

Faith Safety Network's Top 10 Safety Recommendations

While each religious institution must make its own decisions about what safety and security measures to implement, the task can seem daunting in the absence of trusted advice from experienced security experts. With that in mind, we have developed the following recommendations based on the collective knowledge, experience, and best practices of security experts respected by Faith Safety Network.

1. Develop a safety plan to meet the specific needs of your religious institution based on the consensus of your leadership in consultation with security experts.
2. Form a Safety and Security Team headed by a staff member, volunteer, or retained expert with delegated authority to expeditiously implement necessary safety measures and make necessary modifications.
3. Incorporate in the Safety Plan measures to minimize the loss of life and injury from an active shooter, including the presence of armed security personnel during peak attendance times. These security personnel may consist of law enforcement (when available), trained volunteers, or paid security personnel (including off-duty law enforcement officers).
4. Implement a comprehensive, robust plan to protect children from sexual abuse perpetrated not only by adults but from youth as well.
5. Train staff and ministry volunteers to be the “eyes and ears” for suspicious activity and threats to be reported to the Safety Team. This vigilance must be maintained continuously for persons and situations that do not look right, not just during regular service times.
6. Limit facility access to core hours and require those attending services to enter at one main entrance in order to monitor and control access.

7. Include in the Safety Plan a protocol for handling medical emergencies and train ministry staff and the Safety Team to address common scenarios, such as use of an AED, to ensure prompt response to the emergency that includes minimizing the response time of first responders.
8. Conduct a security review of the ministry's activities occurring apart from regular worship services so as not to neglect security vulnerabilities that occur during off hours.
9. Establish a relationship with local law enforcement and ensure they have a familiarity with your institution's facility and activities.
10. Include safety and security as agenda items periodically, if not regularly, as part of staff and governing meetings, not just on a once-a-year basis.