I. Emergency Escape Plan

This section focuses on the things you can do to be better prepared in case you have to leave an abusive situation very quickly. The following is a list of items you should try to hide in a safe place (e.g. at a friend’s or family member’s home, with your lawyer, in a safety deposit box).

a) Take a photocopy of the following items and store in a safe place, away from the originals. Hide the originals someplace else, if you can.
   - passports, birth certificates, immigration papers, status cards for all family members
   - school and vaccination records
   - driver’s license and registration, or government issued photo ID
   - medications, prescriptions, medical records for all family members
   - social assistance information
   - work permits
   - divorce papers, custody documentation, court orders, restraining orders, marriage certificate
   - lease/rental agreement, house deed, mortgage payment book
   - bank books
   - insurance papers
   - address/telephone book
   - picture of spouse/partner
   - health cards for yourself and family members
   - all cards you normally use e.g. credit cards, bank cards, phone, Social Insurance

b) Try to keep all the cards you normally use in your wallet:
   - Social insurance cards
   - Charge cards
   - Phone card
   - Banking cards
   - Health cards
c) Try to keep your wallet and purse handy, and containing the following:
   - car/house/office keys
   - checkbook, bank books/statements
   - driver’s license, registration, insurance
   - address/telephone book
   - picture of spouse/partner
   - emergency money (in cash) hidden away

d) Keep the following items handy, so you can grab them quickly:
   - emergency suitcase with immediate needs
   - special toys, comforts for children
   - jewelry
   - small saleable objects
   - items of special sentimental value
   - a list of other items you would like to take if you get a chance to come back to your home later

II. Creating a Safer Living Environment
Here are some tips for Creating a Safer Living Environment while you are living with your partner:
   - 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, counsellors, children’s friends.
   - Make arrangements with friends or family so that you can stay with them if necessary.
   - 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.)
   - Teach the children to let you know when someone is at the door, instead of 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.

III. During a Violent Incident
We cannot always avoid violent incidents. However, to increase your safety, here are some things you can do:

- Start to position yourself to get out quickly or near a phone so you can call 911, if necessary.
- Try to move to a space where the risk is the lowest. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchen, near weapons, or in rooms without access to an outside door.)
- Use your code word with your children so they can call for help.
- Use your judgement and intuition - if the situation is very serious, you can agree with your partner or give him/her what he/she wants to calm him/her down. You have to protect yourself until you are out of danger.
- When, or after, you have been assaulted, call the police at 911 if you can. Tell them you have been assaulted by a man/woman, (don't say your husband/partner), and leave the phone off the hook after your call.
- Make as much noise as possible (set off the fire alarm, break things, turn up the stereo or TV) – so that neighbours may call the police for you.
- Remind yourself that you have an Emergency Escape Plan (if you have created one), and go over it in your mind.