



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Safety Tips For You and Your Family

**IF YOU ARE IN DANGER, CALL 911**  
or your local police emergency number

For Chicago and the surrounding suburbs call WINGS at  
**847-348-3001**

To find out about help in your area, call:  
National Domestic Violence Hotline:  
1-800-799-SAFE  
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

**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 & you are being threatened or attacked:**

- **Stay away from the kitchen** (the abuser can find weapons, like knives, there)
- **Stay away from bathrooms**, closets or small spaces where the abuser can trap you
- **Get to a room with a door** or window to escape
- **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**; get the dispatcher's name
- Think about a neighbor or friend you can run to for help
- If a police officer comes, tell him/her what happened; **get his/her name & 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, if the phone rings twice, a shade is pulled down or a light is on
- **Pack a bag** with important things you'd need if you had to leave quickly; put it in a safe place, or give it to a friend or relative you trust
- Include **cash, car keys & important information** such as: court papers, passport or birth certificates, medical records & medicines, immigration papers
- **Get an unlisted phone number**
- **Block caller ID**
- **Use an answering machine**; screen the calls
- **Take a good self-defense course**

### 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 & 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**

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF OUTSIDE THE HOME

- **Change your regular travel habits**
- Try to **get rides with different people**
- **Shop and bank in a different place**
- **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 & program it to 911 (or other emergency number)**

### HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF SAFER AT WORK

- Keep a copy of your court order 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** to walk you to your car or to the bus
- If the abuser calls you at work, **save voice mail** and save e-mail
- Your employer may be able to help you find community resources

*The American Bar Association (2006) Domestic Violence Safety Plan [on-line] Available at <http://www.abanet.org/tips/dvsafety.html#safetips> (accessed July 10, 2006)*