



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
BUNCOMBE COUNTY



Places of Worship



Emergency Planning and Self Inspection Guide

References, resources and considerations for
emergency action planning by our community's places of worship

January 2018

This document is intended to serve as a starting point for faith based organizations and their leaders in the development of a site-specific emergency actions plan for their organization's property.

Every organization will have different needs and should adapt these recommendation and best practices to fit the needs of their particular site. The Buncombe County Sheriff's Office makes no representations as to the adequacy, or lack thereof, of this planning tool. Rather, it is our goal to provide direction for our community's places of worship regarding reasonable standards and measures of safety to confront the spectrum of threats and emergencies they may face. It discusses actions that may be taken before, during, and after an incident in order to reduce the impact on people, property, and loss of life, but it should not be relied upon as legal advice. The toolkit is designed as a guide only.

It is our hope to provide you with the outline and conversation starters you may need to develop or improve your specific emergency action plan, implement the plan and conduct any internal training you deem most effective and appropriate for your specific team members and/or congregation.

You should always consult with your own legal advisor and your insurance carrier prior to implementing a particular plan.

For more information concerning this publication, to make suggestions as to how to improve this publication, or to request added follow up with your organization, please contact the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office Community Outreach unit at 828-250-4427. A Deputy Sheriff or a member of our Chaplaincy will be glad to assist you.

First Steps - Prevention

Develop a Planning and Oversight Committee

1. Who: Pastoral staff, elders, deacons, key congregational members (i.e. law enforcement personnel, EMS, fire, military, lawyers, counselors, doctors).
2. Goal: To provide a forum for developing, implementing and continually refining a planning process to address the safety needs of your place of worship before, during, and after a critical incident.
3. Objectives:
 - a. Complete a security risk assessment to include the facility, policies and procedures, business practices, and operations.
 - b. Adopt a security plan.
 - c. Assemble a security team and appoint a Security Team Leader to implement the plan.
 - d. Coordinate training and education for the congregation.

Conduct a Risk Assessment of your Place of Worship

1. Who: Sheriff, local law enforcement, fire and rescue, and private consultants.
2. Goal: To assess the existing risks, threats and vulnerabilities of your place of worship including:
 - a. Facility;
 - b. Staff and volunteers;
 - c. Congregation demographics;
 - d. Childcare protection protocol;
 - e. Surrounding community threats;
 - f. Communications (internal and external);

- g. Policies and procedures; and
- h. Handling of money during worship services.

Develop a Security Plan

1. Who: Place of worship security team, in collaboration with government entities that have responsibility in the plan, including first responders such as sheriff, police, fire, EMS.
2. Goal: To adopt a basic plan of operation before, during, and after a critical incident in a place of worship during a time of worship.
3. Framework:
 - a. Basic facility security measures should include:
 - Facility blueprints
 - Cameras and alarms
 - Locked and unlocked doors and windows
 - Exterior lighting
 - b. Establish the role of the security team before, during, and after a critical incident including duties such as:
 - Communications (internal and external)
 - Preparation drills
 - Role of greeters
 - Perimeter and parking lot monitoring
 - Placement of security team members in facility during time of worship
 - Childcare protocol
 - Duties during a critical incident:
 - 911 call
 - Coordinate evacuation or lockdown procedures
 - Confront the threat
 - Managing the safety zones
 - Point of contact (POC) with first responders
 - Assist first responders
 - c. Establish an evacuation procedure

- d. Establish a lockdown protocol
- e. Adopt a Crisis Intervention Stress Management (CISM) strategy
- f. Analyze congregation demographics (i.e. number of children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, people with criminal backgrounds such as sex offenders)
- g. Implement a firearms policy that specifies who, if anyone, can or cannot carry a firearm into a place of worship. The available options are:
 - Allow all concealed carry permitted persons to carry concealed handguns on the premise, if not otherwise in violation of the law (i.e. if the church is on school grounds).
 - Restrict the concealed carry of handguns to only designated personnel who are lawfully able to possess a firearm on the premise.
 - Prohibit all persons from carrying firearms, open carry or concealed carry.
 - Allow any person who can lawfully possess firearms to carry them openly on the premise.

