

Essex District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett

HOW DO I STAY SAFE?

A Safety Plan for
Victims of
Domestic Violence



A MESSAGE FOR YOU

Crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking are different than most others because the offender is often known to the victim. The offender may be aware of the victim's address, phone numbers, and daily habits. Even when the offender is not known to the victim, much information about the victim can be easily obtained through public records and information posted on the Internet.

If you are a victim, I encourage you to speak with a domestic violence advocate to review your safety concerns and your special needs, abilities and cultural issues. I also encourage you to report all suspicious activities to law enforcement authorities. It is particularly important for you to be aware of behaviors that may indicate a higher level of concern and risk for you. Some of the offender's behaviors may include: has threatened homicide or suicide and you believe the threats; owns or has access to guns; is constantly and violently jealous; has choked or strangled or sexually assaulted you; has held you hostage, followed or spied on you.

This brochure may be helpful in developing a plan that will increase the safety of you and your children at home, work, school and when going to court. It is important to remember that a safety plan is never a guarantee of safety. It is a work in progress that you should constantly update.

Do not be afraid to seek help from others to develop a plan that is right for you. I am committed to working together with community members to offer prevention programs and strategies that enhance victim safety and promote offender accountability.



Jonathan W. Blodgett
Essex District Attorney



SAFETY@HOME



SAFETY

- Know how to escape and where you would go if you need to leave quickly
- Pack an emergency bag with important items and papers, an extra set of keys and medications and put them in a safe place
- Keep a log of incidents with date, time and place
- Avoid staying home alone
- Change routines
- Meet the abuser in a public place
- Have a third party relay messages to the abuser

CHILDREN

- Teach them a safety plan and practice it
- Tell them how to escape
- Teach them how to use the phone
- Give them permission to dial 911 in an emergency
- Arrange for a safe exchange for visitation with the abuser

SECURITY

- Change and add locks to doors and windows
- Install a security system
- Install motion sensitive lights

- Tell neighbors, landlord, family and friends about your situation and any restraining orders; create a secret signal so they know you need the police
- Rent a post office box for mail
- Keep new address and phone numbers confidential
- Apply for the Address Confidentiality Program

PHONES AND COMPUTERS

- Keep a cell phone with you at all times
- Program 911 and emergency numbers into all phones
- Get an unlisted number
- Use an answering machine and caller ID to screen calls
- Change computer passwords
- Change email address and remove Facebook and other social networking pages

BANKING

- Cancel shared bank accounts and credit cards
- Change passwords for ATM cards
- Open accounts in a new bank and change direct deposits to a new account
- Keep important banking information in an emergency bag

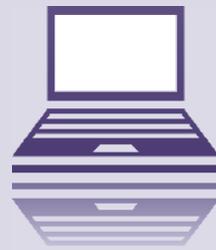
SAFETY@SCHOOL



- Notify authorities at school or daycare of your situation
- Give them a copy of the restraining order
- Give them a photograph of your abuser
- Ask them to keep your address and phone numbers confidential
- Tell them not to release your children to anyone without talking to you first
- Consider changing schools
- Change the route you take to and from school

Give them a copy of the restraining order

SAFETY@WORK



- Inform your employer, supervisor and security of your situation
- Keep a copy of your restraining order with you at all times
- Give security or reception a picture of your abuser
- Change your work hours if possible
- Arrange to have someone screen or record your calls
- Save voicemails and emails from your abuser
- Do not go to lunch or breaks alone
- Ask security or someone to walk you to your vehicle or other transportation
- Always park in a well-lit area and check in and around your car before you get in
- Change your route to and from work

SAFETY@COURT



GOING TO COURT

- Try to get to court at a different time than your abuser to avoid contact on the street or entering the court
- Bring a supportive friend or relative with you or contact a domestic violence advocate to do this
- Ask an advocate or court officer if there is a safe place to wait

AT THE COURT

- Sit as far away from the abuser as possible
- You do not have to look at or talk to the abuser
- You do not have to talk to the abuser's family or friends
- Ask your friend or relative to keep an eye on the surroundings and to help pay attention to safety considerations
- Tell a court officer that you are afraid of the abuser and ask the officer to look out for you
- Try to sit near court officers, security guards, or police officers if you can
- If the abuser or the abuser's friends or relatives are intimidating you, report it to security or the police

LEAVING THE COURT

- Ask the judge or court officer to keep the abuser there so you can safely leave
- If the abuser is not held, either leave before the abuser or wait until the abuser is gone but be aware that the abuser could still be waiting for you
- If you think the abuser is following you when you leave, call police immediately
- Ask a court officer or police officer to walk you out of the courthouse or to your car

*You do not
have to look
at or talk to
the abuser*



IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Address Confidentiality Program

Office of the Secretary of State
617-727-3261
866-SAFE-ADD

Essex District Attorney's Office

Victim Witness Services
978-745-6610

HAWC

Healing Abuse, Working for Change
800-547-1649 (hotline)

Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center

978-388-1888 (hotline)

North Shore Rape Crisis Center

800-922-8772 (hotline)
800-223-5001 – LLAMANOS
(Spanish hotline)

Older Battered Women's Program – Greater Lynn Senior Services

781-599-0110
800-594-5164 (toll free)

SafeLink

877-785-2020 (hotline)

Supportive Care

978-686-1300

Women's Resource Center Program, YWCA Haverhill

978-685-2480

YWCA of Greater Lawrence

978-687-0331
877-509-YWCA (hotline)



*In Case Of
Emergency,
Please Call 911*



www.mass.gov/essexda



Essex District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett
Ten Federal Street | Salem, MA 01970 | 978-745-6610