

Church Safety, Security & Emergency Preparedness

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WHY DO WE NEED CHURCH SECURITY?

Security should not be the main focus of any church but providing adequate security for individuals attending will help create an environment where its members and visitors don't fear violence and it will not hinder them from attending church or church activities.



VIOLENT INCIDENTS ARE NOTHING NEW

- Attacks or violent incidents are nothing new but are increasing.
- In the past 15 years
 - Over 960 Violent incidents at Churches or Religious Events (Suicide, Murder, Robbery, Rape, Assault, Kidnapping)
 - Over 295 Occurred inside the Church
 - Over 665 Occurred on the property or during an event
 - There have been over 400 people killed during these incidents

* Reference www.carlchinn.com



THE REALITY OF VIOLENCE AT CHURCH

- While rare, acts of violence do occur at Churches.
- Violent acts may include robbery, murder, rape and assault.
- The majority of attacks are carried out by someone with some connection to the Church.
- The most common violent act at Churches is a shooting.
- Most Churches are unprepared for a violent event or its aftermath.



WHO IS AT RISK?

- No Church is immune to the risk of a violent episode occurring.
- Churches of all sizes, locations and resources have experienced acts of violence.



THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Where a Security Plan Begins



HOW TO IMPROVE SECURITY

- Have A Plan
 - Church leadership should have a basic plan in place for dealing with security issues.
 - The plan should deal with such areas as:
 - Disruption of services
 - Violence
 - Natural disaster
 - Medical Emergency / Allergic Reactions
 - Missing Child
- The plan should clearly define procedures to handle a variety of situations.



STATE LAW

- "Churches deserve protection from those who would harm worshippers," said Bryant, a Republican, in a Twitter post explaining his decision to sign the measure into law.
- The legislation also allows Mississippi residents eligible to own a gun to carry a firearm in holsters without a permit, reported *Reuters*.
- Participants carrying firearms for church security programs must have safety training and meet permitting standards.



STATE LAW

- **2016 Mississippi Code**

Title 45 - Public Safety and Good Order

Chapter 9 - Weapons

Mississippi Church Protection Act (§ 45-9-171)

§ 45-9-171. Mississippi Church Protection Act; security program requirements



STATE LAW

- 1) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Mississippi Church Protection Act."
- (2) (a) The governing body of any church or place of worship may establish a security program by which designated members are authorized to carry firearms for the protection of the congregation of the church or place of worship, including resisting any unlawful attempt to commit a violent felony listed in Section 97-3-2(1) upon a member or other attendee in the church or place of worship or on the immediate premises thereof. A church or place of worship may establish a security program that meets the requirements of subsection (2)(b) of this section, and a member of the security program shall be immune from civil liability for any action taken by a member of the security program if the action in question occurs during the reasonable exercise of and within the course and scope of the member's official duties as a member of the security program for the church or place of worship. For purposes of this section, "church" or "place of worship" means only a bona fide duly constituted religious society, ecclesiastical body, or any congregation thereof.
- (b) In order to be eligible for the immunity provided in this section:



STATE LAW

- i) The program at a minimum must require that each participant of the program possesses a firearms permit issued under Section 45-9-101 and has completed an instructional course in the safe handling and use of firearms as described in Section 97-37-7. The program may also include one or more persons with law enforcement or military background who may assist the church or place of worship in training of the members of the program;
- (ii) The names of the members designated by the church or place of worship to serve in the security program must be spread upon the minutes of the body or otherwise noted in writing at the time of the member's designation if the body does not maintain minutes, and this written record must be made available to law enforcement upon request during the course of investigation after an incident in which the member used a firearm while acting as a member of the security program; and



STATE LAW

- (iii) The member of the program who is claiming immunity under the provisions of this section must have met the requirements of this paragraph (b).
- (3) A person who is indicted or charged with a violation of criminal law while acting as a member of a security program of a church or place of worship may assert as a defense, in addition to any other defense available, that at the time of the action in question, the person was a member of a church body or place of worship security program, was then actually engaged in the performance of the person's duties as a member of the program, and had met the requirements of this section at the time of the action in question.



