



A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

PROTECTING HOUSES OF WORSHIP BEST PRACTICES



A GUARDIAN SHIELD PRESENTATION

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The United States has approximately 345,000 religious congregations consisting of about 150 million members. These members comprise more than 230 different denominational groups. The number of people coming and going from religious facilities during the week varies with the size of the congregation living nearby. In rural areas, congregations are generally small (100 members or less). In large metropolitan areas and suburbs, congregations can exceed 10,000 members. Some religious facilities also provide educational resources for students in prekindergarten and kindergarten through 12th grade

Identifying and evaluating a known or potential threat to a given facility is a preliminary component of a security assessment, the results of which will guide the process of developing a security plan. A proper plan will aim to deter a threat or mitigate a threat by reducing the religious facility's vulnerability to those threats. Potential threats to religious facilities can originate from disaffected individuals (e.g., employees, former members) or groups, outsiders, criminals, or domestic or international terrorist groups.

As events over the past several years have demonstrated, deliberate attacks on religious facilities are a real threat that can inflict considerable harm.

Religious facilities are vulnerable to pre-planned attacks of targeted violence committed by individuals using a variety of tactics to inflict harm on a religious facility. Individuals who target a religious facility for harm could use firearms; improvised explosive devices (IEDs); vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs); or arson in order to inflict a number of casualties and damage to religious facilities. Perpetrators have a wide variety of weapons and tactics available to achieve their objectives and have demonstrated the ability to plan and conduct complex attacks against multiple targets. Attacks can be carried out by individuals, small teams of a few perpetrators, or larger groups acting in a coordinated fashion.

Individuals who target a religious facility for some act of violence could use conventional firearms, automatic weapons, explosives or similar weapons to harm individuals or take hostages. As past events have demonstrated, deliberate attacks on religious facilities are a real threat that can inflict considerable harm.

The scheduling and predictability of times when members gather to worship, and the attractiveness of religious facilities as a "soft target," lead to the security and protection-related challenges.

Since religious facilities generally provide an open atmosphere, facilities are vulnerable to deliberate acts by outside perpetrators. Religious facilities and their members have been targets of violent attacks. These incidents have served to point out vulnerabilities and have offered valuable lessons for protecting these facilities, the people who attend them, and the employees who work in them. In addition, the perception that religious facilities are "soft targets" and have little security may make them a more attractive target for individuals looking to carry out an attack on a large group of individuals.

In general, religious facilities are open to all, at least during the conduct of religious services. Depending on the type of structure, the nature of access restrictions and other security measures that may be in place, religious facilities may or may not be able to control access to the facility by potential adversaries. Some high risk facilities employ private security guards, trained volunteers, and/or local police to assist in access control.

Religious facilities are also vulnerable to attacks outside their main building, such as in contiguous parking areas, where vehicles have unrestricted access and are generally not inspected, and in auxiliary buildings such as educational facilities. The layouts of most religious facilities permit close proximity of vehicles to buildings and areas where people congregate. These include parking areas, driveways on facility grounds, and nearby streets. There are usually no vehicle barriers near the main entrances or other vulnerable parts of the buildings.

Individuals who deliver parcels or are hired to do construction or repair work are often given unescorted access to religious facilities, and the contents of packages they deliver or materials brought into the facility are not inspected. Additionally, religious facilities are generally not secured, leaving HVAC units and other critical building utility supply components (e.g., water, electric power, natural gas service) easily accessible.

Religious facilities attract a group of people of like faith into a single location at specified times. This makes the facility a ready target for an adversary seeking to attack that particular group of people. This vulnerability is increased by easy identification of the specific faith, either by facility configuration or signage. Religious or customary garments, clothing or other items worn or displayed by persons of a particular faith may also increase identification of individuals belonging to a particular faith. In addition to religious services and special events, congregants often gather outside of religious facilities before and after religious services where little or no security or protection is afforded.

In that most religious facilities are nonprofit, many have very small budgets that are used to pay for the basic operation of the facility and to provide services to the congregation and surrounding communities. Many do not have the financial resources to implement extensive security measures, especially physical security equipment. Thus, for example, workers and volunteers may not undergo background checks.

In addition to man-made or man caused incidents, natural and other hazards (tornadoes, floods, and hurricanes) can affect the safety of religious facilities, as well as the religious facility's ability to carry out normal operations. Emergency action plans and business continuity plans should also provide the foundation for responding to unexpected or catastrophic events.

Security practices should address the threats deemed most likely to occur or have the potential to result in the greatest damage. Potential threats to religious facilities can originate from disaffected individuals associated with the institution, but can also originate from outside the community.

