

**Producing a Seminar for:  
*Security and Safety for Places of Worship:  
Every Day and All the Time*  
by Tina Lewis Rowe**



**Details About Seminar Production:** This very useful and immediately applicable seminar can be produced relatively easily, so don't let the details discourage you or your group!

I never want it to seem that I am high-maintenance about when and where I present, and that is not my reason for the details mentioned here. I just know from experience that it takes a coordinator and at least a few volunteers to bring it together. Having a few more to assist will ensure a seminar that will attract a large number of participants, all of whom will come away feeling positive about having a secure and safe place of worship.

**Overview:** This six-hour seminar is engaging and fast-paced and gets enthusiastic responses from every participant—church leaders, staff and volunteers, church members and public safety employees. It provides the inspiration and information needed to develop, implement, maintain, sustain and strengthen a *comprehensive security and safety program in any place of worship*.

It is not presented from the viewpoint of any specific faith and includes examples from a wide range of places of worship.

Topics covered:

- The Four Components of a Comprehensive Program, Adaptable for Every Church.
- Keeping the Whole-Church Focus: Protecting the People, Places, Property, Processes and Programs of a Place of Worship.
- Concerns and Issues: Developing security and safety groups; decisions and issues about weapons; how to do thorough, ongoing inspections and assessments; emergency plans and training; responses to emergencies; reducing the "assailant's advantage", disruptions and threats; protective measures; security staffing; law enforcement liaisons, developing personal plans for individuals and families.
- Whole-Church Engagement for Security and Safety Stewardship.

**Full 6 hour seminar:** 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a short break for a provided on-site lunch. (Box or sack lunch from deli or fast-food source, catered food or pizza.) The shortened lunch is necessary to allow the seminar to be done in 6 hours and it is very beneficial to keep the group together all day.

**Shorter seminars:** These can be done if there are no other options, but it is not optimal. It takes time to explain the concepts and provide guidelines and helpful ideas. In addition, the visual material in the full seminar is extensive and very useful, but must be reduced for the shorter time frame. The minimum time for an overview and foundational material is three hours with or without a short break.

**Seminar incorporating local trainers:** Sometimes local police or sheriff's organizations or a church security group from a host church, wants to have a representative provide some aspect of the training. In those cases, advance planning is required, to ensure an effective team-teaching approach.

**Host group or groups:**

- One or more Sheriff's Offices and Police Departments
- Sheriff or police employee associations, chaplain associations
- Criminal Justice components: U.S. Attorney, District/County Attorney, City Attorney
- One or more churches or a network of churches
- Insurance companies, security and safety vendors
- Community organizations and service clubs

**Scheduling:** Experience shows that Thursday is the best day for a seminar in most places, although Saturdays allow participation by many who could not attend otherwise.

(Fridays and Saturdays are sometimes not convenient for church leaders and staff or for those with families, unless childcare is provided. Those days may also eliminate some faiths or denominations.)

You know your community best, but consider potential participants before you assume Saturday would be best. I'll be happy to present on any day you choose!

Evening seminars are limited to three or four hours and seem to do best on Tuesday or Thursday, since Wednesday evening is a busy evening for many places of worship.

**Training fee:** My fee covers preparation time, travel days, the presentation day and follow-up time (there is often a lot of that). I pay airfare and related travel costs, lodging, ground transportation, meals and taxes: In 2018 my fee is \$3,200, which is often defrayed by a small registration fee.

**Other costs to the host group(s):** Materials to produce the seminar (lunch, breaks, paper supplies, postage, etc.), may be about \$10-\$15 per registrant, but may be much less, if sponsors for breaks and lunch are used.

**How to cover costs:** Usually, registrants are charged a small registration fee and seminar costs are paid out of those fees, with the host group or groups covering any differences. Registration fees have varied from \$12 to \$75, but average \$25.

Sometimes the host pays all costs, to allow participants to attend without charge. Some hosts have been fortunate to have local food sources provide lunch as a public service. In other cases, local groups have combined to support the host group.

**Attendance numbers:** Attendance varies according to size restrictions of the venue and according to the cost, level of advertising and weather. A well-advertised seminar will result in audiences of 80-100 or more (several have been near 300-400).

Sometimes the venue restricts the audience to much less. For example, a library auditorium may only seat 50. In those cases, advertisements stop when the maximum registration is reached. In some locations a second seminar has been held the next day (for a small additional fee.)

**Added training for host church:** Occasionally, an individual church wants the entire seminar just for their church members. Or, a group of church leaders or a security team may want a partial day, after a community day, for a small additional fee.

**Location:** The ideal locations are public buildings (community center, library, etc., educational institution (college community room, auditorium, conference room, etc.) public safety training location (large auditorium or public-access training room) or similar auditorium or conference rooms.

A well-known place of worship can be an effective location, especially if the church is known for community outreach and often hosts events that are open to ecumenical audiences.

- Parking should be sufficient and nearby.
- Seating: Seminar seating with several people to a table or a standard classroom configuration is preferred.

If the room only has theatre seating, participants will need to be able to move to tables in another part of the building for lunch.

- If using round tables, allow for extra and only use  $\frac{3}{4}$  of each table, to avoid having people sit with their backs to the speaker and A/V screen, or requiring some people to stay turned around, holding the workbook in their laps.
- If there are many more seats than registrations, empty seating areas at the back should be cordoned off with tape or signs, so people sit nearer the front and comfortably closer together.

