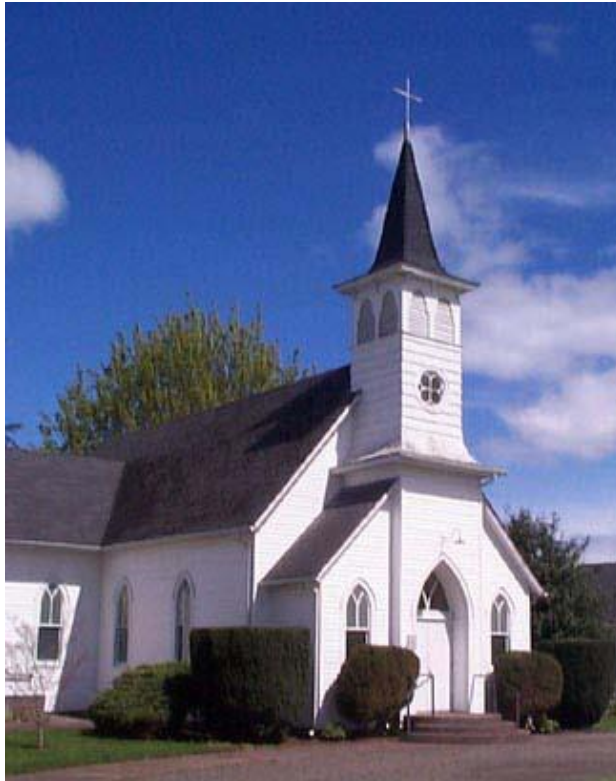




# Church and Safety Team Manual For Houses of Worship



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## **Safety Training for Houses of Worship: *Attitude is Important***

It won't happen here

- A big mistake that many people make is that things like that happen everywhere else. That type of thinking is a barrier between people being prepared and unprepared.

There is nothing I can do if it does happen here

- This is not true, preparation is the key. While you may experience an attack, the more equipped you and your team are could be the difference in someone's life.

God will protect me

- The first line of defense is Prayer and God is always protecting us from things seen and unseen. However, it is good to be prepared, because evil is present in our world and unfortunate things happen.

## **Safety Training for Houses of Worship: *Your Team and Your Church***

Pastoral Staff

- Pastors should always be part of the team (Pastor does not have to be armed or be in a leadership role on the team; the pastor should just be knowledgeable of members, plans, and of any armed individuals)

Safety Team

- Members with past or current experience in Law Enforcement or Military
- Ushers, Childcare Workers, Parking Lot Ministry, Nurses
- Decide with pastor if anyone will be allowed to carry concealed weapons (SC Law Requires CWP holders to be approved by church leadership to carry in church)
- Define Roles- i.e. who will call 911, who will direct evacuees, medical roles
- Regular meeting times to discuss safety team concerns
- Paid security is an option

Church Congregation

- The congregation needs to know basic plan- **congregation does not need to know who is carrying concealed if that is allowed. (IT IS UP TO EACH INDIVIDUAL CHURCH OR DENOMINATION IF YOU ALLOW ANYONE TO CARRY A FIREARM)**



- Any person that carries a firearm **MUST** have the express permission of the pastor

#### Local Police, Fire, EMS

- Establish relationships with First Responders and Law Enforcement
- Contact officers who patrol your district to walk through the church
- Ask about having a marked patrol car parked on site during service times

#### Chain of Command

- Who's in charge during times of emergency
- Back up persons for after hours events

#### Neighbors

- Establish relationships with neighbors or businesses
- Close business neighbor that may be able to contact 911 if they notice danger at the church

#### First Aid

- Ensure that you have adequate first aid supplies to handle events from members with diabetes or trauma such as gunshot wounds

### **Have your plan written out and documented**

#### Know the church insurance policies

- Some insurance companies offer special insurance for Safety Teams
- Policy needs to be in place before Safety Team is formed
- CWP Carriers need own individual insurance
- **VERIFY WITH YOUR CHURCH INSURANCE; EACH COMPANY IS DIFFERENT**
- List individuals that are carrying arms if applicable and also list all individuals on the safety team



## **Safety Training for Houses of Worship: *Risks and Concerns***

### Know Your People

- Are there any members or nonmembers with history of violence? This is not saying to profile each person. But if a woman reports that her husband Brother X is abusive- take note of that situation – be aware
- Do not assume all people with mental illness are dangerous. A common problem for people with mental illness is if they are no longer taking medication – big red flag
- Conversation of individuals. If someone is constantly talking about other shootings, glorifying violence, or you hear threats

### Facility and Physical Grounds

- Knowing your building
  - How many stories is your building
  - Basement access
  - Classrooms accessibility
  - Entry and Exit Points/ Special Hallways
  - Ensure the team is familiar with the floorplan

### Facility and Physical Grounds

- Location- determine what type of community you are in
- Parking Lot Lighting / External Dark Areas of Buildings
- Which doors are opened during service times

### Safe Guarding Your Building and Grounds

- Security Cameras
- Security Systems/ Motion Detectors
- Increase Lighting
- Secure the Facility
  - Be sure that all doors properly lock;
  - Prune bushes, trees or shrubs that could serve as hiding places
  - Proper fencing



- Secure church vehicles
- Block access to HVAC units with fencing
- Panic Bars for Doors
  - Interior doors should have window to see through
- Clear Signage- notice when an unauthorized person is in certain areas
- Inventory of Church Keys
  - Who has copy of keys
  - Have a list of everyone that has a key
- Walkie Talkies
- Code Words for team

## **Safety Training for Houses of Worship: *Crisis Action Behavior***

IN THE EVENT OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER THINGS WILL GET CHAOTIC!!! Escape if you can!!

