

How to make a safety plan

- Make photocopies of all your identification and important documents and keep them in a safe place where you can find them quickly. This is extremely important, and will save you a lot of time and inconvenience later.
- Establish an escape route. (Know where you can go to be safe, if only to make a phone call.)
- If you've been abused before, make sure the police are fully aware of the situation.
- Speak with your friends and people you can trust, let them know what's going on so they can be watching out for you.
- Make safe arrangements for the care of your pets - transition homes do not normally allow you to bring pets there.
- Call a transition home and talk to the staff. You may want to work out a code word so they know who you are if you have to call them in a crisis.
- Hide some money away if possible (you may need emergency taxi fare, although some transition homes, i.e. Kaushee's Place, will pay the fare for you).
- Talk to the children. They need to know which neighbour to run to in an emergency.

Pack an emergency bag in case you need to leave quickly. You can't take everything! Just take what you'll need for a few days. You can leave the bag with a friend if you have to.

If you don't feel safe doing that, you can *make a list of things to take* and make sure you know where to find them in an emergency:

- identification, important papers (birth certificates, marriage certificates);
- documents, if any, relating to the custody of your children;
- health cards for you and the children;
- First Nation status card;
- immigration/citizenship papers, passports;
- money, bank books, credit cards;
- clothes for you and the children for a few days;
- any medicine you or your children may need;
- house keys, car keys;
- the children's favourite toys and books;
- copies of your lease, mortgage, or other deeds;
- your address/phone book;
- car registration, driver's licence, car insurance; and
- your favourite possessions/books (things that give you comfort — don't forget your treasured family photos: these can never be replaced if they are stolen from you or ruined by an angry partner).

It's probably a good idea to get legal and other advice now, even before there is an emergency.

Excerpted from Options, Choices and Changes:

http://www.womensdirectorategov.yk.ca/pdf/options_choices_changes2.pdf