

## **Disaster Preparedness**

In the aftermath of September 11, cities across the nation examined their ability to cope with terrorist attacks should they occur in their community. Disaster preparedness is the discipline of assessing and avoiding disasters as a group, community, and nation. In the context of homeland security, disaster preparedness units assess the risk of terrorist attacks (nuclear hazards, explosions, biological and chemical warfare) and generate emergency management plans to cope with disasters. Plans might include steps for containment of affected areas, evacuation of cities, and emergency services.

**Further Discussion** The idea behind disaster preparedness is to draw up plans ahead of time so that in the event of an attack, governmental and non-governmental agencies know what their duties are, how to integrate them, and what steps to take. What steps could you take at your school to prepare for a disaster?

**Activity: Brainstorm** As a class, consider a terrorist attack in your community. What would be the targets (hospitals, ports, etc.)? If you were in school during an attack, would you evacuate or stay put? What is your emergency communications plan? Transportation plan? What would you need in your disaster supplies kit? What other issues might come up?