A SECURITY SURVEY FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP

A Supplemental Design Instrument for Crime Prevention for Houses of Worship

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Published by the ASIS International 2015.

ASIS INTERNATIONAL | SECURITY MANAGEMENT

Every place of worship is different in size and design. Some places of worship may be a single building with a few attendees. Other places may contain multiple buildings and entrances with thousands attending services and events every day from morning to night with activities for all ages. The design and purpose may be as different as the theology and philosophy taught inside.

Therefore, a security program must be uniquely designed for your facility, placing equal priorities on the safety of people, programs, property, and preparedness for emergencies. The level of security will often be determined by financial and personnel resources; yet, it is imperative that you do something to protect those who worship with you.

As you begin to evaluate your property, keep in mind two distinct threats: A threat from the outside coming in or a threat from the inside that is already there. Your first goal is to eliminate the threat from coming in. However, if the threat is already inside, the first layer of security has failed, and you must then react to the threat. At that point, you have no choice as you must react.

This security survey was developed to help you quickly assess what you have, what you need and areas of vulnerability. Each question can be answered with a "yes" or "no," and there is a section where you can write concerns or recommendations. The survey is divided into six sections:

Step 1: Securing the Parking Lots, Property, and Buildings

Step 2: Securing People Inside of the Worship Buildings

Step 3: Securing the Programs

Step 4: Emergency Preparedness for Weather, Medical, and Other Emergencies

Step 5: Securing the Finances and Membership Data

Step 6: Security Suggestions

This is the simplest survey form available. Please complete the entire survey; then together with your security committee, develop a "Security Plan" for your facility. Prioritize your areas of vulnerability, and then secure a financial commitment to remedy them. I willingly acknowledge that every facility cannot do everything on the list. However, I know, without a doubt, that every facility can do something, something more than they are currently doing. We must do everything we can to protect those who worship with us. To do nothing is unacceptable.

I also recommend that you complete this survey on an annual basis. As your "Security Plan" is implemented, you will begin to notice strengths and weaknesses and that will help to keep your security team focused on improvement.

STEP 1: SECURING THE PARKING LOTS, PROPERTY, AND BUILDINGS

Instructions: Complete this checklist to evaluate the parking lots, the outside perimeter of the property and the entrances to buildings.

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
1. Basics: These must be YES answers!			
Do we have an alarm system with motion detectors?	❏	❏	
Do we have cameras placed strategically throughout the building?	❏	❏	
Do we have cameras placed strategically throughout the campus?	❏	❏	
Do we have our alarm system monitored 24/7?	❏	❏	
2. Are the property lines clearly distinguishable with fences or landscape features? **Note:** Landscaping around the property and/or buildings should be singular bushes/trees that do not obstruct observation. Fences can define the perimeter and limit access.	❏	❏	
3. Are there barriers along the perimeter to prohibit a vehicle from driving into crowds of people or the buildings?	❏	❏	
4. Are parking lots visible from many directions and on the cameras?	❏	❏	
5. Are walkways clear and visible from many directions and on the cameras?	❏	❏	
6. Is there adequate lighting and cameras on:			
Parking lots	❏	❏	
Pedestrian walk ways	❏	❏	
Sidewalks	❏	❏	
Each entrance to the buildings	❏	❏	
Each entrance to the campus	❏	❏	

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
7. Do we have security officers to provide security services?	❏	❏	
Do we have volunteers to provide security services?	❏	❏	
Is there a balance in having both?	❏	❏	
8. Do we provide security in the parking lots during services?	❏	❏	
9. Do we have security observing who is coming into the parking lots, then the building, and what they are carrying with them?	❏	❏	
10. If we have multiple parking lots, can some be closed off/ secured during non-busy times?	❏	❏	
11. Can speed bumps and traffic arms be installed to complicate an expedited exit?	❏	❏	
12. Evaluate each entrance to the property.			
Is each entrance clearly marked with our address?	❏	❏	
Is each entrance well-lighted?	❏	❏	
13. Are the entrances visible from many directions and cameras? **Note:** Entrances should remain clear to allow emergency vehicles access at all times.	❏	❏	
14. Are parking lots and buildings marked with clear signage?	❏	❏	
15. Are signs posted to indicate parking for visitors?	❏	❏	
16. Are signs posted to indicate that the area is under surveillance and/or recording?	❏	❏	
17. Is there a designated location for deliveries and mail?	❏	❏	

