

SAFETY PLANNING WITH A PET



Ensuring Pet Safety When Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Leaving an abusive relationship is a challenging and emotional process, especially when you have a beloved pet to consider. Pets are family, and ensuring their safety is a natural and important concern. Here are some steps and resources to help you plan for your pet's safety during this transition:

Emergency Contacts and Supplies

- **Determine an Emergency Contact:** Identify a trusted friend or family member who can care for your pet if you're unable to be with them. This person should understand the situation and be ready to help when needed.
- **Prepare a Go-Bag:** Keep extra pet food, supplies, and any necessary medications either in your go-bag or at your emergency contact's house. This preparation ensures you have what you need if you must leave quickly.
- **Veterinary Resources**
- **Locate a 24-hour Veterinary Clinic:** Find the nearest emergency veterinary clinic and keep their contact information with you. This is important for addressing any urgent health issues your pet might face.

Safety Precautions

- **Avoid Leaving Your Pet Alone with the Abuser:** If possible, ensure your pet is not left alone with your abuser, as they might take out their aggression on your pet.
- **Establish Pet Ownership:** Create a paper trail to establish ownership of your pet. This includes obtaining a pet license and ensuring that veterinary records are in your name. This documentation can be critical in taking your pet with you legally.

Legal Considerations

- **Protective Orders:** Be aware that in some places, such as Kansas, pets can be included in protective orders. This means your pet can be legally protected from the abuser as well.

Post-Escape Safety

- **Never Leave Your Pet Alone Outside:** Once you've left with your pet, ensure they are never left outside alone, minimizing the risk of them being taken or harmed.
- **Avoid Leaving Your Pet Behind:** If it's at all possible, try not to leave your pet when you leave the relationship. They provide emotional support and deserve to be safe with you.

Alternative Resources

- **Seek Veterinary Assistance:** If having an emergency contact is not an option, consult your veterinarian. Many programs are available to help pets and their owners in domestic violence situations.
- **In Case of Leaving Your Pet Behind:** If you must leave your pet with your abusive partner, contact law enforcement, animal control, or the local humane society. They can assist in monitoring your pet's safety or help remove your pet if necessary.

Leaving an abusive situation is incredibly difficult, but planning for your pet's safety can provide peace of mind and ensure that your entire family, pets included, can begin the journey to a safer, happier life.