



BENJAMIN R. DAVID  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

*State of North Carolina*  
**General Court of Justice**  
**Sixth Prosecutorial District**  
Wilmington, NC 28402

POST OFFICE BOX 352  
PHONE: (910) 772-6610  
FAX: (910) 772-6611

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To: Members of the Media

From: District Attorney Ben David

Re: Safety tips for living with an abusive partner

In this time of self-isolation, we are even more concerned about the members of our community who are not safe in their own homes. We have had two very violent domestic incidents in our District over the last week and dozens of others that will never make our local news but are nevertheless just as terrifying for the victims involved.

Please review and share the safety tips below, provided by the National Center for Victims of Crime. Remember that many people experience violence without the awareness of family or close friends.

- Identify your partner's use and level of force so that you can assess the risk of physical danger to you and your children before it occurs.
- Identify safe areas of the house where there are no weapons and there are ways to escape. If arguments occur, try to move to those areas.
- Don't run to where the children are, as your partner may hurt them as well.
- If violence is unavoidable, make yourself a small target. Dive into a corner and curl up into a ball with your face protected and arms around each side of your head, fingers entwined.
- If possible, have a phone accessible at all times and know what numbers to call for help. Know where the nearest public phone is located. Know the phone number to your local shelter. If your life is in danger, call the police.
- Let trusted friends and neighbors know of your situation and develop a plan and visual signal for when you need help.
- Teach your children how to get help. Instruct them not to get involved in the violence between you and your partner. Plan a code word to signal to them that they should get help or leave the house.
- Tell your children that violence is never right, even when someone they love is being violent. Tell them that neither you, nor they, are at fault or are the cause of the violence, and that when anyone is being violent, it is important to stay safe.
- Practice how to get out safely. Practice with your children.
- Plan for what you will do if your children tells your partner of your plan or if your partner otherwise finds out about your plan.
- Keep weapons like guns and knives locked away and as inaccessible as possible.

- Make a habit of backing the car into the driveway and keeping it fueled. Keep the driver's door unlocked and others locked — for a quick escape.
  - Try not to wear scarves or long jewelry that could be used to strangle you.
  - Create several plausible reasons for leaving the house at different times of the day or night.
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Local resources:

- 911 for emergency assistance
- New Hanover Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Detectives: 910-798-4308 and 910-798-4310
- Wilmington Police Department Domestic Violence Detective: 910-343-3620
- Pender County Sheriff's Office: 910-259-1212
- Burgaw Police Department: 910-259-4924
- Open Gate Domestic Violence Shelter Hotline: 910-343-0703
- Safe Haven Domestic Violence Shelter: 910-259-8989
- Rape Crisis Center of Coastal Horizons: 910-392-7460 or [supportrcc@coastalhorizons.org](mailto:supportrcc@coastalhorizons.org)

Domestic Violence Orders of Protection

Individuals are still permitted to seek Domestic Violence Orders of Protection at this time. If you wish to seek a protective order, please visit the Clerk of Court in your county of residence to initiate the process. Local Domestic Violence shelter representatives are available to assist you.