



Preparing to Leave Safely

A practical checklist for planning, packing, transportation, and privacy.

Safety note: If someone may be monitoring your phone, computer, accounts, or printer, consider using a safer device. Downloads, browser history, messages, and print activity may leave traces.

Deciding whether or when to leave an abusive relationship is deeply personal. **You do not owe anyone an explanation for the choices you make to stay safer.** Because separation can be a high-risk time, consider planning with an advocate before making changes that could be noticed.

Plan the safest exit you can

- Think about **when, where, and how** you could leave. Identify a destination and more than one transportation option.
- If possible, keep an emergency bag with a trusted person or in a place the abusive person is unlikely to find.
- Consider setting aside small amounts of money, spare keys, medication, or copies of documents over time - only if doing so will not increase your risk.
- Use a safer phone or device to research shelter, transportation, finances, or legal options if you believe your technology is monitored.

Emergency bag checklist

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| ■ Photo ID / driver's license | ■ Medications and prescriptions |
| ■ Birth certificates / Social Security cards | ■ Keys: home, car, work |
| ■ Cash, bank card, essential account information | ■ Phone and charger |
| ■ Health insurance / medical information | ■ A few changes of clothing |
| ■ Important legal papers or court orders | ■ Children's comfort or school items |
| ■ Lease/deed, insurance, immigration documents | ■ Pet records, carrier, medication |

You do not need to collect everything before you leave. If you need to get out quickly, your safety matters more than belongings or paperwork.

Protect your location and plans

- Avoid posting your location or plans online. Review shared family accounts, location-sharing services, connected cars, and smart-home access when safe.
- Consider a mailing address, email account, or phone number the abusive person cannot access.
- Tell only people you trust about your destination. Ask them not to tag you, post photos, or share your location.

Need a safe place?

C.A.R.A. can discuss emergency shelter, support services, safety planning, and other options available in Cape May County. You can call even if you are unsure what you want to do next.

Guidance sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline (thehotline.org); Safety Net Project, National Network to End Domestic Violence (techsafety.org). Reviewed July 2026. Safety needs vary; consider planning with a trained advocate.