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
18. Are staff and/or volunteers who work with the mail trained in how to identify a bomb and other harmful substances, and do they know what to do if they find any type of substance?	❑	❑	
19. Evaluate each entrance door to each building. Can each door be locked from the inside and the outside?	❑	❑	
20. Are emergency doors equipped with panic hardware and local alarms to signal that the door is open?	❑	❑	
21. Review each window in each building.			
Can someone gain access to the building through a window?	❑	❑	
Are the windows covered in non-breakable or bullet-resistant glass?	❑	❑	
Glass should be shatterproof—3/8" at least.	❑	❑	
If the windows have locks, include checking them as part of your closing/locking procedures after each event.	❑	❑	
Are windows secured with intrusion alarm systems?	❑	❑	
22. Evaluate the roof on each building. Can someone gain access to the building thru the roof by accessing a skylight, ventilator shaft, roof latch, etc.?	❑	❑	
23. Are air conditioning units and system components fenced in or encaged with bars?	❑	❑	
24. Do you have additional buildings where lawn equipment or other necessities are stored? Are the doors locked? Are hazardous materials clearly identified and in proper containers?	❑ ❑ ❑	❑ ❑ ❑	

STEP 2: SECURING THE PEOPLE INSIDE OF THE WORSHIP BUILDINGS

Instructions: Complete this checklist to evaluate security efforts in the buildings used for worship. You may need to complete this section for each additional building.

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
1. Is each entrance to the building attended by someone acting as a greeter during worship times?	❏	❏	
2. Do the greeters have an effective way to communicate with each other? 2-way radios, cell phones, intercoms, etc.	❏	❏	
3. Are entrances locked when not in use?	❏	❏	
4. Are telephones, intercoms, or electronic scanners available to allow access when the facility is locked? **Note:** Electronic scanners can log in time in/time out, etc. It depends on the needs of your facility as to how much data you wish to capture.	❏	❏	
5. Do we need X-ray machines or metal detectors for entrances and/or package screening?	❏	❏	
6. Are security cameras observed prior to and during services?	❏	❏	
7. Are security personnel/volunteers dispersed throughout the building during the services trained in observation skills?	❏	❏	
8. Are security cameras installed and observable to visitors in the:			
Parking lots	❏	❏	
Entrances	❏	❏	
Cameras pointed toward entrance doors	❏	❏	
Cameras pointed away from entrance doors	❏	❏	
Hallways	❏	❏	

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
Worship Center/Sanctuary	❑	❑	
Prayer Rooms	❑	❑	
Classrooms	❑	❑	
Nursery	❑	❑	
Youth Center	❑	❑	
Gymnasium	❑	❑	
Cafeteria	❑	❑	
Ballfields and playgrounds	❑	❑	
Bus and van loading areas	❑	❑	
Elevators	❑	❑	
Baptismal area (non-dressing area)	❑	❑	
Restroom entrances	❑	❑	
Offices	❑	❑	
Counseling Center/Rooms	❑	❑	
Depository/Safe Area	❑	❑	
Air conditioning systems	❑	❑	
_____	❑	❑	

10 When a room is vacated, is the door immediately locked? ❑ ❑

11. Do you have locking procedures for every building? ❑ ❑

Note: Motion detector sensors tied to the alarms are great indicators of any movement in the building.

12. Does every door have a lock from both the inside and outside? ❑ ❑

13. Does every classroom and office have doors with viewable windows? (Glass should be shatterproof.) ❑ ❑

14. Are offices, camera viewing stations, pulpits, platforms, and choir lofts presented with an emergency exit route? ❑ ❑

