

The Likelihood of Risk - Under Insured

Whether or not to opt for insurance depends on a number of factors. These can include affordability ('do I have enough to pay for it?'), priority ('am I willing to pay if I have the money?'), perception ('is anything really likely to happen to me?') and principle ('the Lord will provide').

While individual attitudes vary, we strongly suggest you consider the implications of under-insurance.

By not taking out insurance for some eventualities at least – or choosing not to make your needs known – you can give the impression that you will manage if things go wrong. In reality, if things were to go wrong you would probably need some form of help, and in the majority of cases it would be friends or family who would step in, even if they couldn't meet all your needs. Some of these needs can be quite costly, which means others could be significantly burdened.

Repatriation following death

In the event of death while you are abroad it's important for you and your family to be agreed about burial arrangements. If the decision is to return the body to the homeland, you need to factor in the high costs of repatriation (thousands of pounds) and to appoint a person to act on your behalf. It is also essential to indicate your wishes in a will. We suggest you make enquiries with an insurance company regarding costs and then approach a local funeral director (where you reside) to quote for the cost of repatriating a body to the place of your choice. This may require several stages of transport or transition. Finally, ensure that you leave explicit instructions regarding your decision.

Repatriation or other options in the event of ill health

Developing countries do not generally have the range of health facilities or the scope of reliable treatment options that are available in the developed world – not to mention the expertise to deal with serious diseases or accidents. At one time mission workers could simply board a plane and get almost instant treatment in their home country. That is no longer necessarily the case; the home country may not give free treatment on your return. First, it is worth checking whether, as a citizen living abroad, you are eligible for any financial assistance if you have to return home. Second, we suggest you look into options in countries near you. While health insurance packages may not be affordable for every eventuality, some may offer a good compromise.

Children's education

Once the possibilities of home schooling are exhausted, education can be expensive even in local private schools. University education introduces another big leap in costs, especially for those who have been abroad for many years. Many countries require a minimum residency period to avoid very high international fees. In planning for your children's future, we suggest you investigate insurance options, or include some provision in your monthly budget expenses. If neither option works maybe the only option at the time is to return home.

House and contents Insurance

Since many mission workers have little in the way of possessions, it is tempting to think there is nothing worth insuring. That may be the case, but everyone experiences times when money flow isn't good and replacements are required urgently. Perhaps reasonably priced cover is not a bad idea. We certainly recommend buildings insurance – and car insurance is a must.