When conducting an individual assessment, three factors should be considered:

- Identify any individual(s) whose behavior may cause concern or disruption and that may affect members of the community.
- Assess whether the identified individual(s) possesses the intent and ability to carry out an attack against the institution or member of the institution, and if the individual has taken any steps to prepare for the attack.
- Manage the threat posed by the individual, to include disrupting potential plans of attack, mitigating the risk, and implementing strategies to facilitate long-term resolution.

Attack indicators are observable behaviors that may precede an attack and may be detected as an individual prepares and plans for an attack. Indicators may include, but are not limited to: the perpetrator conducting surveillance, engaging in training, and/or beginning mobilization activities in advance of an attack.

Understanding behaviors that are unusual, concerning, or suspicious, as well as behaviors that may be indicative of surveillance or imminent attack are essential in the efforts to protect communities from threats of violence.

Individuals who threaten to carry out an attack may engage in a number of behaviors that raise concern in others who know the individual. These behaviors should be looked at in the context of an individual's life and current situation, such that an individual who displays several of these concerning behaviors and is also dealing with a negative life event may be of concern and warrant some intervention. With respect to active shooter situations, investigations and analysis show that many active shooters were described as social isolates, harbored feelings of hate and anger, and/or had some reported contact with mental health professionals. Mental illness is commonly referenced as a potential contributing factor, but its causal impact on the attack can only be speculated. Common catalysts or triggers observed include: loss of significant relationships, changes in living arrangements, changes in financial status, loss of job, major adverse changes to life circumstances, and/or feelings of humiliation or rejection on the part of the shooter.

Some individual behavior indicators may include:

- Socially isolated
- Threats of violence
- Unsolicited focus on dangerous weapons
- Unstable emotional responses
- Intense anger and hostility
- Loss of significant relationships
- Feeling either arrogant and supreme, or powerless
- Expressions of paranoia or depression
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Depression or withdrawal
- Talk of suicide

Surveillance indicators may provide evidence that a religious facility is being monitored and/or assessed by individuals planning an attack. Indicators of potential surveillance include persons in the vicinity of religious facilities attempting to gather information about the facility, its operations, and/or its protective measures. Some potential indicators that religious facilities may be under surveillance include:

- Persons using or carrying video/camera/observation equipment in or near the facility over an extended period
- Persons parking, standing, or loitering in the same area over a multiple-day period with no apparent reasonable explanation
- Persons excessively inquiring about practices pertaining to the facility and its operations or the supporting infrastructure (telecommunications, electric, natural gas, water)
- Persons observed or reported to be observing facility receipts or deliveries
- Employees observed or reported to be willfully associating with suspicious individuals, changing working behavior, or working more irregular hours.

Certain indicators may demonstrate that an attack is imminent and that immediate action needs to be taken. Indicators of an imminent attack include people, vehicles, or packages that demonstrate unusual or suspicious behavior that requires an immediate response. If an attack seems imminent and an immediate action is required, call 911 immediately and follow all emergency operations plans.

Some potential indicators of an imminent attack include:

- Suspicious persons in crowded areas wearing unusually bulky clothing that might conceal explosives
- Unexpected or unfamiliar delivery trucks arriving at the facility
- Unattended packages (e.g., backpacks, briefcases, boxes) or suspicious packages and/or letters received by mail

The religious facility environment is best managed by creating layers of protective measures in collaboration with community partners that allow religious institutions to deter, delay and detect threats. These layers allow an institution to consider a threat as soon as possible and to more effectively respond to, further deter, eliminate or mitigate that threat. Technological sensors such as surveillance cameras or alarms (fire, smoke, tornado, and intrusion detection) may assist in decision making. Barriers, whether locked doors or parking bollards, and facility personnel should be utilized to delay a threat and afford more time for effective decision making. For example, a locked door creates time to better understand the situation and to make a better response decision. Pre-arranged responses to identified threats is also a mechanism to manage time during a crisis as a well-rehearsed response to a threat (e.g. fire drill) allows a more effective response under stress in minimal time.

As information is received during an emergency situation, a number of factors influence leaders' ability to make appropriate decisions. Time, or the lack of time, is a principle disrupter of effective decision making. Strategies to improve responses during a crisis should focus on time management. An effective security plan should expand the window of time available to leaders

to make a good decision. A strong security plan will provide institution leaders opportunity and time during a crisis to make decisions about providing for the welfare of their community.

Protective measures that deter, delay, and detect threats include equipment, personnel, and procedures designed to protect a facility against threats and mitigate the effects of an adverse event. Many different protective measures are available for deployment at a facility and in the areas surrounding a facility. Some are applicable to a wide range of facilities and against various threats, whereas others are designed to meet the unique needs of a specific facility or a specific threat. In addition, some may be tactical in nature, while others may address long-term strategic needs. Some protective measures are designed to be implemented on a permanent basis to serve as routine protection for a facility. Such measures are sometimes referred to as “baseline countermeasures.” Others are either implemented or increased in their application only during times of heightened alert. The relatively open access to religious facilities building and grounds makes it difficult to secure them. Protective measures should be comprehensive, integrating equipment, personnel, procedures, and information sharing to ensure that all employees and all members are involved. Including all employees and members in religious facilities security operations, and properly training them in observation, increases the number of eyes on the issue and improves the chances of detecting a threat.

