

# Safety When Preparing to Leave

## Have a safe place to stay

Make sure it is a place that can protect you and your children or grandchildren.

## Call a domestic violence support service

Find out what services and refuges are available as options if you need them. Keep their address and phone number close at hand at all times.

The WASH House and other local services have a small contact card you can use which has lots of helpful numbers for local services. Ask for it next time you are at the WASH.

## Find someone you trust

Leave money, extra keys, copies of important documents and clothing with someone you trust in advance, so you can leave quickly, if necessary.

Important documents might include identification papers, birth certificates, marriage certificate, passports, health and vaccination records, bankbooks, cheque books. See the Emergency Bag Checklist below for a fuller list.

## Open a bank account

Put it in your name only, to increase your independence. Consider a direct deposit from your pay or Centrelink payment into the new account, if safe to do so.

## Have a safety plan

Planning ahead of time will help you to be ready if you have to leave your home quickly. You may not need to use your safety plan but it's useful to be prepared and you will feel safer when you have one. You could make a safety plan yourself or ask someone from a domestic violence service to help you.

Some things to consider in your safety plan are:

- Where will you go if you need to leave quickly — to the police station, a friend or family member's place, a hotel or a refuge?
- How will you get away — car, taxi, public transport, get someone to pick you up?
- Is there someone you can trust that can help you if you need to leave quickly? If there is, let them know about your safety plan and how you would like them to help you if you call.
- How much emergency money do you need? Think about phone calls, transport and the cost of accommodation.

Think about things such as the children, where to go and what to take with you. Make sure you keep your purse and car keys close or have a copy of the key and money hidden where you can access them quickly if needed.



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You will be calmer and more in control under stress if you are aware of the resources available to help you and you have planned ahead. Find out how to contact services you may need, and have an idea of how to get where you plan to go for assistance.

Study and check your plans as often as possible in order to know the safest way to leave your abuser. Tell people you trust in advance what the plans are. Visualise them in your mind and think through any other barriers that may come up that could prevent you from getting away safely.

## Emergency Bag Checklist

- Identification
- Driver's license
- Children's birth certificates
- Your birth certificate
- Money
- Lease, rental agreement, house deed, mortgage papers
- Bank books, credit cards
- Cheque book
- Insurance papers
- House and car keys
- Medications
- Address book
- Photos
- Medical records of all your family members
- Centrelink documents
- School records
- Passport, Visas
- Marriage Certificate, Divorce papers, family law court papers
- Jewellery
- Children's favourite toys
- Clothing