

“Go bag” or escape bag

If you live with your partner and begin to notice the red flags, or sense a friend may be in trouble, it's a good idea to be prepared to leave when necessary. One way to do this is to keep a “go bag” ready and waiting. This way, in case of an emergency situation, you are able to leave immediately with all the essentials. Your go bag could include:

- Birth certificates and social security cards for yourself and your children
- Driver's license and/or passports
- Marriage, divorce or custody papers
- Legal protection or restraining orders
- Health insurance cards and medical records
- Immunization records
- Car title, registration, and insurance documentation
- Cash and prepaid credit cards that can't be traced
- Prepaid cell phone or a cell phone with a new contract and number. Try to keep it fully charged.
- Current medications and prescriptions for yourself and your children
- Clothing for you and children
- Keepsakes
- Spare set of keys

Keep your go bag somewhere you could easily access it if you had to leave in a hurry. Some ideas might be in the trunk of your car, near your front door, or at a trusted friend's house. Try to keep your phone charged and your car full of gas, just in case.

In many cases, returning to your home once you leave may not be an option. If you do feel the need to return for more items, make sure you are keeping your safety in mind. Consider when you might be able to go when your abuser won't be home, and bring someone with you, such as a friend or police escort.