Run, Hide, Fight (Fight or Flight) Responses

- Shooting into a crowd is not the answer- bullets carry liability
- If applicable know when to pull the trigger

Methods: Confront, Contain, Control & Direct and Divert

- Control movement within the church by having areas locked or inaccessible
- Create a disturbance and lead outside
- Confront the shooter with force

Weapons and Firearms: Up to each congregation

- Pastor has to give permission for CWP holders to carry
- Situations involving those who are armed? (Lack of training, physical or mental disabilities, violations of rules, etc.)
- If firearms are carried, periodic training or briefing sessions should be held
- Improvised weapons or actual weapons
- Insurance liability issues
  - There are policies available for church Safety teams



- Have a written agreement with the person carrying
- **Individuals need to be mentally and emotionally prepared to stop a threat**

#### Training Drills

- More training helps with: (Practice with congregation on evacuating)
  - Muscle Memory: Consistent firearm practice if individuals are armed
  - Remaining as calm as possible vs panicking: Routine evacuation drills and Safety Team Meetings
  - Be ready to help with de-escalation also, other situations between member may happen
  - Acting vs Reacting: Preparation is key! One step ahead of potential threat
  - Have the safety team walk through an “active shooter” event (**NO FIREARMS**)

#### Medical Team and Equipment

- CPR, AED
- To assist while waiting for first responders
- After shooter or attack is **stopped**- then possibly have your church medical team assisting victims (**ON DIRECTION FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT**)
- Trauma Kits

## **Safety Training for Houses of Worship: *Evacuation/ Aftermath***

#### When Law Enforcement and SWAT Enters

- Remember they DO NOT know who the threat is
- The situation will be chaotic
- **FOLLOW ALL DIRECTIONS FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT**

If you are carrying a firearm be aware of this:

- Put down or re-holster the gun
- Hands up
- Keep objects out of your hands
- Law Enforcement cannot stop to help someone- goal is stopping the threat

#### Emergency Operation Planned Written Out



- For Evacuation
- Medical Team
- Policy and Procedures

Meeting Place for Safety- headcount

Alternate Place of Worship

Counseling and Mental Health- traumatic event

Who will speak with news media

Evacuation Planning

- Review with your church, team and other staff
- Everyone should know their role
- How will you evacuate your seniors or persons with disabilities
- Clearly posted exit signs
- Who's in charge to say to evacuate
- Walk through the evacuation plan with the congregation

## **Safety Training for Houses of Worship: *Psychological Aspects of an Active Shooter***

Active Shooter/ Threat can be anyone- Must be taken within context

Warning Signs and Behaviors

- Identification warning behavior: a psychological desire to be a “pseudo-commando,” have a “warrior mentality,” closely associate with weapons or other military or law enforcement paraphernalia (person is obsessively focused on warrior mentality)
  - Role of Video Games-Research shows violent video games desensitize individuals to the impact of mass shootings
- Pathway warning behavior: research, planning, preparation, or implementation of an attack (you notice a person is talking about or planning an attack)
- Fixation warning behavior: an increasingly pathological preoccupation with a person or a cause (constantly talking about a dangerous person i.e. Hitler or Columbine Mass Shooting)
- Energy burst warning behavior: an increase in the frequency or variety of any noted activities related to the target (person may have increase interest in mass shootings)





- Leakage warning behavior: the communication to a third party of intent to do harm to a target through an attack (You overhear about a potential threat)
- Directly communicated threat warning behavior: the communication of a direct threat to the target or to law enforcement before an attack (Clearly communicated threat)
- Last resort warning behavior: evidence of a violent “action/time imperative” i.e selling all possessions (person is basically preparing to die)
- Role of Mental Illness: Medication / Nonmedication (Individuals with Mental Illness should not be profiled; however if a person stops taking medication- could be very dangerous)

**While we discuss primarily active shooters and personal protection, A church should be able to identify risks related to these topics listed below but not limited to the following:**

- Hurricanes
- Fires
- Earthquakes
- Flooding
- Medical Emergencies- Heart Attacks during services
- Missing Child
- Power Outage
- Active Shooter
- Terrorist Attack
- Tornadoes
- Theft



Precision Tactics LLC is an active shooter/ personal defense training and firearm safety company. We train armed and unarmed teams or individuals through a simulation system. Our manual is designed as a beginner guide for safety. This manual does not guarantee that during an attack there will not be any loss of life or injury. In addition, there may be other safety precautions to take that are not listed in this manual. Our goal is to provide helpful knowledge to you. Our information has been derived from the following sources:

FBI Training and Investigations  
Chesterfield Sheriff Department

Meloy, J. R.; Mohandie, K.; Knoll, J.L.; Hoffmann, J. "The Concept of Identification in Threat Assessment, Behavioral Sciences and the Law," June 2015, Vol. 33, No. 2-3. doi: 10.1002/bsl.2166

We hope this information is helpful to you. May God Bless You and Keep You.