



Field Safety for Case Workers

Prior to the Home Visit

- Assess the intake, research risk factors, and review case history
- Determine if coworker, supervisor, or law enforcement support is needed
- Coordinate with office staff so they know exactly where you are supposed to be and for how long
- Familiarize yourself with your destination, routing, and safe havens
- Study the neighborhood and home using online resources
- Check your vehicle and safety kit; ensure only what you need is in the passenger compartment
- Dress safely and appropriately – no ties, sandals, high heels, scarves, or excessive jewelry
- Take fully charged work cell phone with you, pre-programmed with emergency numbers

Vehicle Readiness

- Keep your vehicle in working order, with at least a 1/2 tank of gas
- Maintain an emergency kit with the following items: disposable blanket, flashlight, spare batteries, latex gloves, hand sanitizer, bottle of water, soap, a washcloth, extra sweatshirt, lice spray, and an extra pair of shoes in a sack (to tie off).

Parking & Approaching the Home

- Park in the street; if you must park in the driveway, back in
- Park facing the direction you need to leave
- Canvas the neighborhood; look for potential trouble spots and safe havens
- Take only what you need into the home
- Keep vehicle doors locked
- Visually inspect the home and surrounding area
- Look and listen for signs of disturbances, hazardous chemicals, and/or animals
- Note any smells associated with substance abuse



Safety in the Home

- Stay close to an exit; know where all exits are located
- Always know everyone who is in the residence
- Keep an open path between you and the exit
- Do not enter areas you cannot safely see into (crawl spaces, attics, outbuildings etc.); use a mirror to look around corners
- Maintain personal and professional boundaries
- Continually assess everyone 's emotional states, including your own
- Use nonthreatening body language
- Remain calm and polite
- Maintain respect; this is their home
- Be cautious and use common sense
- Be an attentive listener
- Thank them for their time

NOTE: Tune into yourself. If you assess a situation as dangerous, leave immediately and go to a safe area before you call for emergency services.

When Leaving the Home Visit

- Thank everyone for their time
- Have your car keys out and ready as you approach your vehicle
- Pay attention to your surroundings, including people and activity near the residence and your vehicle
- Observe the back seat before entering your vehicle
- Lock your doors
- If you are being followed, go to a police or fire station; do not go to your home or office
- Do not sit in the vehicle to check your phone or do paperwork
- Move to a safe area before making any calls

Additional Resource: [Home Visit: Addressing APS Professional Safety - YouTube](#)

This content is from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center [Field Safety-checklist.pdf \(pitt.edu\)](#)

Adapted by Ohio's University Consortium for Child and Adult Services (OUCCAS) for the Ohio Human Services Training System (OHSTS)
Revised April 2023