

Fairhaven Police Department  
Domestic Violence Awareness

**SAFETY DURING AN EXPLOSIVE INCIDENT:**

- If an argument seems unavoidable, try to have it in a room or area that has access to an exit. Avoid the bathroom, kitchen or anywhere near weapons.
- Practice how to get out of your home safely. Identify which doors, windows, elevator or stairs would be best.
- Have a packed bag ready and keep it in a secret but accessible place in order to leave quickly.
- Identify a neighbor you can tell about the violence and ask that they call the police if they hear a disturbance coming from your home.
- Devise a code word to use with your children, family, friends, and neighbors when you need the police.
- Decide and plan for where you will go if you have to leave home (even if you don't think you will need to).
- If the situation is very dangerous, use your own instincts and judgments to keep yourself safe. Call the police as soon as it is safe to do so. (You have the ability to obtain a restraining order at your local court during business hours and through local police during the night and weekends).
- Always remember – **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO BE ABUSED IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP** – Physically, Emotionally or Sexually.

**SAFETY WHEN PREPARING TO LEAVE:**

- Determine who would let you stay with them or lend you some money.
- Always try to take your children with you or make arrangements to leave them with someone safe.
- Leave money, an extra set of keys, copies of important documents and extra clothes with someone you trust.
- Open a savings account in your own name to start to establish or increase your independence. Think of other ways in which you can increase your independence.
- Keep the shelter numbers close at hand and keep change or a calling card with you at all times.
- New Bedford Women's Center: 508-996-3343, Fairhaven Police Department: 508-997-7422.
- **REMEMBER: LEAVING YOUR BATTERER CAN BE THE MOST DANGEROUS TIME.**

**SAFETY IN YOUR HOME:**

- Inform a neighbors and landlord that your partner no longer lives with you and that they should call the police if they see your abuser near your home.
- Rehearse a safety plan with your children for when you are not with them.
- Inform your children's school or daycare about who has permission to pick up your children. (Give them a copy of your restraining order).
- Change/Add locks on your doors and windows as soon as possible. Add a peephole and increase outdoor lighting if possible. Try to borrow obtain or borrow a cellular phone.
- Change your telephone number.

## SAFETY WITH A RESTRAINING ORDER:

- Keep your restraining order with you at all times. Leave extra copies at work, with a friend, in your car, etc...
- Call the police if your partner breaks the protective order.
- Think of alternative ways to keep safe if the police do not respond right away.
- Inform family, friends and neighbors you have a restraining order in effect.
- Try to avoid places in the community where your batterer may frequent.

## SAFETY ON THE JOB AND IN PUBLIC:

- Decide who at work you will inform of your situation. This should include office or building security (provide a picture of your batterer if possible).
- Arrange to have someone screen your telephone calls if possible.
- Devise a safety plan for when you leave work. Have someone escort you to your car, bus, or train. Use a variety of routes to go home if possible. Think about what you would do if something happened while going home.

## YOUR SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH:

- If you are thinking of returning to a potentially abusive situation, discuss an alternative plan with someone you trust.
- If you have to communicate with your partner, determine the safest way to do so.
- Have positive thoughts about yourself and be assertive with others about your needs.
- Plan to attend a support group for at least two weeks to gain support from others and learn more about yourself and the relationship.
- Decide who you can call freely and openly to give you the support you need.
- Read books, articles and poetry to help you feel stronger.

## IF YOU ARE A TEEN IN A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP:

- If things in your relationship don't feel right to you, talk about it with someone you trust.
- Decide which friends, teachers, relatives or police officers you can go to in an emergency.
- Contact a domestic violence advocate in the District Attorney's Office or the police department to learn how to obtain a restraining order and make a safety plan.
- Remember – you should never have to feel afraid in your relationship.
- NO MEANS NO!

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