

Checklist

Important Items to

Take When You Leave

Take When You Leave

Identification

- Driver's License
- Birth Certificate
- Children's Birth Certificates
- Social Security Cards

Financial

- Money and/or credit cards (in your name)
- Checking and/or savings account books

Legal Papers

- Protective Order
- Lease, rental agreement and house deed
- Car registration and insurance papers
- Health and life insurance papers
- Medical records for you and your children
- School records
- Work permits/Green Card/Visa
- Passport
- Divorce and custody papers
- Marriage license

Other

- Medications
- House and car keys
- Valuable jewelry
- Address book
- Pictures and sentimental items
- Change of clothes for you and your children
- Other

RICARDO RODRIGUEZ JR.

CRIMINAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY

- **Victims Unit**

100 E. Cano, 2nd Floor

Edinburg, TX 78539

(956) 292-7616

- **Protective Order Assistance**

(956)292-7613

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY) for the Deaf

- **Texas Department of Family and**

Protective Services

Abuse/Neglect Hotline

1-800-252-5400

- **Domestic Violence Shelters in the Rio Grande Valley Region**

Mujeres Unidas (McAllen, TX)

1-800-580-4879

Family Crisis Center (Harlingen, TX)

1-866-423-9304

Friendship of Women (Brownsville, TX)

956-544-0849

Ricardo Rodriguez Jr.
Criminal District Attorney
VICTIMS UNIT

Personal Safety Plan
Taking Precautions And
Making Plans To Stay Safe



100 E. Cano St.
Edinburg, TX 78539
TEL:(956) 292-7616
www.co.hidalgo.tx.us

Safety During an Explosive Incident

- A. If you feel an argument may be about to occur, try to move to a place that has one or more exits. Try to avoid being in a bathroom, kitchen or room that may contain weapons.
- B. Practice exiting your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator, or stairwell to use.
- C. Pack a bag, and leave it at a friend's or relative's house.
- D. Identify one or more neighbors you can tell about the violence, and ask them to call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- E. Develop an age-appropriate safety plan with your children.
- F. Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends and neighbors when you need someone to call the police.
- G. Decide and plan where you will go if you ever have to leave home.
- H. Trust your instincts and your judgment. In some dangerous situations, you may choose to give the abuser what he/she wants to calm him/her down. Only you can decide the best way to protect yourself and your children in each situation.

Safety with Technology

- A. Create a new email account.
- B. Your abuser may be monitoring activity on your computer. If possible, use a safe computer, which may be located at:
 - a public library
 - a community center
 - an internet cafe.
- C. Change passwords and PIN numbers frequently.
- D. Your abuser could use your old cell phone bill to see who you've been calling or use the GPS in your cell phone to track your location. To avoid these risks, use a donated or prepaid cell phone to make plans. Contact your local domestic violence program to see if they could provide you with a donated phone.
- E. Search your name on the major internet search engines to see if the results have links to your contact info.

Safety When Preparing To Leave

Leaving an abusive relationship can be a dangerous process, so it's important to take steps to insure your safety.

- A. It's best not to tell the person abusing you that you are planning to leave. Make your plans in secret and leave when he/she isn't home.
- B. Open a checking or savings account in your own name.
- C. Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents and extra clothes and medicine in a safe place or with someone you trust.
- D. Get your own post office box.
- E. Identify a safe place where you can go and, if possible, someone who can loan you money.
- F. Always keep the shelter phone number, a calling card, or change for emergency phone calls with you.
- G. If you have pets, make arrangements for them to be cared for in a safe place. Some animal shelters will board domestic violence survivors' pets for free. You can find an online directory of participating pet shelters at Humane Society Safe Haven for Pets. www.hsus.org/ace/20663

Safety With A Protective Order

- A. If you or your children have been threatened or assaulted, you can request a protective order. For information on how to apply for a Protective Order, please call the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office—Civil Division (956) 292-7613.
- B. Keep a copy of your protective order with you. Also keep a copy in your car, home, work and your children's school.
- C. Call the police if your abuser violates the protective order.
- D. Inform family members, friends and neighbors that you have a protective order against your abuser.

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Safety In Your Own Residence

- A. If you stay in your home, lock windows and change the locks on doors as soon as possible.
- B. Develop a safety plan with your children for times when you are not with them.
- C. Inform your children's school, day care, etc., about who has permission to pick up your children.
- D. Inform neighbors and the landlord that your partner no longer lives with you, and that they should call the police if they see him/her near your home.
- E. Never tell the abuser where you live. Never call the abuser from your home because, he/she may find out where you live.
- F. Request an unlisted/unpublished number from the telephone company.
- G. Notify your utility company of security needs and restrict access to the account by using a password.

Safety On The Job And In Public

- A. Inform someone at work of your situation. Include the security officers at work and provide them with a copy of your protective order and a picture of your abuser.
- B. Have someone screen your telephone calls at work.
- C. Have someone escort you to and from your car, bus or train.
- D. Use a variety of routes to come and go from home.
- E. You can buy an air horn at your local hardware store or order online. If you are in public and the abusive person approaches you, sound the horn to startle him/her and draw attention to yourself.

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