

Anglican Diocese of the Living Word

Diocesan Safety Policy and Guidelines

Attachments

1. Sample Project Plan to Implement a Safety Program
2. Sample Safety Plan
3. Considerations for Preparation of a Safety Plan

### Sample Project Plan to Implement a Safety Program

Action	Responsible Person/Role	Date Completion Needed
1. Discuss the establishment of a Safety Program with the wardens and vestry.	Rector	
2. Identify a Safety Program Leader (SPL).	Rector	
3. Prepare a local Project Plan to Implement a Safety Program.	Rector and SPL	
4. Identify additional Safety Program team members as necessary, including the Security Team Leader (STL).	Rector and SPL	
5. Prepare an initial draft of a Safety Plan, including the Activity Schedule and Log.	Rector and SPL	
6. Identify Allied Support Organizations and points of contact (POCs) within those organizations.	Rector and SPL	
7. Upon the Rector's review of the draft of the Safety Plan, contact Allied Support Organization POCs to establish a relationship, request support, and solicit their review of the Safety Plan.	Rector, SPL, and STL	
8. Revise the Safety Plan based upon input from Allied Support Organizations and the Diocese.	SPL	
9. Approve the Safety Plan.	Vestry	
10. Submit Safety Plan to the Registrar of the Diocese.	Rector	
11. Conduct inventory of existing safety equipment against that required by the Safety Plan.	SPL or designee	
12. Conduct inventory of high-value items, document results, and store in secure location.	SPL or designee	
13. Acquire necessary safety equipment and/or contracts (security monitoring, etc.), including emergency procedure signage.	SPL	
14. Conduct training of Safety Program personnel.	SPL and Allied Support Organization POCs	
15. Conduct rehearsals with Allied Support Organization personnel.	SPL, STL, and Allied Support Organization POCs	
16. Conduct rehearsals with parishioners	Rector, SPL, and STL.	
17. Conduct annual review of Safety Plan and notify the Registrar of the Diocese confirming the completion of the review as well as submitting a revised safety plan, if applicable.	Rector, SPL, and Vestry	

## Sample Safety Plan Outline

- I. Introduction/Philosophy of Approach and Purposes
- II. Facility Safety
  - a. Roles and responsibilities
  - b. Routine measures
- III. Facility Physical Security
  - a. Roles and responsibilities
  - b. Routine measures
- IV. Personnel Security
  - a. Background checks
  - b. Routine measures
- V. Emergency Procedures
  - a. Fire
  - b. Natural disaster
  - c. Human threat
- VI. Coordination with Allied Support Organizations
  - a. Local law enforcement
  - b. Local fire department
  - c. Local medical care
    - i. Emergency medical response/Ambulance
    - ii. Hospital/Emergency room
  - d. Insurance agent for necessary coverages
  - e. Security monitoring vendor
- VII. List of required equipment and materials
- VIII. Activity Schedule and Log
  - a. Periodic equipment inspection (functionality and inventory)
  - b. Periodic training of Safety Program personnel
  - c. Procedure rehearsals with Allied Support Organizations
  - d. Procedure rehearsals with all parishioners
  - e. Review of the Safety Plan by Vestry

## Considerations for Preparation of a Safety Plan

While news headlines of shootings and attacks on schools, churches, and other public and business places have shocked us all over the past quarter century, those threats pose one part, albeit a significant part, of the overall topic of church safety. We must give careful thought and planning for the safety of the people and property of our congregations. Although fire and anti-theft protections are long-standing and well-accepted in our culture and should not be overlooked or omitted from sound safety planning, a substantial portion of the comments which follow focus on the human threat, a topic that is much more ominous to our sensibilities, likely due to its shocking and seemingly unpredictable nature. As such, we must give particular attention to this risk to be fully prepared for something so foreign to our routine perceptions of civil community. Again, this list is not comprehensive but should serve as a helpful guide.

### Facility safety

1. Risk of human accidental injury is an ever-present concern in churches because of the high amount of our people's presence, activity, and circulation throughout a church building. Because the buildings aren't the place that any of us live in as constantly and intimately as our own homes, it is easy to miss little things that pose a risk, especially to children, things like a loose bookshelf, a sharp edge, a faulty electrical connection, or an unsanitary corner. Potential problems can exist outside the building such as tripping hazards, or seasonal conditions such as snow or ice buildup.
2. The best way to mitigate safety risks and prevent mishaps is to assign roles and responsibilities and conduct periodic inspections. A routine cleaning and maintenance checklist should guide the Sexton or other persons in the conduct of facility care duties, paying particular attention to kitchens, restrooms, nurseries, youth classrooms, and other high-touch areas such as door handles. Maintain a plentiful supply of hand sanitizer dispensers and waste baskets. Additionally, someone should take the responsibility to conduct a semi-annual safety inspection to look for items that need repair or cleaning both inside the building and outside.

