Church Security
Making Your Mass & Events Safer
Safety Plan

It is important to understand there is no simple formula for survival in a threatening situation. Although, a survival mindset will get you a much stronger foundation upon which you can base your decisions and actions.
Safety Plan

Having a plan in place will reduce your exposure and increase safety.

- **Without a plan:**
  Chaos and fear

- **With a plan:**
  Structure and organized reactions
Trained vs. Untrained

• During an emergency or act of violence, the trained individual may experience anxiety but the untrained will likely panic.

• The trained individual will recall their training whereas the untrained will be in disbelief or shock.

• The trained will commit to action where the untrained will descend into helplessness.
AWARENESS
Involves taking the time necessary to gain a basic understanding of an active shooter, threat or emergency situation.

PREPARATION
There is no substitute for preparation. Look through a survival lens and prepare for “when” it happens and not “if” it happens.

REHEARSAL
Involves practicing your plan. Rehearsing your plan will reduce response time and build confidence.
We believe that church security is best accomplished through **PREVENTION!** You should not focus most of your energy on ways to handle just an active shooter. Instead, we believe you should focus your energy on being **PREPARED** to handle all critical incidents and emergencies from occurring in the first place.
CHURCH SHOOTINGS ARE NOTHING NEW

- Actually, there are very few incidents, but they become high-profile when they occur.
- Number of casualties have increased (weapons used).
- Mental illness has factored into this epidemic.
- Violence at all houses of worship, has tallied more than 184 incidents each in 2018 and 2019.
Today, we must change our mindset about safety and improve the protection of all who enter upon our church and school property.

- We have become easy targets
- They are a large place of assembly
- Causes the most devastation
Sutherland Springs, TX
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

November 2015
26 killed
Parkland, FL
MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS HS

February 2018
17 killed
Blacksburg, VA
VIRGINIA TECH

April 2007
32 killed
Jonesboro, AR
WESTSIDE SCHOOL
March 1998
5 killed
Newtown,
CT
SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY

Dec. 2012
26 killed
Interesting Fact

SINCE 1967 (54 YEARS), HOW MANY FIRE DEATHS HAVE OCCURRED IN SCHOOLS ACROSS AMERICA?

1. <50
2. <100
3. <200
REASONING

• More than half the cost of new construction is based solely on life safety and fire codes.

• Until recent, we have done little to provide adequate security to our students and parishioners.

  • Fire Service gets an A+
  • Security gets a NI (needs improvement)
Safety/Security Team

Having a highly visible safety/security team may actually prevent or reduce the potential for a threat and offer comfort to your parishioners. Since Ushers and Greeters are often in a position to be the first ones to closely observe visitors coming onto your property, they should all be part of your safety/security team and should have regular and documented training exercises.
Safety/Security Team

It is important to keep focus on both safety and security at your entire place of worship. Try to think basic before you think high tech or high costs. Your training does not have to be complex creating a “combat” ready environment; rather, it should consist of providing materials on safety and security issues, high risk or threat situations and general emergency situations.
Safety/Security Team

TEAM COULD CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING:

• Building/Grounds Engineer
• Parish/School Administration
• Medical/EMS Law Enforcement/Fire
• Ushers/Staff

• UTILIZE ALL YOUR RESOURCES
Safety/Security Team

• Develop your Team and Plan

• Capable adults with sound judgement

• Staff/Ushers/Volunteers
  -Everyone can have a role
  -Secretary
  -Custodian

• Outside Resources
  -Civil Defense
  -Legal

Plan A
Plan B
Plan C
THE TEAM

Should consist of capable adults:

• Given specific responsibility

• Alert and ready to respond to emergency/threat

• First responders have these traits
THE TEAM

Assign a Safety/Security Coordinator

• Develop and oversee safety/security plan

• Keep plan active

• Keep updated and effective for your specific location

• Coordinate activities/training

• Schedules regular inspections/assessments
THE TEAM

Develop your Plan

• Plan should address all emergencies
  - Weather
  - Medical
  - Disruptions
  - Violent acts
  - Fire

