

In the United States, we take for granted that we live in a safe, comfortable world. Abundant light is available with a simple flick of a switch. We can change the temperature in our homes by just turning the dial of the thermostat on the wall. Instant communication is provided by the telephone. Not only are our surroundings designed to be convenient, but in our society physical dangers have been reduced to a minimum.

While we may face danger infrequently, there are lessons that we can learn from those who put their lives on the line every day. They consider the possible danger, have a plan and prepare themselves accordingly. How can you be prepared for an emergency? If you're reading this website, you're off to a good start. When disaster strikes, it usually happens quickly with little time to react. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. Local officials and relief workers will eventually be on the scene to help you, but they obviously cannot get to everyone right away. That's why it is so important to be prepared not only for disaster, but in the event your basic services like water, gas, electricity and telephones are cut off unexpectedly. Families can cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. The American Red Cross offers the following steps and checklists to help you create your family's own disaster plan. Knowing what to do is always your best protection and it's your responsibility.