### Facility physical security

1. Anti-theft. Security systems are a worthwhile investment. Discuss with your insurance agent and local police. Maintain an inventory of high-value items and keep that inventory document in a secure, off-premise location. The use of motion activated cameras focused on the Sanctuary/Altar and Sacristy, where typically more valuable items are stored is inexpensive and easily installed. They are monitored through a web-based system that can work on a rector-designated cellular telephone.
2. Roles and responsibilities for general security should be established so that the procedures may be followed effectively and pose as little disruption as possible to the purposes of your gatherings. Roles regarding security should be assigned to the Rector, Security Team Leader, Security Team Members, and Ushers (for evacuation or for shelter in-place purposes).
3. Consider how to secure doors after worship or other event has begun, except for a few key doors that can be monitored.
4. Alertness to things out of the norm, particularly by those with security responsibilities, must remain in place. For example, take note of any unrecognized persons who may be in peculiar attire, behaving in a nervous or irregular manner, or place themselves in suspicious locations

such as standing in a corner of the nave or sitting in a car in the parking lot. Recognize the security vulnerability that accompanies the normal counseling practices by clergy and other trained and licensed persons affiliated with the congregation. A disgruntled person who blames the church for an issue can be an actor in a violent event.

5. Think of security as a concentric design, or like layers of an onion: First, the parking lot, then the outer facility doors, then inner doors leading to classrooms or the nave, then the gathering space itself. Human threats should be first addressed at the outermost point, if possible.

#### Personnel security

1. Sadly, it is more likely that a child will be molested by a caregiver on church property than a church will experience an active shooter scenario. Church insurance policies generally prescribe considerations for background checks for caregivers. This should also be considered for security personnel or those with security responsibilities. Those responsibilities, particularly when the use of force or other high-risk actions might be required, should be carried out by approved stable, reliable persons. Any person carrying a firearm on church premises or outings, must have a "Concealed Carry" permit, and if no permit is required by state law then carrying should be approved by the Rector and Wardens. This is indicative that they have received training in firearm safety and have passed proficiency requirements. As Rector, you should know at any given time who is carrying a gun on church property. Those who carry firearms should meet and have a response plan that is approved by the Rector and Wardens.
2. Similarly, insurance coverages routinely require that written procedures be established and carefully followed and that minors are not left in the care of an individual adult in private settings. Check with your insurance agent and local police for best practices and guidance. This is, of course, in addition to the Diocesan and Provincial requirements.

#### Emergency procedures

1. Fire. Have an evacuation plan in place. Practice it. Incorporate conspicuous visual helps such as evacuation routes, location of nearest and alternate exits, location of safety equipment, emergency telephone numbers, etc. Check on-premise fire-fighting equipment on a periodic basis. There are private companies who will do this for you and your local Fire Department might be available to review your plan and equipment yearly. Know who will deploy that equipment and who will lead the evacuation process.
2. Natural Disaster. Establish response procedures for dangerous weather conditions (tornado flood, etc.) or other natural disaster. Establish a congregation calling plan, assigning parishioners to check on and look after one another. Ask members to check in to a central telephone, email, or text as time and situation permits so you know their particular situation.
3. Human threat.
  - a. Have a written plan and practice it. If there's an event, people will not rise to an ideal or heroic level, but will fail to the level of their training. The average duration of a church shooting event is six minutes. The average response time of law enforcement is greater than six minutes.
  - b. Practice a lock-down response, such as when the threat is outside. Have a similar procedure when the threat may be inside and mobile. What if people are in the nave?

What if people are in classrooms? What if people are in offices? Have a method to secure doors.

- c. Train security team members in verbal de-escalation techniques. This may be the most effective action that can be taken outside of the use of force, and lethal force and firearms are the last resort.
- d. Practice communication among security team members that will occur during an event. Confusion can result in people getting hurt.
- e. Train security team members in the use of restraints. Improper use of handcuffs or similar devices can result in reversals and loss of an otherwise neutralized situation.
- f. Have a first-aid kit on site and at least two people who knows how to use its contents.
- g. Learning the signs of an unstable individual or noticing someone who looks “out of place” is important. Request training on this issue from your local law enforcement agency.
- h. Look into including an inexpensive outside camera that can also serve as a doorbell. These are usually web-based and can be monitored from inside the building by someone in the office, or an usher during a service from a cell phone.

#### Coordination with Allied Support Organizations

1. Ask the local police and fire department to help develop your safety plan. “You’re the expert. We need your help.”
2. Let Law Enforcement practice emergency response drills in your church (at appropriate times). It will build good will. It will help them become familiar with your facility, increasing awareness of places an intruder can hide and as well as evacuation routes. It will also help them identify and know the practices of church security team members (you don’t want them to get shot by the police because it appeared they were exercising force and were mistaken as the unlawful actor). Provide the Police and Sheriff’s departments a copy of your plan for their files.
3. Discuss first aid and supplies with local EMTs or the hospital emergency room staff. Establish a relationship with those agencies to increase familiarity among parties and property and hopefully reduce response time to an incident.
4. Review the safety plan with your insurance agent. Some provisions of the plan may require compliance with the terms of your coverage.
5. In all cases, you must be careful to follow the laws of your state regarding any of these issues.

There is a tendency to think that “something like this will never happen here.” That is a high-risk assumption! The people of the First Baptist Church in tiny Sutherland Springs, Texas would tell you that they never dreamed that someone would enter on a Sunday morning and kill 23 persons. The shooter was known to many of them and the person he wanted to harm wasn’t even there that morning. In almost every mass shooting event or attempt there have been numerous overlooked clues in advance. You can’t depend on others to prevent a tragedy. You are urged not to become complacent! As Rector, remind the people during announcements on a regular basis of different aspects of the Safety Plan (rotate among the various threats – fire, theft, natural disaster, and human threat) and remember that practicing keeps these potential crimes from becoming more hurtful than they could be.

Ask your parishioners to follow your practice of praying regularly for God’s protection from all forms of violence, where human or natural, as well as the discernment to follow His will in your response.