HAVE SOMEONE IN CHARGE

- A Church security team led by one person in charge of security is usually the best way to improve security.
 - The person in charge needs to be someone with command and control experience.
 - Current or retired law enforcement officers or military personnel are usually the best choices.

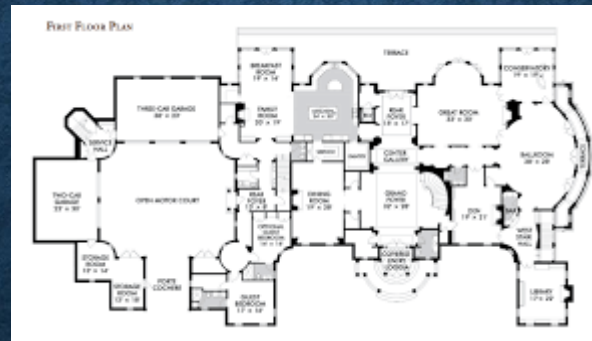


SECURITY ASSESSMENT

- Conduct a security assessment to identify any vulnerabilities.
 - Ideally, this assessment is conducted in conjunction with local law enforcement or other security professionals.
 - Contact your local sheriff's office for assistance
- Develop a security plan and guidelines with defined roles for all staff, including greeters, ushers and other frontline workers.



SHARE FLOOR PLANS



ALERT

ADVANCED LAW ENFORCEMENT RAPID RESPONSE TRAINING



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Surveillance

- Surveillance and observation are critical to avoiding and minimizing harassment and threats.
- Security cameras might identify a potential issue or threat outside before it can enter the church.
- Video systems are also very helpful.
- Cameras not only act as a deterrent, but also preserve evidence for later analysis and prosecution.



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use Multiple Layers of Security
 - Train all greeters, users and other staff to recognize and act on threats. Even if it is simply calling 911.
 - Have volunteers patrol or watch parking areas.
 - Ushers and greeters usually know most people who attend and should be trained on how to deal with threats or unruly persons.



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Act Quickly and Calmly
 - Church security and/or ushers should become visible at the first signs of a disruption or trouble.
 - They should place themselves between the disruptors and the congregation.
 - This will help people to remain calm, and will help isolate the disruptors early and prevent them from moving freely within the Church.



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct Training of your Security Team.
 - The more the better.
 - If your congregation has law enforcement members or military personnel they should be recruited to assist in training and help with security.
 - Have your local sheriff's office assist in training.



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Communication is essential to church security.
 - Have a plan to communicate with security teams and with church leaders quickly if an incident occurs.
 - Have a means to alert Sunday School teachers and child care staff.
 - It can be as simple as text messages
 - Two way radios
 - Intercom



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Be Ready to Lockdown Childcare
 - Have procedures in place for lockdown of sensitive places, such as childcare.
 - Procedures need to be in place for notifying the childcare staff of any disruption or security threat.
 - The childcare staff should immediately lock all entrances into the childcare area, allowing no one entry until the crisis has been resolved.
 - Create a code word for a lock down.



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Medical Emergencies
 - Have a list of Doctors, Nurses and Paramedics in your congregation who would be willing to help in a crisis.
 - Have a first aid kit readily available.
 - Have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on the property and easily accessible with volunteers trained in it's use.
 - Are you prepared for children/adults who have allergic issues with foods, insect bites, etc..



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Other Tips For Security Improvement
 - Control access points, use only necessary entrances and exits. “Necessary” is the key word and should not be replaced with “convenient”.
 - Have greeters at all entry doors.
 - Church keys, who has them?
 - Staff and volunteers should not work alone especially at night.
 - Conduct opening inspections to be sure the property is secure.



SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make sure lighting is sufficient and shrubbery is maintained to limit hiding places.
- Conduct closing inspection to make sure all windows and doors are secure and that someone is not left in the facility.
- Ensure that the inside of the facility is properly illuminated and exits are marked.
- Have an emergency plan in place and periodically practice it and revise as necessary.
- Maintain an inventory of all expensive or easily stolen items and perform a periodic audit to ensure all items are present.



DISRUPTORS

- Isolate or Remove
 - Churches have the right to remove disruptive individuals.
 - Verbally communicate to the disruptors that they are trespassing and they must leave.
 - If they refuse to leave, it may be best to keep them contained and wait for law enforcement to arrive unless they pose a physical threat.
 - To the extent possible, move congregants who are in close proximity to another part of the sanctuary.



DISRUPTORS

- Keep Potential Disruptors Out
 - Courts have held that Churches have the right to keep people out of the Church.
 - An individual does not have a legally protected right to enter and remain on private property.
 - If you know a person is a security threat or potentially disruptive, you have the right to keep them from entering.



RESPONDING TO TRANSIENTS

- Helping the poor is central to the church's mission. But that does not mean that such help should be done thoughtlessly or without concern for the welfare and safety of those who work with the needy.
- To avoid problems, church staff members need training and guidance in responding to transients and to other individuals seeking help.



RESPONDING TO TRANSIENTS

- Define each staff member's role with respect to the church's ministry of caring for the needy.
- Provide training to church administrative personnel and other staff members on how to respond to transients.
- Tell people what you can do rather than what you cannot do. Keep coming back to "Let me tell you what we can do." This may be only making a referral.



RESPONDING TO TRANSIENTS

- Establish procedures to enhance personal safety in responding to the needs of transients.
 - When a staff member is working alone at the church, the building should be locked.
 - Electronic lock
 - Doorbell
- If a member of the church staff is working alone at the church:
 - Do not indicate this to a stranger or over the phone
- Have a voucher system rather than giving out cash.



WORKING ALONE

- If someone is working at the church alone:
 - Let others know your schedule.
 - Keep all doors secured.
 - Do not allow strangers to enter when alone.
 - If at night, call someone and let them know they are leaving and driving home.
 - Have adequate lighting around parking areas and walk ways.



ACTIVE SHOOTER

- If a shooter gets in:
 - Direct confrontation is essential
 - This is dangerous, but you can improve your chances by distracting the shooter.
 - Weaken his shooting ability by throwing hymnals, yelling from multiple directions, and tackling him from behind.
 - Have a trained security team approach and overwhelm the shooter by any means.
 - Armed off duty law enforcement



ACTIVE SHOOTER

Having an active shooter in the church is an unlikely scenario for any church but you need a plan.

- Follow protocols rather than improvising.
- Reduce provocation. Set guidelines for denying access to people who are unstable, agitated, angry, or intoxicated.
- Alert the entire security team and 911.
- Have a security team go to and secure any child care area.
- Evacuate worshippers when possible and secure doors.



DEFENSIVE MEASURES

What kind of things can you use
to defend yourself and others?



DEFENSIVE MEASURES - ANYTHING



DEFENSIVE MEASURES



WHAT ABOUT THIS?



CALL 911

- Don't hesitate to call **911** immediately if you feel an unsafe situation is developing.
 - The caller should stay on the line until law enforcement arrives
 - The manner in which the call is made and the information given is important, so do not downplay the event.



SUGGESTION

- During times of stress, individuals often cannot think, speak and behave as usual.
- Have a laminated note card at each phone within the facility.
- The notecard should be typed and have a script the caller can follow when talking to 911.
- This will eliminate the need to do much thinking.



REMEMBER

- The best security is awareness.
- Have a plan and practice it.
- Prepare for the worst case scenario.
- Know that good security can be in place with minimal intrusion to the congregation.
- There is no assurance that a violent episode can be avoided. By taking responsibility for the safety of your Church, you will have done the best thing to prevent it.



RANGER



ACADEMY

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