Knowing what to do when faced with a crisis can be the difference between calm and chaos, between courage and fear, and between life and death. To best prepare your staff, members, and possible visitors for a crisis, create an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and conduct training exercises. Together, the EOP and training exercises will prepare your staff and congregation members to effectively respond to an incident and help minimize loss of life. Facility readiness requires that leadership develop and exercise response plans that apply general preparedness and response protocols to specific types of emergencies and facility capabilities (including security resources). EOPs need to be customized to communities and facilities to meet the unique needs of a religious facility. Additionally, it is incredibly important to review, update, and practice the EOP regularly. Good plans are never finished; they can always be updated based on experience, research, and changing vulnerabilities or threats.

One of the first steps in planning is developing a mechanism to notify members and religious facility personnel that an incident is occurring and to instruct them on what to do. There should be specific methods for communicating an incident internally to staff, members, and facility visitors.

When an incident occurs, quickly determine whether facility personnel and facility occupants need to be evacuated, locked down or assume shelter in place. Evacuation requires all occupants to leave the building. While evacuating to the facility parking lot makes sense for a fire drill that only lasts a few minutes, it may not be an appropriate location for a longer period of time.

Lockdowns are called for when a crisis occurs outside of the facility and an evacuation would be dangerous (e.g., escaped criminal). A lockdown may also be called for when there is a crisis inside and movement within the facility will put facility occupants in jeopardy. All exterior doors are locked and occupants stay in an enclosed area. Windows may need to be covered. Shelter-in-place requires staff, members, and visitors to immediately find a room with no or few windows,

and take refuge there. All windows, exterior doors, and other openings to the outside should be closed and locked.

Emergency actions plans should provide for the needs of all facility personnel, members, and visitors with disabilities and other functional and access needs. This is especially important when considering evacuation procedures. Predetermined evacuation routes and staging areas for those with disabilities should be considered.

As soon as a crisis is recognized, it is important to account for all facility personnel, facility members, and visitors. Emergency responders treat a situation very differently when people are missing.

A crisis is the time to follow the emergency operations plan, not to make a plan. During a crisis, leaders need to project a calm, confident, and serious attitude to assure people of the seriousness of the situation and the wisdom of the directions being given. It is also important to communicate accurate and appropriate information.

ACTIVE SHOOTER



An Active Shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area; in most cases, active shooters use firearms(s) and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims. Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes, before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

RUN > HIDE > FIGHT

SURVIVING AN ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT

Evacuate if there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape, if possible
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be
- Avoid stairwells or other areas where you could be entrapped
- Keep your hands visible

- Follow the instructions of any police officers
- Do not attempt to move wounded people
- Call 911 when you are safe
- Information to provide to the 911 operator:
 - Location of the active shooter
 - Number of shooters, if more than one
 - Physical description of shooter/s
 - Number and type of weapons held by the shooter/s
 - Number of potential victims at the location



Hide out if evacuation is not possible; find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Your hiding place should:

- Be out of the active shooter's view
- Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (i.e., an office with a closed and locked door)
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement
- To prevent an active shooter from entering your hiding place:
 - Lock the door
 - Blockade the door with heavy furniture



If the active shooter is nearby:

- Lock the door
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager
- Turn off any source of noise (i.e., radios, televisions)
- Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks)
- Remain quiet

If evacuation and hiding out are not possible:

- Remain calm
- Dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location
- If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen
- Take action against the active shooter. As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throwing items and improvising weapons
 - Yelling
 - Committing to your actions



How to react when law enforcement arrives:

- Remain calm, and follow officers' instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Immediately raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid making quick movements toward officers such as attempting to hold on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming and/or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating, just proceed in the direction from which officers are entering the premises



The first officers to arrive to the scene will not stop to help injured persons. Expect rescue teams comprised of additional officers and emergency medical personnel to follow the initial officers. These rescue teams will treat and remove any injured persons. They may also call upon able-bodied individuals to assist in removing the wounded from the premises. Once you have reached a safe location or an assembly point, you will likely be held in that area by law enforcement until the situation is under control, and all witnesses have been identified and questioned. Do not leave the safe location or assembly point until law enforcement authorities have instructed you to do so.

To best prepare your congregation create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and conduct training exercises. Together, the EAP and training exercises will prepare your staff to effectively respond and help minimize loss of life.