• Seek assistance from first responders for logical approach
THE TEAM

• Team should be trained to report threats/concerns

• Trained to react to anything making them uncomfortable – Do not dismiss uneasy feelings

• Should be able to identify a threat and take action

• Train with other ushers/staff from other churches
  • Keep in mind though, what works for them may not be suitable for your location
THE TEAM

• Designated to observe certain areas of the church
  -Narthex
  -Nave
  -Parking Lot
  -Doors
  -Altar
  -Interior Rooms

• Wear clothing representing who you are

• Wear badges or lanyards to be easily identifiable
Early detection is critical

• Most violent acts begin in the parking lot

• The parking lot and entrance(s) should be the focal point

• Security cameras monitored

• Ushers/Greeters observing people entering the church
TRAINING & BEST PRACTICES

Develop Three Circles of Security

1) Parking Lot
2) Exterior/Interior doors
3) Interior of church
Given the importance of perimeter security, it is crucial that you provide the appearance of your property to be well secured.

Mass shootings are not typically spontaneous but are thought out and planned based on the appearance of security at a location.

Do not provide an open invitation for an attack on your property.
Situational Awareness, what is it?

• Observant of surroundings (Looking for signs)

• Investigate disturbances on your property

• Report anomalies to your leadership

• Don’t assume that vandalism on your property was just for the thrill of doing so. It could be a precursor to a threat or break-in. (Cameras, door locks, etc.)
BEST PRACTICES

- Conduct security assessment prior to and during the Mass or event
- Exterior and Interior
- Repair/replace damages as soon as possible
Research indicates that over 60% of all mass shootings begin in the parking lot.

This should be the focal point of your perimeter security plan:

- Are your lots easily visible from the streets/public?
- Adequate lighting?
- Does landscaping in or around your lots provide hiding places?
PARKING LOTS

• During arrival/departure of parishioners, be vigilant of people and activities occurring.

• After Mass/event, don’t assume threat level has diminished.

• During Mass/event, conduct walk-arounds. Look for suspicious activities or anomalies.

• This can be seen as deterrent to a potential threat.

• Being visible also offers a form of comfort to those in attendance.
PARKING LOTS

• Consider having a vehicle labeled Safety Patrol.

• Park it at the entrance and/or drive through the lot during the Mass/event.

• Partner with law enforcement and ask if they can attend your event and sit in parking lot.

• Some agencies may be able to leave an unmanned vehicle during Mass to act as a deterrent.
Can your doors be properly secured?

Are there any weak points?

Do you have all glass doors?

- Your security assessment of the property may require you to update or replace some doors.
- If you are replacing any doors, always ensure they comply with local and national fire code.
• Consider locking your secondary doors after Mass has started. Late arrivals can be directed to the main entrance.

• Per fire code, only doors with panic hardware can be locked during occupancy.

• During Mass, we recommend the main entrance be safeguarded by your team.

• Have a lockdown procedure for all doors should a credible threat be determined.
• Examine your doors and inspect for deficiencies and or evidence of tampering.

• Ensure they latch properly.

• Criminals will “scope out” your property for weaknesses.

• An open door policy is no longer conducive to today’s society.

• A key control policy is a must.
Do your windows pose a security issue for your property?

• Inspect windows for tool markings, pry marks, or cracked glass.

• This may be evidence of an attempted break-in.

• Or, someone may have gained access to the church prior to Mass and are hiding/waiting to plan their attack.

• Ensure all windows open/close properly and have adequate locking mechanisms.
LANDSCAPING

• Landscaping can add beauty to your property but also can be a place of refuge for an intruder.

• It is important to keep well maintained.

  *Does your landscaping hide your entrance doors or windows?*

• As mentioned earlier, this is the invitation that an intruder will look for.

• Your security assessment of the property should address any issues.
Is there adequate lighting?

