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CHECKLIST

LEAVING HOME

If you are preparing to leave your partner, it is a good idea to make a plan of what can be done before you leave and what you are going to take with you when you go. If it is safe to do so, you should take anything you need or think you may need when you go because you may not be able to return to your home safely, and your ex-partner may destroy or hide items that he knows you will want.

Create a 72-hour kit and put it in a safe location from which it will be easy to retrieve. Your kit should contain essential items (copies of identification and health cards for you and your children, changes of clothing for all of you, medication, etc.) to get you through a few days if you have to leave in a hurry.

We have developed a checklist that includes suggestions for safe ways to remove these items from the family home. You can use the column on the left to keep track of what you have done/plan to do with each item in the list.

Of course, if you leave in a hurry because it is not safe for you to stay, you won't take these steps, and that is okay. Everything can be sorted out later, when you and the children are in a safe place.

FINANCIAL

YOUR OWN BANK ACCOUNT

- Open a new bank account, at a different financial institution, in your name only. Use a new PIN that your partner will not guess.
- If you have direct deposit, inform your employer about your new account once it is safe to do so.

UTILITY BILLS

- Photocopy utility bills for the previous several months and keep them somewhere safe.

RESPs

- Talk to your financial institution about whether you can move any RESPs to a new bank. This may not be possible if both your and your partner's names are on the RESP.

YOUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- Take your tax returns, pay stubs and other financial documents from the past several years and store in a safe place: at work, with a trusted friend or family member or in a safety deposit box at your new bank.

ALWAYS REMEMBER

Your safety and the safety of your children is more important than any document or possession, no matter how treasured it may be.

YOUR PARTNER'S FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- If you can do this safely, look through your partner's financial documents (bank statements, pay stubs, tax returns, mortgage documents, investment reports, etc.) and make photocopies.
- Put the photocopies in a safe place away from home: at work, with a trusted friend or family member or in a safety deposit box at your new bank.

MORTGAGE/LINE OF CREDIT

- Talk to your bank or mortgage broker to ensure your partner cannot add to the mortgage/line of credit without your in-person consent.

CREDIT CARDS

- Get a new credit card in your name only from a different credit card company than any cards you have now. Use a new PIN that your partner will not guess.

REVENUE CANADA (FEDERAL TAXES)

- Contact Revenue Canada as soon as you have a new address. Complete and submit change of information form with Revenue Canada.

MONEY IN JOINT ACCOUNTS

- You have a legal right to half the money in any joint accounts, so you should remove that money and put it in an account in your own name. Do this as soon as possible after you leave so your partner does not take all of the money, but do not do it before you leave in case he checks the bank balance and sees that half the money is gone.

BANKING

- Tell your bank once you have left the relationship and discuss financial considerations.

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WORK

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TRANSPORTATION

After you leave:

- If you drive to work, consider using a new route that your partner will not be familiar with. Talk to your employer about safe parking.
- If you use public transit to get to work, find an alternate route that your partner won't expect you to use.
- If you have a car and are concerned about your partner stalking you, get it checked for a GPS tracking device. Learn more about technology abuse in the section “Managing electronic communication with an abusive ex-partner.”

SAFETY AT WORK

- Let your employer and key co-workers, as well as security staff, know that you are planning to leave your partner and are concerned that he may visit your workplace.
- Develop a workplace safety plan.

CHILDREN

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COUNSELLING

- Consider setting up counselling for your children so they will have emotional support when you leave. You may need to get their father's consent or a court order for this.

TOYS AND OTHER IMPORTANT POSSESSIONS

- Talk to your children about their most prized possessions and encourage them to keep them all in one place in case of an emergency.

PHOTOS

- Carry a recent photo of your children with you and/or have one on your phone in case you need emergency assistance to find them.

SAFETY

- Develop a safety plan with your children so they know what to do in an emergency. See the “Safety planning” section for tips.

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COMMUNICATION

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CELL PHONE

- Update your contact information to include the names of your children's school/daycare centre, your doctor, bank manager, lawyer and anyone else you may need to reach quickly after you leave.
- Create or change the password to your phone.
- Back up any important information you keep on your phone to a secure location.
- After you leave, if you can afford it, buy a new phone and plan that are with a different company than the one your partner uses.
- Review our Online Safety Tip Sheet for more information about being safe online

COMPUTERS, LAPTOPS, TABLETS

- Create or change the password to any technology that is yours. Keep it where you can easily grab it when you leave.

DOCUMENTS

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PASSPORTS – YOURS AND YOUR CHILDREN'S

- If it is safe to do so, remove passports from the home and leave at work, with a trusted friend or family member or in your safety deposit box.
- If it is not safe to do this before you leave, keep them all together somewhere you can grab them quickly when you leave.

IMMIGRATION /CITIZENSHIP PAPERS

- Photocopy these documents and keep in one of the safe places we have suggested.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

- Photocopy and keep in one of the safe places we have suggested.

VEHICLES

- Find and copy vehicle-related documents (registration, insurance, loan) and store in a safe place.
- After you leave, if you take a car with you, contact the insurance company to change the policy into your name only and to remove your name from policies for any other vehicles.

CHILDREN'S REPORT CARDS

- Remove the originals from the home or, if that is not safe, make photocopies and store in one of the safe places we have suggested.

