Security and Safety for Places of Worship

Personalize and adapt everything for your place of worship and what works for your situation.
The 5-Ps of Your Place of Worship:

- Property
- Places
- People
- Programs
- Processes

What it takes to keep the 5-Ps secure and safe:
- Inspection
- Prevention
- Detection
- Protection
- Action

How a whole-church focus can help:
- Inspection
- Prevention
- Protection
- Detection
- Readiness for Action

Whole-Church Program Components
1. A Safety and Security Coordinating Group
   * Security Team
   * Safety Team or Medical Team
   * Security Liaisons
2. Security and Safety Inspections
3. Procedures, Plans and Checklists
5. Whole-Church Involvement:
Safety and Security Committee

Security Team

Medical Assistance Team (Safety Team)

Security Liaisons

Security Volunteers

- Police officers, military, firefighters, (current or retired).
- OR, may be a team of alert adults who are ready to respond directly to problems and to get assistance when appropriate.
- Works with Security and Safety committee or church leadership regarding activities, apparel, equipment, etc.

Be clear and specific about participation, no matter who are members of the Team:

1. Background investigation.
2. Attitudes and approaches to situations.
3. Scheduling and attendance.
4. Attire, grooming and overall demeanor.
5. Responsibilities and tasks (and limitations and prohibitions.)
6. Weapons and non-lethal items—training and qualification activities.

- Don’t set a number, so there are no “vacancies” to fill. Invite members, after discussion and careful consideration.
- Develop a few tasks to which you can assign a volunteer who isn’t optimal for a protective role.
- Rotate an Intelligence Officer role to stay aware of trends and events.
- Have a leadership role in keeping a whole-church focus.
Main Service Tasks
- Focus on the worship leader and platform team/choir/musicians.
- Focus on the congregation.
- Focus on the lobby and exterior.
- Patrolling through the building, to check entry points, restrooms, children’s areas, etc.
- Ready to evaluate situations quickly and either call 911 or handle on-site.
- Assistance in any kind of emergency.

Research and understand your legal options
- Weapon
  - Non-Lethal Weapon
    - Hitting, Slapping
    - Pushing, Shoving
  - Vocal Disturbance
    - Threats

Disruption

Weapons?
Legality for the individuals involved.

Leadership preferences.

Training/Capabilities/Judgment.

Other important training:
- Reducing (de-escalating) conflict.
- Recognizing and responding to mental health and emotional issues.
- Recognizing and responding to indicators of domestic violence, child or elder abuse, sex crimes and improprieties.
- Methods and plans for handling a variety of disruptions.
- Recognizing explosives.
- Recognizing indicators of concealed weapons.
Develop a duress word or code words, known by the team, leaders, greeters, ushers and others.

Expand the Role of the Security Team

- A leadership role in whole-church efforts: support, encourage and train.
- Research situations and use as scenarios for discussion and training.
- Training, briefings, consulting for pastors, staff and members. Be an active resource for safety.

Briefings:
- Conferences and camps
- Travel—domestic and foreign
- Mission trips
- Food pantry staff, money handling, vehicle safety, personal safety.

Before they leave..............

Vehicle safety?
Driving requirements and restrictions?
Behaviors that are not allowed?
Safety tips for the situation or location?
Other advice?
Include a Safety Team or Medical Assistance Team (EMR Team)

* Minor first aid. CPR, AED.
* Assistance while waiting for 911 response.
* Trained responses if appropriate.
* A wide range of other activities can be developed........

Other activities and projects.

* Blood drives.
* Health Fairs.
* Safety talks for children. (Playground, classroom, etc.)
* Health and Fitness.
* Newsletter quarterly.
* Website articles.

Safety and Security Liaison

* Be responsible for keys, open-up and lock-down, final look-around.
* Be aware and alert.
* Ensure that safety procedures are followed.
* Be ready to give and get assistance.
* Report concerns and problems in a timely manner. 911.
The Committee and Teams can provide leadership about traditional Crime Prevention

- Burglary
- Robbery
- Theft
- Embezzlement
- Vandalism

Most frequently stolen items:
1. Sound systems
2. Audiovisual equipment
3. Computers
4. Art objects
5. Cash
6. Copper fittings/sprinklers and ACs

An average of 1,300 church fires are reported each year, causing $40 million in property loss.