- Your exterior lights should be illuminated all night.
- Having property well lit at night will also be a deterrent and give the intruder that sense that your property is secured and not an easy target.
Any given neighborhood wants their community to feel safe from harm. Consider developing a Neighborhood Watch Program as part of your Safety/Security ministry. Your local law enforcement agency can likely assist you in developing this program specific to your community.

If one is already in place, look for ways to enhance it with respect to the current culture on the need for church security.
Reach out to the adjacent neighbors that border your property. Ask if they would consider being your eyes and ears for suspicious activities around the property during and/or after events.
Consider providing an email address for these neighbors to report instances that may be occurring on your property either during events or after hours. Provide them a contact name/number to report unusual activity around the church.
Audible alarms and/or strobe lights installed on the exterior of your buildings could also be a deterrent and notify neighbors of an intrusion. Individuals with a threatening plan seek out easy targets and could be “staging” their attack based on the security or lack of security at your parish.
Detection – Early detection of a threat is a key element to the safety of all who enter upon your property. If a potential threat can be detected early, you have a much greater chance of neutralizing it. Qualified and trained individuals who can identify suspicious signs of behavior should be strategically placed at your entrances and parking lot. Keep in mind, if a threat is identified, your lockdown procedure and emergency response plan should be activated immediately.
Deter – If the situation allows, there may be an instance where you will need to confront an individual to determine their intentions. If this can be accomplished in a safe manner, the mere fact that you are addressing the individual may in fact deter them from committing any acts of violence. While engaging someone, you should be able to respond calmly and effectively as to keep control and de-escalate any potential high emotional conflict. If there is no opportunity to verbally engage individuals, making eye contact with them can also be a deterrent to someone with ill intentions.
Your safety plan should include emergency lockdown procedures to help delay the intruder. If a threat is imminent, lockdown procedures need to be activated immediately. Seconds save lives and anything you can do to delay an attack will help reduce the potential for harm.
TRAINING & BEST PRACTICES

Interior of Church

• Do a walk-through of church prior to Mass

• Look through interior rooms, restrooms, kitchens, etc.

• Look for signs of disturbances

• Report anything and everything to the Team for discussion
TRAINING & BEST PRACTICES

• Conduct a briefing with Team prior to Mass
• Train for and practice situational roles
• Conduct monthly meetings to discuss safety and current events
• Training should be recurring
• Play out an emergency situation and evaluate
The best type of emergency response training is to ask:

- What could happen?
- What early detection techniques can be employed?
- How do we respond quickly?
- What will we do in response?
- Who will do what?
- What will we do next?
Utilizing the previous questions will assist in development of your plan. Then, you ask:

• How can we prevent it?
• How can we reduce or minimize harm to others?
• What will we do when it happens?

Remember, the goal is not to develop a church SWAT team, it is to be ready and able to take action until help arrives.
Commit to a Whole Church focus:

Plan should include all buildings and events in which the church may be at risk of harm

- Expand your thinking past the main services the church provides
- Consider all activities and events that occur at your church
AWARENESS

- Be aware of anything that might indicate the church is being targeted such as recent public criticism.

- Consider anything that might increase a negative interest in the church.
DISRUPTIONS & DISTURBANCES

Discuss and plan with church leadership to decide at what level of disruption should the security team intervene.

If a disruptive person is unknown to the congregation, 911 should be called. (He/she may have done it in other places, may be wanted, may need assistance).
OPTIONS FOR DISTURBANCES/DISRUPTIONS

Shield & Guard
Stop from advancing

Divert & Direct
Use persuasion to remove the person
DIVERT & DIRECT

Distract and Delay:

• Guide the disturbance away and outside
• Leave a way out, in the direction of an exit
• Do not corner someone or yourself
• Do not prevent the person from leaving
Have A Leadership Role

Balance concern with reason, steadiness, and optimism.

