

If you are in an abusive situation and have pets, please read this to keep you and your pets safe



Did you know that up to 48% of abused women will not leave an abusive situation out of fear of leaving their pet behind? Abusers know that targeting your pet for abuse will keep you silent, compliant and in their control. Before leaving an abusive situation, make sure you have made these arrangements for your pet(s).

- Ask friends, family or co-workers if they can care for your pet(s) while you seek safety at a shelter.
- Contact your local family violence shelter and ask if they will accept you and your pet(s). Visit www.animalsandfamilies.org for a listing of shelters in your state that can help.
- Ask the family violence shelter if they have a pet foster care program or can refer you to a safe pet boarding facility. For a listing of places that may be able to help board your pet, visit www.ahimsahouse.org/directory.
- Before leaving, create a pet bag that includes veterinary records (especially recent vaccination history), microchip information, collars, leashes, identification tags, medication, pet food, and a favorite blanket and toy. For cats, put the pet bag into a cat carrier so that the cat carrier is ready to go when needed. And try to place the pet bag in a safe location, such as with a friend or family member, or secure outdoor location.
- Have photos of your pets and any instructions on feeding or caring for your pets.
- To prove ownership of the pet, it is important to have veterinary records, adoption receipts, etc., in your name. If you do not have those records, try to have your pets examined by a veterinarian before leaving so that any records are in your name. Once you leave the home, consider changing veterinarians so that you and your pet cannot be tracked to the prior veterinary clinic.
- If seeking a protective order, be sure to ask that pets are included in the order. Many states have specific laws that allow the inclusion of pets, but a judge can add a pet to the order upon request and showing cause.



If you can safely leave the abusive situation with your pet(s), please do so.

Information provided by Allie Phillips, Founder of Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T).

www.animalsandfamilies.org