

## What Should You Include In a Family Action Plan?

Action plans vary with each family. Some of the questions you should consider are:

-  How old are your kids?
-  How large is your family?
-  How large is your home?
-  How many entry doors do you have?
-  Do you live in town or in the country?
-  What defensive weapons do you have?
-  Where are your defensive weapons kept?

Building a family action plan starts with a look at the potential threat to you and your family. Has there been an increase in crime in your area? Do you feel vulnerable? Discuss the plan with your family very early in the planning stage. It will amaze you where good advice will come from. If everyone is involved in the planning, they will more readily accept the outcome.

**Step one:** Identify a safe room. Most houses do not have an ideal room for security. Try to identify a room that everyone can get into quickly (it may not be the master bathroom). Some things to look for are:

-  Easy access
-  Cover
-  Lockable door

**Step two:** Assign tasks. Everyone in your family should have a specific list of tasks to perform. This insures that one person does not have to remember everything and that everyone contributes to the safety of the group. This may sound like “made up” work, but the psychological impact is that all members are performing essential tasks and are working to protect the family.

**Step three:** Code words. Consider the use of code words. Code words can initiate actions such as go to the safe room now or get to the car now. These have been used for a variety of situations. **Keep them simple.** We often try to complicate things when a simple solution is needed.

**Step four:** Practice. This sounds so simple, but in the heat of the moment your brain won't sort this all out. It requires planning and occasional practice. Do your kids need their stuffed bear to feel comfortable and not give your position away? Try it and you will be amazed how easy it will be to implement when you need to use it. Have your kids

initiate a practice. It will be a different experience, but anyone can call for implementation of your family's action plan.

Consider using an action plan for severe weather and for home security. Similar principles apply.

Here is a simple checklist:

-  Safe room – Where in your home is a room with one entry? What should be there to comfort each member of the family?
-  Communication – Use your cell phone not the cordless phone you have in the kitchen. The line can be cut or blocked on a cordless phone.
-  Cover – What can you hide behind? Is it cover or concealment?
-  Locks – You need to slow down the bad guys.
-  Weapons – Where are they and who is responsible for them?
-  When was the last time you practiced?
-  What changes do you need to make to your plan?

**Remember: You only get one crack at securing your family during an attack. Make it work!**