

PLACES OF WORSHIP

CHURCH SECURITY

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PURPOSE OF CHURCH SECURITY IN PLACES OF WORSHIP

- Why should we discuss this topic?
- Since 1999, over 2000 incidents have occurred at Places of Worship throughout the United States. Incidents consist of:
 - Thefts of tithing, property, or embezzlements
 - Burglaries
 - Cyber theft of member and facility information
 - Disruption of services
 - Assaults including sexual assaults
 - Active intruders or shootings

DEVELOP CHURCH SECURITY GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY OF MEMBERS AND FACILITY

- Develop a comprehensive and simple guideline for the safety of church members and protecting the Place of Worship
- Each denomination or faith is different but the safety of members is the same
- Create a simple outline for members in case of emergency and steps to take to prevent an incident.
- If you haven't created one, suggest researching and presenting one at the earliest opportunity.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Be friendly to those visiting, observe unusual behavior, notify leaders

THEFT PROTECTION AND FACILITY SECURITY

- Entry and Exits limited for entry and clearly marked for exit.
- Are exits usable and known by members
- Suggest one entry that is monitored for meetings. Consider locking the door after services start or taking steps to monitor entry of people.
- Locking office doors when not in use
- Protection of tithing storage or items of value
- Tithing settlement with two or more leaders, documentation, safekeeping. Bank deposit, online, or storage at church. Embezzlement safeguards

INFORMATION SECURITY OF MEMBERS AND FACILITY

- Cyber security and protection of computer devices.
WI-FI protection
- Cameras, alarm systems
- Security of member information and financial information
- Broadcast of church services via social media
- Do members have digital access to church programs and information? If there are violations, take action.

USE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

- In emergency, call 911
- Use of cell phones by clergy, leaders, and members

KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE AT CHURCH FACILITY

- Take the steps discussed and consider how each unique congregation can better secure its members and facility for a safe place of worship.
- Consider a church security team or calling
- Consider active law enforcement and retired law enforcement as a resource
- Take those steps to secure the church

WEAPONS AT CHURCH FACILITIES

- Michigan Concealed Weapons Law
- CPL holders are barred by law from carrying a concealed pistol in certain places
- **Places of worship:** This includes churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and any other facility or property used as a place of worship. However, authorities who run places of worship can decide to void this ban on their premises.
- Leadership or church denomination can allow the carry of concealed weapons by members designated.
Ex: Active LE church members, retired LE member, CPL holders

RESPONDING TO A DISRUPTIVE PERSON IN A CHURCH MEETING

- If a serious or dangerous disruption is occurring on Church property or at a Church-sponsored event, call law enforcement. When the situation is under control, notify your leader and the Church Security Department. If a person becomes disruptive during a Church meeting:
 - Be respectful, speak calmly and with self-control, and respect his or her personal space. Do not touch the person.
 - If the individual is at the pulpit, turn off the microphone.
 - Explain to the individual that his or her behavior is inappropriate in this setting. Ask them to stop and leave. You may also invite them to meet with a leader in the foyer.
 - If the person refuses to leave and continues to cause a disturbance, dismiss the meeting.
 - Do not attempt to physically restrain or remove the person.
 - If the person has been asked to leave Church property, but refuses, inform him or her that law enforcement may be notified, and he or she may be arrested for trespassing. These guidelines apply regardless of where the disruption occurs (at the pulpit, in the congregation, on the stand, and so on) and can be adapted as needed for all meetings, classes, and other Church events or activities.

RESPONDING TO AN ARMED INTRUDER OR ACTIVE SHOOTER

- **Armed Intruder** If an intruder threatens to use a weapon, comply with the person's demands. Do not provoke the intruder by arguing or acting defiant or confrontational. If the intruder demands cash, including donations, give the intruder what he or she demands without hesitation. After the intruder leaves, call law enforcement immediately. When time permits, notify your leader and the Church Security Department.

RESPONDING TO AN ARMED INTRUDER OR ACTIVE SHOOTER

- Active Shooter or Other Active Assailant If an active shooter or other active assailant enters the building, do one of the following, based on the circumstances:
- RUN
- HIDE
- FIGHT

RESPONDING TO AN ARMED INTRUDER OR ACTIVE SHOOTER

- **Run.** Flee immediately if a safe path is available. Move quickly to the safest exit and away from the building to a safe location. Exit quietly, without drawing the attention of the assailant. Adults are to ensure all children are supervised and accounted for. Do not return to the building or to an office or classroom for personal items. Do not carry anything that could be mistaken for a weapon by responding law enforcement.
- **Hide.** If you are unable to escape safely, hide out of sight of the assailant's view. If possible, close, lock, and barricade the doors to the classrooms, offices, or other rooms where you are hiding. Turn out the lights, silence mobile phones, and keep low to the floor and away from windows. If there is an exchange of gunfire between law enforcement and the assailant, everyone in the building is to stay in their barricaded rooms until instructed otherwise by law enforcement.
- **Fight.** As a last resort, if there is no time to run or hide, fight back against the assailant. Use anything available as a weapon, and fight to stop the assailant. If others are present, organize to defend yourselves.

EXAMPLES AND LINKS OF PREVIOUS CHURCH INCIDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

- <https://newsmaven.io/charlottealerts/news/video-church-shooting-caught-on-camera-3-dead-choas-confusion>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53hleVLARbE>
- <https://www.newsmax.com/thewire/texas-church-shooting-video/2017/11/09/id/825120/>
- <https://research.lifeway.com/2018/05/21/how-likely-are-u-s-church-shootings/>

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