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
15. Are offices, camera viewing stations, pulpits, and stages equipped with silent emergency alarms?	❏	❏	
16. Is there an area where people on the platform can take shelter in the event of an active shooter?	❏	❏	
17. If an active shooter enters the sanctuary, do you have a plan?	❏	❏	
18. If an armed robber approaches the administrative offices, do you have a plan?	❏	❏	
19. If your facility allows individuals to carry weapons, do you ensure they are adequately trained in the usage of such weapons?	❏	❏	
20. Are volunteers, staff, and security personnel trained in how to identify and respond to:			
A mentally disturbed person	❏	❏	
A person who is intoxicated or high	❏	❏	
A person with a backpack or unusual suitcase	❏	❏	
A person who does not seem to "belong" in your setting	❏	❏	
A known pedophile who arrives for services	❏	❏	
An unknown pedophile who arrives for services	❏	❏	
An angry person	❏	❏	
An estranged spouse	❏	❏	
Weather emergencies	❏	❏	
Medical emergencies	❏	❏	
Accusation of abuse and/or neglect	❏	❏	
21. If volunteers, staff, and/or security personnel need to summon additional personnel, do you have a system?	❏	❏	
22. Are all exits clearly marked the appropriate signage? Electric? Battery backup?	❏	❏	

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
23. Are hallways and stairwells lighted in the event of a power outage?	❏	❏	
24. Do we have a system in place so that staff and volunteers know how to "shelter in place" or to "lock down" the building?	❏	❏	
25. Do our staff and/or volunteers know what to do if they "think" they hear gunfire?	❏	❏	
26. Do we have a key inventory or electronic readers with specific codes for each individual who needs access to the building?	❏	❏	
27. Do we know who has keys or codes to the building?	❏	❏	
Do we know if anyone has lost keys or shared codes to the building?	❏	❏	
28. Do we secure areas to prevent unauthorized entry? Such as:			
The pastor/clergy/minister offices	❏	❏	
Administrative offices	❏	❏	
Counseling offices	❏	❏	
Vault/Money room	❏	❏	
Supply closets	❏	❏	
Baptismal	❏	❏	
Control rooms	❏	❏	
Confession booths	❏	❏	
Camera viewing stations	❏	❏	
Nursery and childcare rooms	❏	❏	
Classrooms	❏	❏	
Lunchroom/Dinner hall	❏	❏	
29. Do we secure musical instruments, sound equipment, purses, or anything of value in a locked areas?	❏	❏	

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
30. Are the buildings protected by an alarm system? Who needs to know the contact information and codes?	❏	❏	
31. What is connected to the alarm system?			
Exterior doors?	❏	❏	
Interior doors?	❏	❏	
Windows?	❏	❏	
Vault?	❏	❏	
Hallways?	❏	❏	
Motion detection?	❏	❏	
Does it indicate when a door or window is not closed?	❏	❏	
32. Will the alarm system detect breakage on windows and doors?	❏	❏	
33. Does the alarm system include panic/duress buttons?	❏	❏	
If yes, where are they located?			
Who is called?			
Are the police immediately dispatched?	❏	❏	
34. Does the camera system offer zoom lens or pan-tilt capability?	❏	❏	
35. Is the alarm connected with the cameras and recording when activated?	❏	❏	
36. Is someone designated to check the recordings, back-ups, storage, and retrieval systems?	❏	❏	

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STEP 3: SECURING THE PROGRAMS

Instructions: Complete this checklist to evaluate security efforts to secure the various programs offered at your place of worship. For example, if your place of worship provides a nursery or childcare, school classes, community classes, and services, etc. there are various levels of security that need to be considered. You may need to complete this checklist for each building that offers programs. For example, if you offer recovery classes or classes for anger management, these may require additional supervision and security.

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
1. If your facility has pastoral, administrative or counseling offices, are they in an area that has:			
Limited access (people are screened prior to entrance)	☐	☐	
Cameras	☐	☐	
Emergency exits	☐	☐	
Silent alarms	☐	☐	
"Code" page for assistance	☐	☐	
Purses, money, valuables secured	☐	☐	
Windows in every door and/or classroom	☐	☐	
2. At any given time, how do you know how many people are in the building and who they are?			
3. Do you have safes to secure money and important documents?	☐	☐	
4. Do we have a procedure for transporting money to the bank?	☐	☐	
5. Do we have a procedure for counting the money?	☐	☐	
6. Do we have cameras and appropriate lighting in all classrooms, restrooms, and hallways?	☐	☐	
7. Do we ensure that all workers and volunteers pass a background check with fingerprints and ensure the references are verified?	☐	☐	

NOTE: It is recommended that you know individuals at least six months before allowing them to volunteer and/or work with children.

