



SAFETY PLANNING WITH PROTECTIVE ORDERS

Steps to take if the abuser has left the home.

Here are some suggestions to try to help keep you safe if the abuser has permanently moved out of the home, either willingly or due to a **protection order**.

- ❖ Change your locks so he can't enter the home with a key. Even if he left his key with you, he may have other copies that you don't know about. If you rent your home, you may likely have to get permission from your landlord first before changing the locks and give a copy of the new key to your landlord.
- ❖ Put dead bolt locks on your door. If you can, replace any wood doors with steel or metal doors. If you rent your home, be sure to get permission from your landlord first before changing the doors.
- ❖ If you have the money, think about installing a security system.
- ❖ Try to make sure that the outside of your house is well-lit. Think about getting a lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to the house (motion-sensitive lights).
- ❖ Keep bushes, trees, and other plants around the house well-trimmed so it's more obvious if someone approaches your home. Trimmed bushes would also make it harder for the abuser to hide in without being seen by a passerby or neighbor.
- ❖ Change your phone number. Ask the telephone company to make your new number unlisted and unpublished.
- ❖ Call the telephone company to request caller ID and to block unlisted numbers. Ask that your phone number be blocked so that if you call someone else no one will learn your new, unlisted number.
- ❖ Explain your situation to any daycare or babysitter, carpool people and the school. If the abuser is not allowed to be near the children, let all these people know this and give the school a copy of the protection order.
- ❖ Keep a certified copy of the protection order with you at all times.
- ❖ Let friends, neighbors and coworkers know that you have a protection order in effect and to let you know if they see the abuser around your home or work. Give them a picture of the abuser if they don't know what he looks like.
- ❖ Most employers are very supportive, be sure they know about your situation and that your protection order covers you at work as well.
- ❖ Remember that you can call law enforcement if the abuser violates the protection order. If you don't have a protection order, you can still call the police if the abuser comes to your home uninvited and you feel in danger.
- ❖ Have your cell carrier check your phone for a tracker and wipe it clean. Take your car to a repair shop and have it swept for tracking device and remove it. This is not just turning off the GPS function. Tracking devices can be placed through the calculator on the phone and placed in your car where you can't see it.

Steps to take if you have left the abuser and relocated to a confidential address

Here are some suggestions to try to help you keep safe and to prevent the abuser from learning where you live if you've moved to a confidential location.

- ❖ State of Colorado has the **Address Confidentiality Program** for victims of abuse. It gives you a legal address for all the things you need to give your address. You can sign up for this program at our office. You can rent a post office box to try to keep your address confidential.
- ❖ Be aware that protection orders can list address. Before filling out your new address on any forms, ask if there is any way to keep your address confidential.
- ❖ Ask the telephone company, utilities company, trash collecting company to keep your address and phone number confidential.
- ❖ Be careful about ever giving out your new address or phone to anyone, even for pizza delivery.
- ❖ Keep a certified copy of your protection order with you at all times.
- ❖ Let the school know about your situation and give them a copy of the protection order.
- ❖ Reschedule all appointments that you had prior to leaving that the abuser may have known about.
- ❖ Take different routes to work and to school. Drop kids off at different school entrance if possible.
- ❖ Find new places to buy groceries, bank, restaurants and any other place you go on a regular basis.
- ❖ Talk to people you trust; that you just left an abusive relationship so that they are on alert if they see anything suspicious around your home.