Note: North Carolina General Statute § 14-415.11 authorizes the church to post signs, as any other private property, prohibiting the possession or carrying of firearms. But, if not otherwise posted, anyone who has obtained their concealed carry permit under North Carolina General Statute § 14-415.24 may carry on church property, unless possession of the firearm is otherwise prohibited by law (e.g. if the church is on school grounds). Similarly, a church would have the authority to allow firearms to be openly carried on the premise so long as the possession of firearms is not otherwise prohibited by law (e.g. if the church is on school grounds).

Special circumstances:

- If church services are held on any school property (public, charter or private), the law governing the possession of firearms on school grounds (North Carolina General Statute § 14-269.2) would apply.
- If circumstances require a school program to be held on church property, the law governing the possession of firearms on school grounds (North Carolina General Statute § 14-269.2) would apply to the area where the school program is taking place because this would be a curricular or extracurricular activity sponsored by a school. Other areas of the church property not being used for the school program would continue to be regulated by the church authority as set out in the “Note” above.

- If a religious organization operates a school and a church is also located on this property, then the law governing the possession of firearms on school grounds (North Carolina General Statute § 14-269.2) would apply.
- If a church operates a daycare on church property, the church (being private property) may choose whether or not to allow firearms on the premises.

These prohibitions on carrying firearms on school property do not apply to:

- A weapon used solely for educational or school sanctioned ceremonial purposes, or used in a school approved program conducted under the supervision of an adult, whose supervision has been approved by the school authority;
- Fire fighters, emergency service personnel, North Carolina Forest Service personnel, detention officers employed by and authorized by the sheriff to carry firearms and any private police employed by an educational institution, when acting in the discharge of their official duties;
- Those persons exempted by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269(b), such as law enforcement officers;
- A armed armored car service guard; or an armed, courier service guard, when acting in the discharge of the guard's duties and with the permission of the college or university;
- A armed security guard while on the premises of a hospital or health care facility, located on educational property, when acting in the discharge of the guard's duties with the permission of the college or university;
- An employee of a school who lives on the campus and has a concealed handgun permit may keep a handgun in their private residence;
- A person with a concealed handgun permit, or who is exempt from obtaining a permit, can have a handgun in a closed compartment or container within the person's locked vehicle or the handgun can be in a locked container securely affixed to the person's vehicle. The person may also possess the concealed handgun on his/her person while in the locked vehicle on school grounds. It would be lawful for a concealed handgun permittee to remove a handgun from a vehicle on school grounds if done so in response to a life threatening situation; or
- A volunteer school safety resource officer when acting in the discharge of official duties.

Develop a Training and Education Strategy

1. Identify the audience:
 - a. Staff and volunteers
 - b. Congregation
 - c. Community
 - d. Collaborative partners (i.e. sheriff's office, local police, fire, EMS, etc.)
2. Determine the delivery method:
 - a. Presenters
 - b. Presentation style
 - c. Materials (i.e. handouts, PowerPoint, etc.)

Note: Always protect the confidentiality of sensitive information. Share sensitive information only on a “need to know” basis.

During a Crisis

Security Team Leader Activates the Security Plan

1. Designated person calls 911.
2. Lock down or evacuate the sanctuary depending on the threat.
3. Lock down or evacuate the childcare area depending on the threat.
4. Set up and manage safety zones.