An effective EAP includes:

- An established method for reporting emergencies
- An evacuation policy and procedures
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments (i.e., floor plans, safe areas)
- Contact information for, and responsibilities of individuals to be contacted under the EAP

Parishioners are likely to follow the lead of pre-appointed incident managers during an emergency situation. During an emergency, those managers should be familiar with their EAP, and be prepared to:

- Take immediate action
- Remain calm
- Lock and barricade doors
- Evacuate staff and parishioners via a preplanned evacuation route to a safe area
- Assist Individuals with Special Needs and/or Disabilities

EXPLOSIVE THREATS



Terrorists have frequently used explosive devices as one of their most common weapons. They do not have to look far to find out how to make explosive devices. Most information is readily available in books and on the internet. Explosive devices are highly portable using vehicles and humans as means of transportation. These devices can be detonated from remote locations or through the utilization of homicide bombers.



If you receive a telephoned bomb threat, you should do the following:

- Get as much information from the caller as possible. Try to ask the following questions:
 - When is the bomb going to explode?
 - Where is it right now?
 - What does it look like?
 - What kind of bomb is it?
 - What will cause it to explode?
 - Did you place the bomb?
- Keep the caller on the line and record everything that is said.
- Notify the police and building management immediately.

Be wary of suspicious packages and letters. They can contain explosives, chemical or biological agents.

Some typical characteristics which ought to trigger suspicion include parcels that:

- Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you.
- Have no return address or a return address that can't be verified as legitimate.
- Are marked with restrictive endorsements such as "Personal," "Confidential," or "Do not X-ray."
- Have protruding wires or aluminum foil, strange odors or stains.
- Show a city or state in the postmark that doesn't match the return address.
- Are of unusual weight given their size or are lopsided or oddly shaped.
- Are marked with threatening language
- Have inappropriate or unusual labeling.
- Have excessive postage or packaging material, such as masking tape and string.
- Have misspellings of common words.
- Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated.
- Have incorrect titles or titles without a name.



- Are not addressed to a specific persons
- Have hand-written or poorly typed addresses.

With suspicious envelopes and packages other than those that might contain explosives, take these additional steps against possible biological and chemical agents.

- Refrain from eating or drinking in a designated mail handling area.
- Place suspicious envelopes or packages in a plastic bag or some other type of container to prevent leakage of contents. Never sniff or smell suspect mail.
- If you do not have a container, then cover the envelope or package with anything available (e.g., clothing, paper, trash can, etc.) and do not remove the cover.
- Leave the room and close the door or section off the area to prevent others from entering.
- Wash your hands with soap and water to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
- If you are at work, report the incident to your building security official or an available supervisor, who should notify police and other authorities without delay.
- List all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give a copy of this list to both the local public health authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

SURVEILLANCE INDICATORS



Surveillance Indicators

Surveillance may be fixed or mobile.

Fixed surveillance is done from a static, often concealed position, possibly an adjacent building, business or other facility. In fixed surveillance scenarios, persons may establish themselves in a public location over an extended period of time or choose disguises or occupations such as street vendors, tourists, repair or deliverymen, photographers or even demonstrators to provide a plausible reason for being in the area.

Mobile surveillance usually entails observing and following persons or individual human targets, although it can be conducted against non-mobile facilities (e.g. driving by a site to observe the facility or site operations). To enhance mobile surveillance many persons have become more adept at progressive surveillance.

Progressive surveillance is a technique whereby the person observes a target for a short time from one position, withdraws for a time (possibly days or even weeks), then resumes surveillance from another position. This activity continues until the person determines target suitability and/or noticeable patterns in the operation's or target's movements. This type of transient presence makes the surveillance much more difficult to detect or predict.

More sophisticated surveillance is likely to be accomplished over a long period of time. This type of surveillance tends to evade detection and improve the quality of information. Some

persons perform surveillance of a target or target area over a period of months or even years. Public parks and other public gathering areas provide convenient venues for surveillance because it is not unusual for individuals or small groups in these areas to loiter or engage in leisure activities that could serve to cover surveillance activities.

Indicators of potential surveillance include:

- Persons using or carrying video or still cameras or other observation equipment in the area
- Persons attempting to gain photos or diagrams of your facility
- Persons parking, standing, or loitering in the same area over a multiple day period with no apparent reason
- Parishioners being questioned off site about practices and procedures
- Persons observing deliveries





HOUSE OF WORSHIP SECURITY SELF ASSESSMENT



NEIGHBORHOOD

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Can the house of worship be observed from surrounding facilities or streets?			
Are neighborhood streets and walkway in the immediate vicinity well lighted?			
Are the property boundaries of the house of worship easily recognizable by visual means?			

