; **get his name and badge number**
* **Get medical help** if you are hurt
* **Take pictures** of bruises or injuries
* **Call a domestic violence program or shelter;** ask them to help you make a safety plan

**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 house; make a signal for them to call the police, for example, a shade is pulled down or a light is on
* **Pack a bag** with important things you would need if you had to leave quickly; put in a safe place, or give it to a friend or relative you trust
* Include **cash, car keys and important documents**
* **Get a new and unlisted phone number**/ screen calls
* **Take a self**-**defense course**

**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF**

**OUTSIDE THE HOME**

* Try to **get rides with different people**
* **Shop and bank at different places**
* **Cancel any bank accounts** or credit cards you shared; open new accounts at a different bank
* **Keep your court order and emergency numbers with you at all times**
* **Keep a cell phone** and program it to 911 (or other emergence numbers)

**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, to give your address and phone number to the police
* **Teach them who to call for help**
* **Tell them to stay out of the kitchen**
* **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
* **Change your regular travel habits**

**HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF**

**SAFER AT WORK**

* Give a **picture of the abuser to security** and friends at work
* **Tell your supervisors** – see if they can make it harder for the abuser to find you
* Don’t go to lunch alone
* Ask a security guard or friend to walk you to your car or to the bus
* If the abuser calls you at work, **save voice mails** and save e-mails

**USE THE LAW TO HELP YOU**

**Protection and Custody Orders**

* **Ask** your local domestic violence shelter’s legal advocate to **assist you with filing any court orders**
* **Get a certified copy** of the court order
* **Keep the court order with you AT ALL TIMES**

**In most places, the 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 you temporary child support**
* **Order the police to come to your home** while the abuser picks up personal belongings
* **Give you possession of the car,** furniture and other belongings
* **Order the abuser to go to a batterers’ intervention program**
* **Order the abuser not to call you at work**
* **Order the abuser to give guns to the police**

**If you are worried about any of the following, make sure you:**

* **Ask the judge** to order the abuser to **pick up and return the children** at the police station or some other safe place
* Ask that any **visits the abuser is permitted are at very specific times** so the police will know by reading the court order if the abuser is there at the wrong time
* **Tell the judge** if theabuser has harmed or threatened the children; ask that visits be supervised; think about who could do that for you

**During your visit with the prosecutor:**

* **Show** the prosecutor your **court orders**
* **Show** the prosecutorany **medical records** about your injuries or **pictures**
* **Tell the prosecutor the name of anyone who is helping you (a victim advocate or a 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; you don’t have to look at or talk to the abuser; you don’t have to talk to the abuser’s family or friends if they are there
* **Bring a friend or relative** 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
* Make sure you **have your court order before you leave**
* Ask the judge or the sheriff to **keep the abuser there** for a while when court is over; leave quickly
* If you think the abuser is following you when you leave, call the police immediately
* **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**

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Diane Peppler

Resource Center

Safety Planning for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

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**24 HOUR HOTLINE**

**906-635-0566**

**1-800-882-1515**

**P.O. Box 698**

**Sault Ste. Marie MI, 49783**

[**www.dprcenter.org**](http://www.dprcenter.org)

**OUTREACH OFFICES**

**LUCE 906-293-4853**

**MACKINAC 906-643-0498**