FBI “Active Shooter” Protocol Plan:

1. Run:
 - a. Follow instructions of the security team.

- b. Use escape routes identified by the security team.
 - c. Leave personal belongings behind.
 - d. Proceed to safe zones identified by the security plan and as directed by the security team.
 - e. Take others with you if possible, but do not stay behind if others will not go.
2. Hide (lockdown plan):
- a. Lock and barricade doors.
 - b. Close and lock windows; close blinds.
 - c. Turn off all lights.
 - d. Silence electronic devices.
 - e. Remain silent.
 - f. Remain in place until given an all clear by the security team or first responders.
3. Fight (confronting the shooter: a last resort): Try to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items around the area, such as fire extinguishers or chairs.
4. Safe zones (identified in the security plan): Designated security team members must manage and control safe zones until first responders arrive.

Interacting with First Responders

Law Enforcement's first priority must be to locate and stop the person or persons posing the threat and they will not stop to help the injured. Law enforcement officers may not be able to distinguish the "good guys" from the "bad guys".

Congregates and staff, including the security team members, should be trained to do the following when first responders arrive:

- a. Follow all commands such as getting down on the ground, dropping all objects (including cell phones) from hands and putting hands in the air.

- b. Clearly identify yourself verbally.
- c. Once identified and cleared, the security team should meet with first responders and provide as much information as possible (ie. location of safe zones, last known location of the threat, facility access points and childcare location and access).

In the Aftermath of Crisis

Place of Worship Security Team

1. Brief first responders upon arrival.
2. Continue to manage safe zones and assist first responders as directed.
3. Identify a place of worship spokesperson to address the media and public along with the first responder media spokesperson.
4. Coordinate all activities with first responders.

First Responders

1. Assume command of the critical incident.
2. Treat and transport injured individuals from crime scene and safe zones to medical facilities.
3. Initiate the investigation.
4. Interview witnesses.
5. Preserve the crime scene.
6. Coordinate continuing activities of the security team.
7. Appoint a designee to communicate with the media. Include place of worship media spokesperson.
8. Debrief with the place of worship security team after the threat is over.

Reunification Plan

1. Identify a safe location separate from distractions (including the media and general public), for family members trying to reunite with their loved ones.
2. Provide family members with timely, accurate, and relevant information.
3. Be prepared to speak with family members about what to expect when reunited with their loved ones.
4. Ensure effective communication with those that have language barriers or need other accommodations, such as the hearing impaired, etc.

Crisis Intervention Stress Management (CISM):

1. Security plan should include a CISM strategy.

“What is CISM? CISM is a comprehensive, integrative, multicomponent crisis intervention system. CISM is considered comprehensive because it consists of multiple crisis intervention components. CISM interventions range from the pre-crisis phase through the acute crisis phase, and into the post-crisis phase. CISM is also considered comprehensive in that it consists of counseling which may be provided to individuals, small groups, large groups, families, organizations, and even communities.”

The seven core components of CISM are defined below:

- a. Pre-crisis preparation. This includes stress management education and crisis training.
- b. Disaster education for staff, congregation and community.
- c. Defusing. This is a structured small group discussion provided within hours of a crisis for purposes of assessment.
- d. Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) refers to the "Mitchell model" (Mitchell and Everly, 1996) 7-phase, structured group discussion, usually provided 1 to 10 days post crisis, and designed to mitigate acute symptoms, assess the need for follow-up, and if possible provide a sense of post-crisis psychological closure.
- e. One-on-one crisis counseling or psychological support during and after the incident.
- f. Family crisis counseling.
- g. Follow-up and referral for assessment and treatment, if necessary.

A Primer on Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). George S. Everly, Jr., Ph.D., C.T.S. and Jeffrey T. Mitchell, Ph.D., C.T.S. The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. 2010.

2. Security Team Leader or designee should activate the CISM strategy immediately.

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP):

1. Is your place of worship still accessible after the critical incident?
2. Consider a temporary relocation of your place of worship, if needed.
3. Analyze the impact of the critical incident on place of worship leaders, staff, and congregates to assess their ability to continue their duties (see CISM above).

