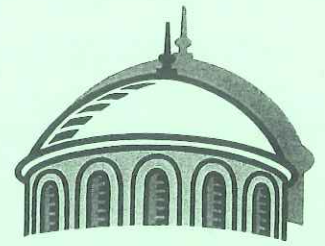




HOUSES OF WORSHIP SAFETY



"Citizen Attention is the Best Crime Prevention"

We would think that criminals would respect certain organizations and property in our community. This is not true. A criminal will take advantage of any opportunity to exploit an individual and property. Everyone needs to be aware of techniques that can protect them from criminals.

Potential Areas of Victimization:

- Burglary is usually the most frequent church crime; sound systems, audiovisual equipment, computers, office equipment, art objects, stain-glass windows.
- Criminal assault to staff and members is another danger area.
- Hate crimes happen at houses of worship.
- Theft of and from vehicles.
- Embezzlement or misappropriation of funds.
- Robbery of fund deposits.

Reasons for Vulnerability:

- Security measures minimal and inadequate.
- Rarely designed with security issues as an important feature.
- Control and access management weak.
- Mission of ministering to the homeless, drug users, gang members, etc., could bring dangerous clients.
- Inadequate lighting and not properly trimmed landscaping.



Parking Lots:

- Lock your vehicle.
- Keep windows rolled up.
- There should be good parking lot lighting for evening activities.
- Landscaping should be trimmed around the parking lot for good visibility.
- Informing your employees and volunteers about these break-ins.
- Alerting your congregation and reminding them to not leave valuable items in their car and to lock it when attending church service.
- Post crime prevention reminder signs in your parking lots.
- Have your parking lot helpers, security teams (larger congregations), to maintain a watchful eye when church service is taking place.
- Encourage all members to report suspicious activity, information about these crimes, or any break-in, to the police.

Crime Prevention Ideas:

- **Vandalism** - Deter vandalism by asking the following to be observant of activity taking place on or near your facility:
 - ✓ People visiting your facility.
 - ✓ Members of your community/neighborhood.
 - ✓ People responsible for maintenance/repairs.
 - ✓ All employees/volunteers.
- **Valuables Inside The Facility** - As mentioned before, places of worship generally have items that may be of high value, or particular significance, that are a part of the worship service or related activities. These items should be secured when not in use. These items include, but are not limited to offering boxes, collection plates, musical instruments, hand written scrolls, religious artifacts, etc.
Possible protection ideas might include:
 - ✓ Metal wall safes.
 - ✓ Safety deposit boxes.
 - ✓ Fire resistant/theft resistant lock boxes or safes.
 - ✓ Locked cabinets.
 - ✓ Alarmed areas (if item(s) are particularly valuable or irreplaceable).
 - ✓ All individuals having access to such items may be required to sign-in/sign-out when accessing these items.
- **Individual Offices/Rooms** - Depending upon the design, layout, and usage of your facility, it may be important to control access and movement inside. It is important to remember that access limitations, viewing windows, etc., are an important part of knowing what is going on inside. Here are some considerations:
 - ✓ Adequate access system limiting usage of particular rooms, areas depending upon the user and the event.
 - ✓ Adequate locking devices that is easy to use. Could include traditional keys, swipe cards, numbered touch pad, etc.
 - ✓ Viewing ability into all rooms via a window in the door or a wall.
 - ✓ Adequate telephone placement so emergency calls can be made from anywhere in the facility easily and quickly.
 - ✓ Office furniture arranged so that the person occupying the office has clear visibility of outside activity and ease of quick exit from office if needed.
 - ✓ PA system or other means of internal communication with an easily understood message delivery process.
 - ✓ Numbering system for all outside/inside doors for quick location identification when problems arise.

Programs and Initiatives:

- Establish a permanent security/protection committee.
- Review security procedures periodically, including **key control** and **security checklist**.
- Budget for maintenance and upgrade of security hardware.
- Procedures to mark property with identifying number/letters.
- Consider security service at certain hours.
- Certified accounting firm to review books yearly.
- Have Metro Crime Prevention Representative do an inspection of facilities. This is free.