EXTERNAL GROUNDS

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Are designated parking lots or parking areas well lighted?			
Are pedestrian walkways and building entrances particularly well lighted?			
Are all signs of the building illuminated by exterior lighting?			
Are motion detector activated lighting located near doors and windows?			
Are exterior lights associated with the house of worship controlled by a photoelectric cell?			
Does someone have the specific responsibility for checking the operation of all outdoor lighting?			
Are lighting repairs made in a timely manner?			
Are switches, breakers or electrical panels inaccessible to the public?			
Is foliage prevented from obscuring exterior lighting figures?			

Are bushes, shrubbery or other plant growth trimmed in an appropriate manner so as not to serve as a hiding place?			
Are informal pathways lighted to prevent them from becoming a security risk?			
Is the line of sight from the house of worship to parking lots, pedestrian walkways unobstructed by landscaping and/or plant growth?			
Are exterior or detached storage buildings well-constructed and secured?			
Is the dumpster area well lighted?			
Have any steps been taken to prevent any exterior building recesses or alcoves from serving as hiding places?			

BUILDING PERIMETER

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Is there a marquee or other signage visible from the adjacent roadway that identifies the house of worship?			
Are visitor entry points clearly identified?			
Do visitors have to check in at an administrative office or desk before they can access other parts of the building?			
Are exterior doors not used as designated entry points locked to prevent entry from the exterior?			
Is there a strategy to prevent exterior doors from being propped open?			
Are perimeter doors full metal or solid core wooden doors with deadbolt locking devices? Must comply with all applicable fire regulations			
Are all locks functional and in good repair?			
Are exterior doors equipped with high quality cylindrical locks with a deadbolt of at least 1” in length?			
Is there more than 1/8” clearance between the exterior door and their door frames to prevent plying?			

Are all exterior windows easily locked?			
Are double-hung windows and horizontal sliding windows equipped with an auxiliary locking device or interlocking sashes to prevent a small flat blade sliding between the sashes to unlock the window? Must comply with all applicable fire regulations			
Are horizontal sliding windows or doors equipped with screws or devices to prevent the sash or door from being lifted from the track?			
Is there a clear procedure and person designated for unlocking and locking the house of worship on a daily basis?			

ELECTRONIC INTRUSTION DETECTION SYSTEM

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Does the house of worship have an intrusion alarm system?			
Does the alarm cover all exterior entry points?			
Is the intrusion alarm activated every night?			
Are there clear signs and/or decals posted on the exterior of the building indicating the house of worship is equipped with an intrusion alarm system?			
Is the intrusion detection system monitored from a central location?			
Are appointed members and staff formally trained on arming and disarming procedures?			
Is preventative maintenance and periodic testing done on the intrusion alarm system?			
Is there a process or procedure to upgrade or grow the system as needs dictate?			
Are the arm/disarm codes for the intrusion alarm system periodically changed?			
Are the names and call numbers of persons on the central monitoring station current?			

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Does the house of worship currently have a video surveillance system?			
Is the video system in good working order?			
Does the video system record?			
Is the video system used to view parking areas?			
Does the video system monitor the exterior of the building?			
Does the video system cover all points of entry?			
Does the video system also cover internal areas of the building?			
Is routine maintenance and testing done on the video system?			

INTERNAL BUILDING AREAS

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Are all interior hallways and rooms well lighted?			
Are doors secured sections when not in use?			
Are areas under stairwells enclosed or otherwise inaccessible?			
Are the lockable hardware of all interior doors routinely tested to ensure doors properly close and lock?			
Are locks on mechanical rooms locked and access controlled?			

KEY MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Is there a single person responsible for key issuance, retrieval and record keeping?			
Is there an accurate record of who has keys to the facility?			
Is the issuance of master keys closely controlled?			
Is key duplication prohibited?			
Are key holders required to sign for keys?			
Are duplicate keys stored in a locked cabinet with limited access?			
Are affected locks replaced or rekeyed whenever a key is lost or stolen?			



TWELVE STEPS TO CONGREGATIONAL SECURITY

ONE - PRAY

We know God is a protector, a comforter and who cares for us even more than we care for ourselves. A central part of any church security strategy is to seek God's face and remember the words of 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

TWO – SECURITY PLAN

No matter how large or small your church is, it's imperative that each church develop a plan to ensure the security of your congregation and critical assets. A security plan should holistically assess your church's security and provide the framework for keeping your church at a desired security level.

The first step in creating a viable and sustainable security program is to conduct a Risk Assessment and Need Resources Analysis. Assessing the risks you face, deciding how you will mitigate them, and planning for how you will keep your program and your security practices up to date.

THREE – SECURITY TEAM

Either employ outside personnel and/or designate key persons from within your church organization to work as greeters, security officers or public safety officers. Depending on the size of your church, scale of operations, and scope of duties for aforesaid persons, these positions may possibly be held by volunteers; but, do research your State’s laws regarding Private Security Company & Officer’s operations to insure your security team operates in compliance with any and all applicable laws.

