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The Best Advice for Families Developing Their Personal Emergency Plans

With a pandemic reshaping our routines and attitudes, many of us are suddenly intimately aware of how vulnerable we are. In light of these circumstances, your family might be ready to develop an emergency plan — or revisit an old one. Read on for tips and advice to help you formulate a practical response to potential threats to your family's safety.

Stranger Danger

People coming to your home is something that was more of an everyday occurrence until recently, and it is likely to resume at some time in the near future. Now is a great time to talk with your family about how to handle strangers and potential home intruders.

In [these situations](#), Safety.com recommends adults indicating the home has multiple people inside, even if there aren't. Say something along the lines of "I'll get it!" before going to the door. If someone tries to break in, you can draw attention to your home as well. Set off your car alarm or flip on all the lights. Criminals don't like attention, so it's a great way to deter them.

Children should be instructed to never answer the door alone or run to a window to see who it is. Do some role-playing to ensure they understand, and adults and children alike should plan and use a discreet escape route if someone breaks in. Everyone should have a designated location to touch base, whether at a trusted neighbor's home, [Safe Place](#), or similar location. You should consider multiple designated places in the event one is unavailable.

You should also have a designated emergency contact in the event that your family members become separated. Everyone can call that person to touch base and verify all is well, and that contact can help you get reunited.

Fires, Extinguishers, and Escapes

Teaching your children about fire safety is a must. Explain how smoke detectors work, teach your children that smoke rises so crawling can help them avoid inhaling it, have [escape ladders](#) as needed, and teach kids about stop, drop, and roll. An [escape plan](#) is a must here as well, as well as knowing where fire extinguishers are and [how to use them](#).

Natural Disasters

There are several types of weather-related events that your household should be prepared for. Tornadoes can tear the structure apart, so everyone should know where to go in your home that will keep them safest. The Hartford recommends a [safe room](#) if you have one, but otherwise, the [safest places](#) in a tornado are an interior room with no windows or a bathtub.

There are a few things that could potentially mean fleeing your home before it's damaged, such as a terrorist attack or hurricane. Grange Insurance recommends looking carefully at your family's unique needs as you [formulate your plan](#). Remember outside family members who might be vulnerable, like senior relatives, and also assemble an emergency kit in the event that you need to evacuate your home.

Emergency Kit Essentials

According to Erie Insurance, a well-stocked [emergency kit](#) should have everything you need to survive a few days. Include things like medications, water, face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, food, hot packs, cold packs, and so forth.

As you prepare your emergency kit, there are a couple of items you should consider investing in. One is an [emergency radio](#). Ideally select something with an alarm, batteries, power cord, solar charge capability, and a place to charge your phone. It should be able to receive notifications from the National Weather Service, and you will want to be able to tune into area radio channels as well. Remember a flashlight in your kit; [choose one](#) with ample brightness, durability, and long-lasting battery power or the ability to be recharged.

COVID-19 has drastically changed our routines and perspectives on daily life. As we reflect on how vulnerable we really are, it makes sense to consider your family's safety plan. If a disaster comes your way, you'll be ready.