Planning and Oversight Committee Review of the Critical Incident:

1. Review all reports filed by the Place of Worship Security Team and first responders.
2. Adjust security plan based on reports and lessons learned.
3. Update security plan and conduct new training.
4. Provide copies of the new security plan to all first responders within the community (i.e. sheriff, police, fire, EMS).

Communities of faith provide for the diverse needs of many people in Buncombe County. Staff and members are compassionate and want to help improve the lives of congregation members, the community and others requesting assistance. The property itself may be used for a number of functions that are overseen by staff, volunteers or community members not affiliated with your organization. While it is a good idea to evaluate the security of the physical space for your place of worship, it is equally important to establish clear rules and security protocols for guests, staff and volunteers who are using the property.

This guide is designed to give your organization security measures to consider. By implementing these steps, you can impact the safety of your community in meaningful ways. Consider forming a safety committee to help assess the overall security of your place of worship and implement CPTED changes. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – or CPTED, is the proper design, maintenance, and use of the built environment in order to enhance the quality of life and to reduce both the incidence and the fear of crime. This form provides an easy-to-follow outline of CPTED strategies that will help make your location more resistant to crime, and increase the overall feeling of safety. Use this form now as well as in the future as you maintain the changes you make.

CPTED CATEGORIES /CONCEPTS

Natural Visibility:

- Design and maintenance that allows and encourages people engaged in their normal activity to observe the space around them.
- Eliminates hiding places for people engaged in criminal activity.
- Creates a sense of risk for people contemplating criminal activity.

Access Control:

- Decreases criminal accessibility, especially to vulnerable spaces.

Territoriality:

- Defines property lines and distinguishes private spaces.
- Communicates to people expectations of the appropriate use of the space.
- Builds a sense of community responsibility by intended users.

Natural/Passive

Things that are designed in, not requiring any active effort on the part of the responsible user. Examples include architecture, signage, pathways, and landscaping.

Organized/Active

Planned activities or routines. Examples include neighbor observations, patrols, hired security, and programmed community events.

Mechanical

Installing or using equipment to achieve the principle. Examples include locks and lighting.

NATURAL AREA/VISIBILITY

A. Natural/Passive

1. Is landscaping selected and trimmed so that all entrances and ground floor windows are visible from the street and/or to neighbors?
2. Is landscaping selected and trimmed to prevent places of concealment for unauthorized users? Is it selected and trimmed to prevent opportunities for stolen goods or drugs to be hidden?
3. Are windows free of obstructions, such as bushes, trees, walls, and signs, so that there are clear views into and out of your space from the street or pedestrian areas?
4. Are parking areas visible from inside your building or to neighbors or passers-by?
5. If there is fencing on the property, is it designed to be at least partially see-through so that an adult could not hide behind it?

B. Organized/Active

1. Is a staff member assigned to a desk that is located at the main entrance so he or she can screen visitors and direct them where they need to go? Ideally, this individual has a view out to the parking lot and can observe the area.
2. During the days of worship, are there greeters and ushers who stand at the entrances and monitor the courtyard or parking lot area or the interior of the building? Do they have a plan of what to do if they observe suspicious activity? Do they have a way to communicate with one another if there is a problem? Are distress codes used that communicate to other staff or members that they need help and/or someone to call the police?
3. If the property is rented out to someone unaffiliated with your community, do you have staff or trusted volunteers unlock the building for the renters and monitor the event? This individual should also lock up when the guests leave.
4. Do members drive by the property when it is not in use? Whether this activity is planned and coordinated or spontaneous, it is helpful to have an extra set of eyes on the property when no one is there. Do they know what to do if they see a door unsecured or discover a problem on the property?
5. Do neighbors know how to contact your organization to report concerns or problems? As a proactive measure, provide information about who to contact during office hours and after hours. This way neighbors can alert the appropriate party if there are problems on the property.
6. Has your organization established a Neighborhood Watch? Connecting with neighbors in this way fosters communication, familiarity with each other and the routines of the neighborhood,

and a willingness to get involved and call the police when necessary. Neighbors can watch out for your property after hours and you can keep an eye out for the neighborhood when you and staff are on site.