FOUR – MEDICAL TRIAGE TEAMS

Create a small volunteer team of doctors, nurses and paramedics. This group will serve as an appendage of your security team to provide medical care ranging from basic first-aid to critical triage care prior to the arrival of paramedics, fire or police. It’s important to note, however, that churches can be liable if something goes wrong, so be sure to have clearly defined policies in place that do not expose your church to any potential liabilities.

FIVE – EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

There are many types of emergencies ranging from medical issues, power outages, bomb threats, fire, or active shooters. Unfortunately, many churches are not prepared to effectively and efficiently respond to such emergencies, and simply wait for something to happen. It is critical to have a plan for different scenarios before something tragic happens, hence why having a security program in place is so important.

SIX - COMMUNICATIONS

Whether during normal operations or in a time of crisis, communication is essential! Your church’s emergency response team should have a clear command structure, knowing who will be responsible for communicating with teams throughout the facility. A simple, yet venerable, protocol is the use of two-way radios. They are the most effective way to share information and coordinate people during emergencies. In large churches, it is important to have specific “zones” identified so that each team knows the specific evacuation plans or, in certain situations, lock-down protocols to keep people safe.

SEVEN – EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

ERT kits should include large, reflective vests, powerful flashlights, water, additional emergency radios, building maps and, in some cases small first aid kits and/or Automated External Defibrillator (AED). By placing emergency response team kits at strategic locations around the campus, distribution is made easier in the midst of an emergency. Some churches even keep a stash of “Go Bags” for children (water, space blankets, and snacks) in the event of an evacuation.

EIGHT – AGGRESSIVE FRIENLINESS

Chuck Chadwick, president of Gatekeepers Security Services and founder of the National Organization of Church Security and Safety Management, encourages congregations to train key people— often members of a security team in de-escalation techniques aimed at gently confronting suspicious or hostile individuals in a non-threatening way.

NINE – DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

It's a good practice for the church to engage and support local law enforcement. Invite the police officers assigned to patrol your area to stop in for a brief respite to have a cup of coffee or sometimes prayer. This practice not only strengthens church-police-community relations but also has the added benefit of a police presence on your campus.

TEN – BACKGROUND CHECKS

Conduct thorough background checks for key church personnel and volunteers working in the security program, administration, and children's' ministries.

ELEVEN – ACCESS CONTROL AND CHECK-IN SYSTEM

Ensure all ingress and egress points of your church are properly secured, staffed and monitored respective to your church's operations and security program. Utilizing a secure check-in system for children & larger events is a preemptive measure to mitigate many potential problems. This is an especially important measure to adopt to insure the integrity of children's ministries and day-care services.

TWELVE – CONDUCT “PEN TESTING” AND MOCK DRILLS

Once your church's security program and team are established, it's imperative that the entire team regularly conduct mock emergency drills to ensure the program functions effectively and efficiently.



EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

ROLE OF A SAFETY RESPONSE TEAM

The following are guidelines for creating a safety response team within your congregation should you deem it necessary. The positions listed are recommendations and can be adapted to the needs of your particular site. We recommend that several people be designated and trained for each position and that each position be represented at every possible worship service or event.

Building Coordinator

A building coordinator is a staff member or volunteer trained to know the floor plans of each building and the emergency evacuation procedures for any emergency—medical, fire, tornado, etc. The building coordinator may be involved in long-range planning. *(Your organization disaster response coordinator or building trustee might be appropriate for this position.)*

A building coordinator may be responsible for:

- Receiving status reports from the Incident Coordinator.
- Relaying status report information to the emergency agency/agencies involved (e.g., fire department, police, paramedics, emergency management, etc.).
- Coordinating with the emergency agency/agencies any needed evacuations or other emergency actions.
- A building coordinator may work with the emergency response team to:
 - Coordinate emergency planning activities.
 - Assist with recruiting team members.
 - Schedule training.
 - Communicate ongoing plans.

Incident Coordinator

(It should be noted that the Incident Coordinator is not the same as the “Incident Commander”)

The incident coordinator on duty assumes responsibility for implementing the building emergency plan at the time of the incident, providing leadership until personnel with more experience arrive on scene. (*Greeters, ushers, or other leaders might be appropriate for this position.*) Responsibilities may include the following:

- Working with other emergency response team members to evaluate an emergency.
- Ensuring proper emergency communication.
- Delegating needed emergency actions.
- The incident coordinator may also be called upon by the emergency agency/agencies involved to aid in crowd control and building evacuation.
- The incident coordinator should immediately identify her/himself as such to maintenance personnel and emergency agency personnel responding to an incident.

Medical Response Team Members

Medical response team members are members of the emergency response team who have been trained in medical emergencies. Responsibilities include the following:

- Providing —first aid to those incurring a medical emergency until medical personnel with higher training arrive on scene.
- Conducting a primary assessment of the medical emergency situations and reporting this assessment to appropriate personnel.
- Providing medical assistance and support until professional help arrives.
- Remaining in charge of a medical emergency situation until professional help arrives.