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
8. Have we implemented the "Rule of Two" with no exceptions?	❑	❑	
9. Do we have a policy to ensure that the drop-off and pick-up parents are correct?	❑	❑	
10. Do we have a data sheet (and subsequent database) on each child that contains identifying information, allergies, medications, emergency contacts, and drop off and pick up authorizations? These data sheets may need to be removed and carried out quickly in the event of an emergency.	❑	❑	
11. When we plan events with overnight stays, do we ensure adequate adult supervision with adults supervising the adults?	❑	❑	
12. Are workers and volunteers trained on state and local law regarding child abuse and neglect?	❑	❑	
13. Is our environment "encouraging" to individuals to report abuse or violence that happens in the home? **Note:** Many times, it is an enraged spouse that initiates violence in houses of worship.	❑	❑	
14. Are workers and volunteers trained to take any and every accusation seriously and to report it to the director of security and local law enforcement?	❑	❑	
15. Does our facility create an environment where children and young people will come forward with any and all reports and/or attempts at inappropriate behavior?	❑	❑	

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STEP 4: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR WEATHER, MEDICAL, AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Instructions: Complete this checklist to evaluate security efforts and initiatives you have in place for natural disasters and medical emergencies.

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
1. Do we have someone (and/or a team) designated to be in charge in the event of an emergency?	❏	❏	
2. Do we have an emergency preparedness plan that addresses weather emergencies, medical emergencies, and man-made emergencies that could happen at our facility or adjacent to our facility?	❏	❏	
3. Do we have a list of names, titles, phone numbers, etc. of people to contact in the event of an emergency for extra volunteers?	❏	❏	
4. Do we have fire extinguishers in every building and around every area that uses gas, stoves, grills, and/or flames? **Note:** The majority of all fires begin in the kitchen or from a candle.	❏	❏	
5. Do we have an evacuation plan for each building? **Note:** This should be practiced at least once or twice a year.	❏	❏	
6. Do we have an area designated for medical emergencies? How is this area lighted?	❏ ❏	❏ ❏	
7. Do we have gloves and masks readily available? **Note:** Medical staff should be trained in how to handle hazardous body fluids.	❏	❏	
8. Do we have a first aid kit? Defibrillator? Narcan?	❏	❏	
9. Do we have a doctor or nurse or standby during services and events? How far is the closest ambulance?	❏	❏	

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	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
10. Are volunteers, staff and security personnel trained in CPR and other life-saving actions?	❑	❑	
11. Do we have individuals designated to help individuals with disabilities in the event of an emergency?	❑	❑	
12. Is someone trained in how to shut down the key mechanical and/or utility systems and/or electrical systems?	❑	❑	
13. Is there a designated area for a storm shelter?	❑	❑	
14. Do we have an emergency kit with flashlights, batteries, radios, water, first aid kits, supplies, blankets, and phones?	❑	❑	
15. Do we have bottled water and food available?	❑	❑	
16. Do we have someone designated who can speak to the media on behalf of the congregation, regardless of the type of emergency?	❑	❑	

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STEP 5: SECURING THE FINANCES AND MEMBERSHIP DATA

Instructions: Complete this checklist to evaluate security efforts you have in place for securing financial and membership data.

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
1. Do we have a computer system that tracks membership data that is secured with adequate firewalls?	❑	❑	
2. Do we back up membership data and financial giving records on a regular or daily basis?	❑	❑	
3. Are the back-ups stored on site or in the cloud?	❑	❑	
4. Is the mainframe in a climate-controlled environment with surge protections and back-up power? Is it away from a sprinkler?	❑ ❑	❑ ❑	
5. Do employees and/or volunteers sign a non-disclosure agreement prior to working with membership and/or financial information?	❑	❑	
6. Do we have financial policies that directs on how donations are handled and how expenses are approved and paid?	❑	❑	
7. Do we have financial procedures on how donated money/checks are processed?	❑	❑	
After collection, how is the money secured?			
Who has access to the area where the money is secured?			
Is the money counted in a room with cameras?	❑	❑	
When/who counts the money and prepares the deposits?			
Who handles the mail each day to process donations?			
Who processes credit card donations?			
How are the numbers secured?			
Are donations made over the phone?			
How is this information secured?			
Who has access to donations and tracks this information for end-of-year tax donation receipts?			