7. If there are periods when your place of worship is experiencing an increase in crime or livability issues, do you consider organizing more activities at the property as one intervention? For example if you are having problems at 10pm on Saturday night, you may plan an activity during that time to bring more legitimate users onto the property and disrupt the pattern of problems.

C. Mechanical

1. Does lighting around the building generally provide a soft, even light without deep shadows or bright glare? Are lights left on at night, or on photosensitive timers so they go on at dusk and off at dawn?

2. Are there lights over, or next to, all exterior doors that are on timers or motion sensors? Are the fixtures vandal-resistant?

3. Are alcoves, hallways, stairwells, parking areas, pedestrian walkways, and any recessed areas illuminated?

4. Are the interior lights that are visible from the exterior left on at night?

5. Are there motion-sensing lights along the sides and rear of the building?

6. Is there a way to see outside all exterior doors without opening the door? This can be achieved with wide angle viewers (peep holes), or windows in or adjacent to the doors.

7. Have you considered installing a camera surveillance system? If you have such a system installed, is there anyone monitoring it? Are the recordings kept for at least two weeks?

8. Are convex mirrors used to increase visibility around blind corners or into vulnerable areas?

ACCESS CONTROL

A. Natural/Passive

1. Are entrances to the place of worship accentuated with architectural elements, lighting, and/or landscaping so that it is clear where pedestrian traffic should go?

2. Is fencing or landscaping used to discourage trespassing in vulnerable areas of the property?

3. Are dumpsters secured and positioned under lights and at an angle that will minimize concealment?

4. Are high value items such as stereo systems, musical equipment, and other valuables secured or stored in a locked closet or room when not in use?

5. Do you use thorny or prickly vegetation to discourage access to vulnerable areas of your property? The Portland Plant List at www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/plantlist is a good resource for finding native plants that are not invasive species.

B. Organized/Active

1. Are prospective employees subject to reference and criminal background checks? Volunteers who work with cash, children, and are provided with keys to the building should also be checked. You may have a policy to employ individuals with criminal histories, but you should be aware of their past.

2. Are there key control and security access protocols in place including the following considerations:

a. Does your organization have a key control policy in place? It may include who should receive keys and when the building should be re-keyed. Another requirement may be that all keys will be stamped "do not duplicate", locked up when not issued, and there should be multiple keys available for entrances, equipment storage, and offices when necessary. Keys may be issued to a member holding an official position in the community, but reclaimed upon resignation.

b. If you use key cards, fobs or a key pad entry system, can you limit access on your key cards to individuals depending upon what they are using the space for? Some staff and volunteers may only require access to certain parts of the building.

c. Is a list of the employees and staff who have keys, key cards, or key pad codes maintained and up to date?

d. Do staff and members sign an agreement about proper use of the alarm system and keys if they are given this access?

e. Do you regularly test your building's alarm system and train staff and appointed members on how to use the system? They should know what to do if the alarm is mistakenly activated and how to communicate with the monitoring company. Is the emergency contact information updated with the monitoring company as needed? Do you change your security code periodically and when someone leaves the organization? Security codes should not be visibly posted on your premises or on computers. Do you maintain a list of everyone who has a security code to the building?

3. Are staff and members given a lock up procedure checklist that includes checking to make

sure that storage, offices, and entrances are locked and that the security alarm is armed?

4. For each entrance that is kept unlocked during business hours, is there a person assigned to monitor that door? If a person is not stationed to work close to the door, is there an enunciator on the door that indicates when someone has entered the building?

5. Are entry, storage, and office doors locked when not in use? If the place of worship has hours when it is open to the public, you may have certain entrances unlocked during those times, but locked otherwise. Consider what doors need to be unlocked and accessible. You may install an intercom during the off-hours.