Medical response team members should immediately identify themselves as such to any personnel responding to the incident.

Safety Response Team Members

The safety response team members are staff members or volunteers who understand and are prepared to facilitate a safe and effective response to any emergency situation. Safety response team members know the location of approved tornado shelter areas in the building. Responsibilities include the following:

- Building evacuations—responsible for reporting to the incident coordinator that their assigned section has been cleared during an evacuation.
- Lock down/shelter in place procedures
- Other intervention procedures as the situations dictate.
- Work in coordination with the building maintenance/trustees to minimize hazards.

- If available, maintain hand-held radios to coordinate with incident coordinator or other team members.

Safety response team members should immediately identify themselves as such to any personnel responding to the incident.

BUILDING EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Leader Responsibilities

In the event of an emergency, leader responsibilities may include the following:

- Knowing how to correctly respond to and summon help for a medical emergency.
- Knowing how to correctly report a fire or smoke emergency using the 911 emergency numbers.
- Knowing the locations of the manual fire alarm pull stations in their area.
- Knowing the locations of the fire extinguishers in their area and how to use them.
- Knowing how to correctly respond to a fire warning alarm.
- Knowing the facilities lock-down/shelter in place procedure.
- Knowing designated shelter areas and precautions to take in the event of a tornado emergency.
- Becoming familiar with exit routes and knowing alternate exits to correctly respond to a call for an evacuation.
- Closing all opened doors as they evacuate an area.

Medical Emergency

Call 911 or other appropriate emergency response activation number. Be prepared to give the following information:

- Name and extension.
- Location.
- Number of people involved.
- Nature of injury or illness.
- Remember to stay on the line until help arrives, if at all possible.

Note: Treat minor injuries from supplies in the first aid kits. The kits are located (*provide location here*).

While waiting for professional help do not move the ill or injured person, unless safety considerations necessitate movement or transportation to a safer location. When professional help arrives:

- Allow responding units to take control of situation.
- Emergency response team members will stand by to assist as needed

Regular CPR/First Aid training is recommended for all leaders, especially pre-school and Sunday school teachers.

Fire and Smoke Emergencies

If you detect smoke and/or fire:

- Activate the manual fire alarm
- Initiate evacuation procedures for any occupants of the affected building(s)
- Call 911 (move to a safe area before making this call).
- Give your name, telephone number, and location.
- Describe the situation.
- If you know how to use a fire extinguisher and feel the best course of action is to attempt to extinguish the fire, locate an extinguisher and, without risking injury attempt to extinguish the fire.
- If the fire is beyond the point of a safe attempt to extinguish it, isolate the fire by closing doors in the area before evacuating.

If the Fire Warning Alarm Sounds

- Do not use the elevator.
- Immediately initiate evacuation procedures.

Note: Evacuation route and holding areas should be checked/secured prior to the evacuation; if at all possible, noting a fire alarm could be a ruse to get people to evacuate to an area where they are more accessible or vulnerable to someone wanting to harm them. Evacuation should be toward ground level. If you encounter smoke or heat in a stairwell, proceed across that floor to another stairwell and continue evacuation to ground level.

- Assist disabled persons in your area.
- If you encounter smoke, take short breaths through your nose and crawl along the floor to the nearest exit.
- Feel all doors with your hand before opening. If the door is hot, do not open it. If the door is cool, open it slowly, keeping behind the door in case you have to quickly close it to protect yourself from oncoming smoke or fire.
- Proceed to the ground level and outdoors.
- Move **upwind** of the building at least 75 feet away from the building and beyond designated fire lanes. Go to your designated assembly area (if possible).
- Do not go to your automobile or attempt to move it from the parking lot. This could hinder access by emergency vehicles.
- Do not congregate near building exits, driveways, or roadways.
- Do not reenter the building until an all clear is issued by the incident coordinator. (Note: The “all clear” should be initially issued by the Fire Department.)

Building Evacuation Emergency

All leaders should know the emergency evacuation routes and procedures for the building, and their designated assembly area outside the building. Memorize the exit route closest to your work area or office.

The designated assembly areas are located: *(provide primary and alternate locations here)*.

Should the designated assembly area be deemed unsafe, an alternate assembly area will be located *(provide location here)*.

If a Building Evacuation is Initiated, important “dos” and “don’ts” are:

- Remain calm.
- Follow the instructions of the incident coordinator or emergency response team, if applicable.
- If you occupy an enclosed office, close the door as you leave.
- Use stairwells (do not use elevator) for evacuation. Be alert for other staff, members, and emergency agency personnel who might also be using the stairwells.
- Do not return for coats, purses, briefcases, etc., after you have left the area.
- Do not smoke.
- Do not return to your area until the —all clear signal is given.