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
How is this information secured?			
Who ensures the actual deposit matches what was prepared?			
Who approves financial expenditures and payments?			
Who reconciles the checking account every month?			
Who verifies credit card purchases?			
How/when are deposits transported to the bank?			
8. **Do our financial policies require a review or an audit every year conducted by an outside firm?**	❏	❏	
9. **Do we review credit reports on employees and/or volunteers that handle money?**	❏	❏	
10. **Do we have layers of review for expenditures? For example, the person who uses the credit card for purchases is not the person who pays the credit card bill.**	❏	❏	
11. **Are invoices reviewed by multiple people on a random basis to ensure that bogus companies, invoices, and/or employees are not being paid?**	❏	❏	
12. **Does the position of treasurer rotate on a frequent basis so that others can review the bank statements and ask questions?**	❏	❏	
13. **Does our administering board review reconciliation reports and bank statements on a monthly basis?**	❏	❏	
14. **Do we require dual signatures for purchases over a certain amount? Example: $500.**			
15. **Do we have a policy of "No Cash" on the premises?**	❏	❏	
16. **How do we provide benevolence assistance? Gift cards? Cash? Checks?**			

STEP 6: SECURITY SUGGESTIONS

Instructions: Complete this checklist to evaluate your overall security efforts.

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
1. Is our church leadership engaged in our security plan? **Note:** For plans to be effective, they must be.	☐	☐	
2. Do we have a security plan for our facility?	☐	☐	
3. Do we have a network of security professionals to help implement security recommendations?	☐	☐	
4. Do we train our network on observation, use of force, proper response, and how to de-escalate a situation?	☐	☐	
5. Do we re-train our network every year?	☐	☐	
6. Do we allow individuals to carry firearms? Do we insist that they participate on our security team for training?	☐ ☐	☐ ☐	
7. Do we have a key/access control policy for our buildings?	☐	☐	
8. Do we have opening and closing procedures for each building with a designated person?	☐	☐	
9. Do we have a detailed property inventory list with serial numbers? It should be updated with every new purchase. Take pictures and/or video of computers, electronics, safes, musical instruments, communion trays, artwork, statues, and anything of value. Store this document off-site or in the cloud.	☐	☐	
10. Do we maintain personnel files on every worker and volunteer? Keep files locked securely.	☐	☐	
11. Do we conduct a thorough background check (signed waivers) on every employee/volunteer? Do we run a state and federal background check, as well as talking to previous clergy leaders, neighbors, and references?	☐	☐	

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
12. Do our volunteers/employees who are transporting attendees have clear driving records? This should be updated every year. **Note:** Every driver must be listed on your insurance policy for coverage.	❏	❏	
13. Do we conduct background checks on employees, youth and children ministers, coaches, mentors, drivers, or teachers either in a paid or volunteer positions?	❏	❏	
14. Do we have one person designated who will speak to the media should a tragic event happen at our facility?	❏	❏	
15. Do we have a manual with all of the contact information and account information for the following:			
Gas lines and connection	❏	❏	
Electrical power	❏	❏	
Water supply	❏	❏	
Telephones	❏	❏	
Alarm System	❏	❏	
Security Coordinator	❏	❏	
Media designee	❏	❏	
Emergency management planners	❏	❏	
Local media	❏	❏	
16. How would we contact parents/members/community should a tragedy occur? Text? Twitter? Facebook? Phone? Who keeps this information up-to-date?			
17. Have we solicited advice and input from local law enforcement?	❏	❏	
18. Has our security plan been reviewed by legal and our administering board?			
19. Has this survey instrument helped to identify areas of weakness?	❏	❏	

	Yes	No	Recommendations/Concerns
20. Do we realize that our security plan will be a living document that will need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis as new threats emerge and things simply change?	❏	❏	
21. Have we made a financial commitment to improving the security at our place of worship, with the understanding that it will continue to increase as equipment is updated and added, and as we add additional security initiatives to new programs and events?	❏	❏	