15% Arson.
30% Mechanical failures/faulty wiring and improperly functioning heating systems.
40% caused by stoves (primarily burners.)
65% had no smoke alarms.

Develop the Security Team and Safety Team to be:
- Leadership Teams
- Information Teams
- Guidance Teams
- Guardian Teams
- Assistance Teams
- Protective Teams
- Defending Teams
2. Inspect and Assess the BIG Picture

Inspect the 5-Ps:
- Places
- Property
- People
- Programs
- Processes

You can conduct a thorough and effective inspection and assessment:
1. Use the guidelines in the Inspection portion of the large download document.
2. Is anything worrisome? Could it lead to something else?
   What could go wrong?
   Could it be detected? Could it be prevented?
   What protection would help?
3. What needs to be done right now to make this better?

Assign people to observe, inspect and assess, many times during a year.
Inspect and Assess by Zones and Activities Within Those Zones—24/7/365

- Parking areas and property
- Exterior of the church; access points, vulnerable areas
- Sanctuary
- Each space; key people; age groups; property; functions; processes; services, special events.

A church that is very, very clean is much more likely to be maintained in other ways as well.

Inspect mechanical, plumbing, appliances, general maintenance and anything that might cause a problem when no one is around to detect it.

In addition to more formal inspections—take a Walk-About.

* Before, during and after services
* Before during and after meetings, parties or events.
* At irregular times during the week.

"Walk about and check things out."
Written policies, procedures, plans
1. High risk activities and situations.
2. High liability activities and situations.
3. Things that are not done very often.
4. Things that are done by different people over time.
5. Activities or tasks where you know there is a tendency to cut corners or to do according to personal preference.

Checklists for special services and events:
- Equipment needed/status
- Safety issues and risks and how to prevent/respond
- Set-up/Break down
- What must be done/can’t be done.

Policies, procedures and checklists especially apply to working with youth, from infants to young adult.

Adults with children?
Children in an activity?
Counseling?

The Plan is really a group of plans and procedures
* Hard copy and computer file.
* Contact numbers
* Checklists and lists

The important thing is to start, then keep adding to it.
Plan for these two options for what seems to be *non-violent* disturbances and disruptions

1. Shield and Guard
2. Divert and Direct

**Shield and Guard**
Put a barrier between the threat and the protected person or group.

**Divert and Direct**
* Distract and delay.
* Guide the disturbance away and outside.
* Leave a way out, in the direction of an exit.
* Do not prevent the person from leaving.

**Security Team members** should plan general actions each will take.

* Who will call 911?
* Who will talk to the problem person?
* If it gets physical who will grab legs, feet, arms, head?
* Who will shield the congregation and/or pastor and platform team?
Variations on the same fundamental concept:

- Run, Hide, Fight
- Avoid, Deny, Defend
- Escape, Wait, Attack
- Get out, Hide out, Take-out
- Move! Escape or Attack

No specific order of action.

May be used by everyone.

*Hide* does not necessarily mean cower.

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If avoiding or hiding isn’t a good option or hasn’t been successful:

Throw chairs, books, purses or other items. Use fire extinguishers, flags, food or anything else. Anything!

**The goal:** Distract, startle, slow down the attack, harm or neutralize.

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**Confront, Contain and Control**

Physical force to overpower. Using actual or improvised weapons. (Non-lethal or lethal)

[Diagram of Confrontation and Containment]

This may be the only way to save lives.
Buddy Bar
Door Jammer:
$75 or so,
but much, much
stronger than
similar products.
buddybardoorjammer.com
Lockdownshades.com

The Assailant’s Advantage
This applies to anyone who plans
aggression, with or without a weapon.
Firearm
Knife
Fists
Improvised weapon

Sexual assault, business robbery, street
robbery, home or church invasion.

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November 5, 2016:
Eugene O’Donnell
(Professor at John Jay College)
in the New York News:
“The bad or deranged guy chooses the time,
place and manner of his attack on the police.
The first shots are often fired by the
assailant, narrowing the options cops have
and leaving their survival to luck or chance.”
By using components of a Whole-Church security and safety program, we can reduce some of the assailant's advantage and keep him from gaining more.