6. Have you considered hiring a private security company to check the premises periodically during the off-hours?

7. Has your community established rules for the use of the property that are posted on the premises? Is there consistency in the enforcement of those rules? Are staff, members and volunteers instructed to contact the police and ask for assistance if someone refuses to leave or is causing problems?

8. When the property is rented to members or individuals unaffiliated with your community, do they sign an agreement that lists the rules for the facility?

9. Are there trainings for staff, members, volunteers and ushers on de-escalation or other techniques in response to someone who is agitated, aggressive, disruptive or experiencing a mental health crisis? It's helpful to have a readily accessible list of referrals.

10. Does your organization maintain an incident log to record problem interactions with site users and excluded individuals?

11. Are there cash control policies in place restricting the amount of cash on hand and requiring regular trips to the bank to make deposits?

12. Is there a separation of accounting duties so that one person doesn't collect donations, deposit them, authorize expenditures, compile financial records and reconcile bank accounts?

One suggestion includes separating the functions of collecting weekly donations and preparing deposit slips from making and recording the deposit. Requiring a second signature on all checks, sign-offs on online bill payments, and a periodic financial review of the balance sheet and income sheet by a separate individual are also ways to protect against internal fraud.

13. Does the facility have emergency procedures in place to deal with bomb threats, domestic violence, hate crimes and active shooters?

C. Mechanical

1. Are exterior doors of heavy-duty, solid-core construction?
2. Do deadbolts have at least a 1 inch throw? Are door strike plates secured with 3 inch long screws that penetrate into the studs of the doorframe?
3. If doors have hinges on the exterior, are the pins secured so they can't be removed?
4. For double doors, are there flush bolts installed into the door frame and floor to secure the door with the strike plate?
5. Are sliding glass doors and windows fitted with track locks and/or wooden rods that fit securely in the bottom track?
6. Are all windows secured by pins or locks?
7. On especially vulnerable windows, is there security film applied to make them more shatter resistant? If you have stained glass windows, this may be an especially important step.
8. Are window air conditioners secured to window frames?
9. Are basement windows locked and secured?
10. Are ladders or other climbing aids secured so they cannot be used to climb into the building?
11. Is there a City registered alarm system in use? Alarms cannot prevent all burglaries, but they can help.
12. Are dead end spaces and alcoves blocked off with fences or gates?
13. Is financial and member information stored securely in the office? Are sensitive documents shredded when they are no longer needed?
14. Are fire and burglary resistant safes bolted to the floor?
15. Are sheds and other outbuildings locked? Equipment and tools should be locked up as well and not left out.
16. Are all fire and emergency exits designed for quick exit, without the need for a key or other tool in order to get out? Make sure that your security improvements do not conflict with fire safety regulations.

TERRITORIALITY

A. Natural/Passive

1. Is there a clear transition between the sidewalk or other public area and your property? This can be achieved through changes in pavement textures, landscaping, changes in elevation, and signage.
2. Is there signage around the property, clearly stating rules and hours of operation?
3. Is the front door posted with after-hours contact information?

B. Organized/Active

1. Do you have a trespass agreement with the Portland Police Bureau if you have outdoor areas where people might loiter or camp after hours? If someone is arrested on your behalf, do you follow through with prosecution?
2. Are there rules of behavior for members, volunteers and staff? Have these rules been communicated?
3. Does the property appear well maintained? Are the following issues immediately addressed: graffiti, which should be reported to the City of Portland's Graffiti Abatement Program and removed promptly, litter and debris, burned out light bulbs, and over grown landscaping?
4. Is there a site monitor in charge of regularly checking the interior and exterior of the building for maintenance issues?
5. If there are tow policies for unauthorized vehicles, are they posted and enforced?

Notes:

C. Mechanical

1. Are street address and suite numbers clearly visible and illuminated at night?

Maintenance Plan:

Are lighting, landscaping, and structural aspects of the property maintained so that others know someone cares about the property and the neighborhood? Consider putting reminders to yourself on your calendar to check on maintenance of the property.