Note: Ensure that *(identify appropriate leader here)* has planned with disabled leaders or members a procedure to assist each disabled person in evacuating. Emergency evacuation procedures should be provided to all members (e.g. in member orientations).

SEVERE WEATHER

Tornado:

When a warning is issued by sirens or other means, seek inside shelter. Consider the following:

- Small interior rooms on the lowest floor and without windows,
- Hallways on the lowest floor away from doors and windows, and
- Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick, or block with no windows.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.
- Use arms to protect head and neck.
- Remain sheltered until the tornado threat is announced to be over.

Earthquake:

- Stay calm and await instructions from the Emergency Coordinator or the designated official.
- Keep away from overhead fixtures, windows, filing cabinets, and electrical power.

- Assist people with disabilities in finding a safe place.
- Evacuate as instructed by the Emergency Coordinator and/or the designated official.

Flood:

- Be ready to evacuate as directed by the Emergency Coordinator and/or the designated official.
- Follow the recommended primary or secondary evacuation routes.

Hurricane:

The nature of a hurricane provides for more warning than other natural and weather disasters. A hurricane watch is issued when a hurricane becomes a threat to a coastal area. A hurricane warning is issued when hurricane winds of 74 mph or higher, or a combination of dangerously high water and rough seas, are expected in the area within 24 hours.

Once a hurricane watch has been issued:

- Stay calm and await instructions from the Emergency Coordinator or the designated official.
- Continue to monitor local TV and radio stations for instructions.
- Move early out of low-lying areas or from the coast, at the request of officials.
- If you are on high ground, away from the coast and plan to stay, secure the building, moving all loose items indoors and boarding up windows and openings.
- Collect drinking water in appropriate containers.

Once a hurricane warning has been issued:

- Be ready to evacuate as directed by the Emergency Coordinator and/or the designated official.
- Leave areas that might be affected by storm tide or stream flooding.

During a hurricane:

- Remain indoors and consider the following:
 - Small interior rooms on the lowest floor and without windows,
 - Hallways on the lowest floor away from doors and windows, and
 - Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick, or block with no windows.

Blizzard:

If indoors:

- Stay calm and await instructions from the Emergency Coordinator or the designated official.

- Stay indoors!

If there is no heat:

- Close off unneeded rooms or areas.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Cover windows at night.
- Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy and heat. Fluids prevent dehydration.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, light-weight, warm clothing, if available.

CONDUCTING A HAZARD ANALYSIS

Purpose

The purpose of a hazard analysis is to determine the hazards a site is most susceptible and vulnerable to experiencing. By determining those hazards prior to development, the site emergency plan will be realistic.

Starting Point

A good place to look for information regarding potential hazards is the local emergency management office. This office can describe the disaster history of the community, the location of flood plains, frequency of major storms, and so on. The local library may also provide some insight on local disasters.

Considerations

Look at disasters or emergencies that have occurred in the community, for example: severe winter weather, hurricanes, forest fires, flooding, utility problems, transportation accidents, etc. Consider the geographic location of the site to flood plains, nuclear power plants, heavy forest, major transportation routes, and neighboring sites that might be hazardous. Look into past emergency events onsite. Consider technological problems that could occur due to problems on the site, such as heating and cooling systems, incinerator problems, power failure, etc. Consider the construction of buildings on the site. Do the buildings pose any hazards, such as building collapse?

Hazard Analysis Worksheet

Using the worksheet on the next page, examine the listed hazards. List any possible hazards that the site may face under the first column labeled “Hazards”. Cross off any hazards that are not possible, for example, the onsite hazardous material incident.

Using a scale of 1 to 3, estimate the possibility of each listed hazard.

1. **Unlikely or low possibility**
2. **Maybe or Average possibility**
3. **Likely or high possibility**

In the next three columns labeled “Employee Impact”, “Property Impact”, and “Economic Impact” use a scale of 1 to 3. Using the 1 to 3 scale estimate the possible impact of each hazard on the employees, property and business. Use a worst case scenario to estimate the probable impact.

1. **Low impact – Few hours of productivity lost, minor injuries, slight property damage**
2. **Moderate impact – Loss of wage, serious bodily injury, moderate property damage**
3. **High impact – Loss of employment, loss of life, destruction of property**

After factoring each impact area, total the row for each hazard. Using the totals, prioritize the hazards to determine which hazards to plan for first. Depending on the needs and resources of the organization, complete the low priorities as possible.

HAZARD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Hazards	Possibility	Employee Impact	Property Impact	Economic Impact	Total Possible Impact
Fire					
Tornado					
Severe Winter Storm					
Flood					
Onsite Hazardous Materials					
Bomb Threat					
Civil Unrest					
Utility Failure					