**Lighting:** Both the speaker and the participants should have adequate light and the PowerPoint screen should be visible with lights on. I will present anywhere you need me to present, but it is challenging for participants to be in a dark room all day.

**Space needs:**

- One or more registration tables with space for registrants to wait in-line, indoors.
- Refreshment tables for water bottles or coffee.
- Sufficient tables for box or sack lunches, opened pizza boxes or catered lunch.
- Arrangements for coat storage in winter, if seating areas are crowded.

**Optional:** Tables for local police and fire department representatives, church insurance companies, local vendors for security and safety equipment or church supplies.

Sometimes these tables are only staffed through the morning. Often a company or group hosts a break, in exchange for a few minutes to greet the audience and mention the company name and services.

**Audio/Visual Needs:** PowerPoint capability with the ability for the speaker to advance slides.

Note: This program cannot be produced with PowerPoint slides being advanced by someone other than the speaker or in a remote A/V booth, since the slides contain many advance points.

Sound is not needed for the PowerPoint. As noted previously, the room should be adequately lighted even when PowerPoint or other A/V is on.

**Sound system:** A room that seats more than 50 people usually requires the use of a microphone. A lavalier/lapel microphone is preferred, but a wireless head microphone can be worn. Handheld or podium microphones don't work well for this seminar, because of the length of time involved and the need for movement.

**Seminar volunteers:** Although a seminar can be produced with only one or two very committed people, volunteer assignments can get the work done more effectively and easily and provide a professional result. It also can increase a feeling of engagement among several churches or groups and is nearly always viewed as a fun time.

In some events volunteers have had several responsibilities, while in others, each volunteer has had only one assignment.

Among the sources for volunteers in previous seminars (varying according to the situation or the volunteer assignment):

- \*Members of the host group or groups.
- \*Police chaplains and members of their churches.
- \*Security teams and security networks.
- \*Registrants, in exchange for a registration fee.
- \*Member churches in Ministerial Alliance groups.

●**Local seminar coordinator(s):** Local people are the key ingredients for a successful seminar. One or more coordinators can ensure that volunteers are ready and able to perform their tasks and that everything comes together on time. I am happy to share thoughts via email and phone calls, to help that be an easy, effective project.

●**Advertising distribution. Advertising is crucial to success—hard copy, e-file and phone calls, sent out several times.** There have been a few host groups that were able to advertise in a week and fill a huge room, but usually it takes at least a month and preferably 45 days to two months or longer, to advertise successfully. Your community may be much different than that, so you can decide.

**Advertising tasks:** One or more volunteers identify potential participants—people, churches and groups—and send ads by email or regular mail and make phone calls. Optimally, advertisements should be sent 45 days out and 15 days out—sometimes with additional ads in that time frame. Sometimes it is useful to send out one more ad the week prior.

**Note:** It is quite commonplace for a few registrations to start being made about one month out, then have a flurry of registrations during the last week. Some hosts set a deadlines of one week out, so food orders can be made and seating needs established.

●**Registration communication:** One or more people to respond to emails and phone calls and to keep a list of registrants for follow-up before the seminar.

●**Registration table:** It nearly always necessary to have one or more people greet participants, check their names on the list of registrants, take checks and cash and give receipts. Usually one person for every 25 participants is required, to get everyone checked-in and seated, before about 8:55 a.m.

●**Breaks and lunch tables:** Break items and food need to be distributed with minimal delay and to ensure sanitary conditions. One person for every 25 participants is effective.

●**After-seminar clean-up or pick-up:** Even if the location has custodial staff, it is necessary to have someone check the area for left items or to note clean-up needs.

●**Event security and safety:** A seminar of this nature could attract the attention of someone wanting to create disruption or cause harm. There may also be medical emergencies, a fire or some other concern. Show security and safety leadership by having plans for the well-being of participants and the location.

There should at least be several people assigned to watch main doors to observe and be ready to call 911 for assistance if needed. One or more people could also be assigned to observe in the seminar room and be ready to assist. It may also be useful to have one or more people occasionally check the parking lot.

**The final product:** I will help develop advertisements for local distribution and will stay in contact with seminar coordinators. I will present an informative and enjoyable seminar that will bring participants together in mind and spirit and create a tremendous amount of goodwill for the host group or organization.

Participants will leave with plans of action in mind and will feel positive about the ability of their churches to develop, implement, improve or strengthen their security and safety program. Individuals will be thinking of ways they can contribute to such a program and stay more safe in every situation.

I hope we can work together to bring a *Security and Safety for Places of Worship* seminar to your area. You will be providing a tremendous service to places of worship and helping every place of worship feel part of a network of community caring.

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## **Tina Lewis Rowe**

Author of the most widely distributed material on church safety and security—over 35,000 copies distributed, world-wide, without charge.

- Thirty-four years in active law enforcement—25 years with the Denver Police Department, retiring as a Captain, and 8 years as the Presidential appointed United States Marshal for Colorado. Developed security plans for trials, dignitary visits and major events.
- Presented to thousands of audiences on a wide range of topics related to public safety effectiveness, organizational and professional development, leadership, management, and security and safety planning for businesses, government and organizations.
- Evaluated security at nuclear sites and military bases, historic and traditional courthouses, federal sites and private sector businesses.
- Worked with hundreds of places of worship to improve their security and safety.
- Her website, [www.tinalewisrowe.com](http://www.tinalewisrowe.com), is a widely used resource for organizational, personal and professional development.