THE CRIDGE TRANSITION HOUSE FOR WOMEN
SAFETY PLAN

Part A. Creating a Safer Environment
Developed by the PEEL Committee Against Women Abuse, 2006
www.pcawa.org

There are many things a woman can do to increase her safety. It may not be possible to do everything at once, but safety measures can be added step by step. Here are a few suggestions:

1. AT HOME

*If you are living with your abusive partner/spouse:*

- Get your Emergency Escape Plan in order and review it often.
- Create a telephone list with numbers of local police, nearest women’s shelter, assaulted women’s help line, crisis help line, family members, counselors, children’s friends.
- Make arrangements with friends or family so that you can stay with them if necessary.
- Watch for warning signs that the next violent episode might be coming up and make plans for the children to be sent to friends, family etc. (Try to anticipate your partner’s “cycle,” e.g. when the money for alcohol or drugs runs out.)
- Teach the children to let you know when someone is at the door, rather than answering the door themselves.
- Teach your children how to use the telephone (and your cellular phone, if you have one) to contact the police and the fire department.
- Create a code word with your children and/or friends so they know to call for help.
- Teach your children how to make a collect call to you and to a special friend if your partner takes the children.
- Plan your emergency exits, teach your children and know them well.
- Teach your children their own Safety Plan.
If you are not living with your abusive partner/spouse:

- Change the locks on the doors and windows. Install a peephole in the door. Change the locks on your garage and mailbox (note: sometimes a landlord will help with such costs).
- Teach your children to tell you if someone is at the door, and to not answer the door themselves.
- Keep your restraining order with you at all times.
- Make sure that the school, day care, and police have a copy of all court orders, including restraining orders, custody and access orders, as well as a picture of the abusive partner.
- Watch for warnings signs that the next violent episode might be coming up and make plans for the children to be sent to friends, family etc. (Try to anticipate your partner’s “cycle,” e.g. when the money for alcohol or drugs runs out.)
- If you have call display on your phone, be careful about who can get access to the stored numbers (example, last number dialed, etc.).
- Have your telephone number unpublished, as it is harder to track than when it is unlisted. Block your number when calling out.
- Consider deactivating your account or changing your privacy settings on social networking sites such as Facebook.
- Consider getting a cellular phone and preprogram numbers of people to call.
- Contact your local Victim Services to inquire about your eligibility for the Supportlink / D.V.E.R.S. emergency response system program.
- Consider moving your furniture around differently as this is something your partner may not anticipate. It may cause him/her to bump into it and give you warning that he/she is in the house. Also put your kitchen utensils and knife block in the cupboards so they are not as accessible.
- If you live in an apartment, check the floor clearly when getting off the elevator. Look in mirrors and be aware of doorways in hallways. Speak to security, or make an anonymous call, requesting safety in your building.
- Purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from upper floors.
- If you have a balcony, consider putting wire around it.
- Replace wooden doors with steel/metal doors if possible.
- Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers for each floor.
- Consider the advantages of getting a guard dog.
☐ Install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to your house.

☐ Do whatever you can to install security systems, including additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, an electronic system, etc. – anything to provide added security.

2. IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

☐ Tell your neighbours that you would like them to call the police if they hear a fight or screaming in your home.

☐ Tell people who take care of your children (eg., school, daycare, friends) which people have permission to pick them up. Also tell them the names of those who you DO NOT want to pick up your children. Provide photographs if you have them.

☐ Tell people in your neighbourhood that your partner no longer lives with you, and they should call the police if he/she is seen near your home. You may wish to give them a photo and description of him/her and of their car.

☐ Ask your neighbours in advance if they would be willing to look after your children in an emergency.

☐ Hide clothing and your Emergency Escape Plan items at a neighbour’s house.

☐ Use different grocery stores and shopping malls, and shop at hours that are different from when you were living with your abusive partner.

☐ Use a different bank or branch, and take care of your banking at hours different from those you used with your abusive partner.

☐ Change your doctor, dentist and other professional services you would normally use.

☐ Do not put your name in your apartment building directory.

3. AT WORK

Each person must decide for herself if and/or when she will tell others that her partner is abusive and that she may be at risk. Friends, family and co-workers may be able to help protect women. However, each woman should consider carefully which people to ask for help. If you are comfortable, you may choose to do any or all of the following:

☐ Tell your boss, the security supervisor, and other key people or friends at work about your situation.
Ask to have your calls screened at work. It would also help to have these calls documented.

Discuss the possibility of having your employer call the police if you are in danger from your (ex) partner.

When arriving or leaving work:

- let someone know when you’ll be home.
- carry your keys in your hands.
- get a remote or keyless entry car door opener.
- walk with someone to your car.
- scan the parking lot.
- walk around your car, look under the hood and check if anything has been tampered with and check brakes. Remember to keep your car seats forward, so you know if someone is hiding in the car.
- if your partner is following you, drive to a place where there are people to support you, e.g. a friend’s house, police station.
- if you have underground parking, consider parking across the street.
- keep a sign in your car saying “call police”.
- if you are walking, take a route that is populated.
- change the patterns of when you arrive and leave work and the routes you take home.
- if you see your partner on the street, try to get to a public place, e.g. a store.
- if you see your partner on the street, call attention to yourself and request help.