Having a weapon is only one aspect of reducing an assailant’s advantage.

A reminder: Almost 100% of police officers killed by the use of a weapon are armed—and many have their weapons drawn.

What advantages can we take from an assailant?
- His ability to catch everyone off-guard.
- His ability to arrive and blend in, without being observed and monitored.
- His ability to find unsecured or unmonitored exterior or interior entry points.
- His access to vulnerable people or targeted areas or people.

What advantages can be taken from an assailant?
- His ability to have time on-site to prepare.
- His ability to hide inside or outside and wait.
- His ability to act without being detected.
- His ability to be anonymous or unidentifiable.
- His ability to sustain an attack.
- His ability to know the exact location and capabilities of the security team.
On-going security measures can take away the assailant’s advantage. 
● Cannot catch everyone off-guard.
● Cannot arrive and blend in, without being monitored.
● Cannot gain access to vulnerable or targeted areas or people.
● Cannot find unmonitored exterior or interior entry points.
  (No security measures or measures not being used.)
● Cannot have time or opportunity to prepare for an attack.
● Cannot be detected or outside and wait.
● Cannot act without being detected.
● Cannot be anonymous or unidentifiable.
● Cannot know the exact location and capabilities of the security team.
● Cannot sustain an attack.

How can individuals and groups make a difference?

● Family and friends of angry, threatening, troubled or mentally or emotionally dysfunctional people. 
  (Legal or civil action; warn likely targets, make police reports, etc.)

● Church staff or volunteers who have counseled or conversed with someone who discusses a potentially threatening situation. (Notifications to security team and others, notifications to law enforcement, warnings to targets.)

What resources can make a difference?

● Law enforcement resources who hear of concerns that might be linked to the congregation or pastor. 
  (Warnings to all area churches, identifying information, further investigation, additional protective resources)

● Anyone who hears rumors, notices something disturbing or thinks there could be an incident. 
  (Congregation, security teams, church neighbors, church network.)
A Phone and Email Network of Churches

Contact about suspicious situations.
Contact if a property crime was attempted or committed.
Contact about threats.
Contact about strangers who exhibit odd behaviors.
Contact about disruptions.
Contact to share information.

- Be aware of anything that might indicate the church is being targeted.
  Someone is seen observing the church.
  Odd behaviors of a visitor.
  Public criticism of the church or members.
  Threats about intentions toward the church.

1. Security and Safety Committee,
   Security Team
   Safety Team
   Security Liaisons

2. Inspections (An ongoing program)

3. Plans, procedures, checklists.


5. Involve the Whole Church

1. Be consistent, persistent and insistent.
   Exceptions weaken the safety and security of your whole church.

2. Be creative: Quizzes, surveys, handouts, home and church safety, etc.

3. Make it part of every activity. “What could go wrong?” Or, “How could this be made more safe?”
Training doesn’t have to complicated.

**Explain:** Describe the use of equipment or supplies for emergencies. Describe suggested actions.

**Discuss:** Use scenarios you apply to specific people, places, property, programs and processes in your church.

**Provide visual material:** Draw diagrams or have photos to show locations of mechanical parts (dials, turn-off valves, etc.), emergency equipment, exit routes, etc.

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- **Youth:** General safety and security (on-site and off-site), trends, vehicle safety, quick exit information and walk-through.
- **Children and Infant:** Staff briefings, safety coloring pages, playground safety, awards, etc.
- **Senior/elderly age:** General issues, phone scams and mail fraud, elder abuse, location of medical equipment, etc.
The 5-Ps of Your Place of Worship:

Places

Property

People

Programs

Processes

To keep the 5-Ps secure and safe:

Inspection
Prevention
Detection
Protection
Readiness for Action
You can have a leadership role:

1. Balance concern with reason, logic and optimism.
2. Keep a dual focus: Security and Safety.
3. Keep your entire place of worship in mind.
4. Think basic before high tech or high cost. Start with people solutions.
5. Think and talk of safety and security as something you and everyone can help achieve.

Thank you!

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