• Keep a dual focus: Security and Safety
• Keep your entire place of worship in mind
• Think basic before high tech or high cost
• Start with people solutions
• Think and talk of safety and security as something you and everyone can help achieve
You are not alone in this fight. Law enforcement agencies around the world are developing action plans to address the crisis of mass shootings. As such, it is vitally important to utilize your public officials and first responders in an effort to develop your safety/security plan for all emergencies. Having a plan in place will offer a level of security and comfort to your parish and give you the best chance of reducing the potential for a threat.

TOGETHER IT IS POSSIBLE
Catholic Mutual strongly recommends that employees or volunteers not be armed as part of your Safety and Security Plan. There is a possibility that an armed employee or volunteer acting as security may not be protected under the diocesan insurance plan thus exposing them to great personal risk should they be involved in an active shooter situation. Rather, we strongly recommend hiring armed security firms and/or active law enforcement who require training and carry professional liability insurance.
Catholic Mutual Group offers an excellent active shooter training scenario and training geared for our schools. This information could also be useful for you to construct your plan for the church and other parish buildings. You may access this training on our CMG Connect platform at:

www.CMGconnect.org
Additional Resources

**CARES** documents can be found at: [www.catholicmutual.org](http://www.catholicmutual.org)

Click Member Login, enter your Username and Password, Select the Risk Management Info icon, Property, and then Emergency Preparedness.

*Active Shooter Emergency Response*
*Church Security*
*Perimeter Security*
*Safety/Security Team Best Practices*
*Church Safety & Security Guidebook*

**Catholic Mutual’s Emergency Response Procedures App**

The instructions to download this app to your cell phone or tablet can be sent to you by contacting your Risk Management Representative.
• **Department of Homeland Security:**

• **FEMA:**
  https://www.fema.gov/medialibrary
Cyber Security Awareness

“They are Coming for You!”
Threats

- Phishing emails
- Ransomware
- Wire transfer fraud
- Social engineering
- Malware infections
- Lost or stolen devices
Tokio Marine Risk Management Services and Online Resources

Our Cyber Risk Management solution includes a range of phone-based, in-person, and online resources:

- Cyber expert phone hotline
- Email Phishing Simulations and training
- Online training courses
- Training coordinator/support services
- Webinars, email newsletters, cyber alerts
- State-by-state regulatory information/updates
Employee Training

Introduction to Breaches
A data breach could be devastating to your organization. These three courses provide an overview of data breaches, how they can occur, how to prevent them, and the laws that regulate data security.
- Employee Motives
  - "VIEW" on Feb. 2020 – 14 min.
- Info to Data Breaches
  - "VIEW" on April 2021 – 12 min.
- Threats to Data Breaches (60 Mins.)
- Laws & Regulations (96 Mins.)

Social Engineering
Social engineering attacks are one of the main causes of data breaches. This series will prepare employees for common social engineering attacks and give them the tools to protect their companies and information.
- Phishing
  - "VIEW" on Nov. 2020 – 10 min.
- Non-Phishing
  - "VIEW" on Nov. 2020 – 12 min.
- Business Email Compromise
- Site Fraud

GDPR Training
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a broad sweeping EU legislation designed to increase an individual’s right to control personal data. This awareness course is designed for all audiences across your organization and provides learners with an understanding of the regulation, why it is important, and how it affects organizations across the globe.
- GDPR Awareness Training (96 Mins.)

Data Security Basics
Understanding how to keep your devices secure can go a long way in preventing a data breach. This mini-series explores the basics when it comes to data security best practices.
- Mobile (12 Mins.)
- Password Best Practices (10 Mins.)
- Public Wi-Fi (8 Mins.)

Safeguarding Information
Information is one of the most valuable resources a company has. This course describes the importance of maintaining a safe environment for sensitive information, identifies the value of technical safeguards, and dives into the best practices for handling sensitive information.
- Safeguarding Information (96 Mins.)

PCI Training Series
The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards require organizations that accept payment cards to train the employees on best practices to prevent the theft of cardholder information. This series covers basic steps to protect cardholder information.
- Identifying Fraudulent Payment Cards (10 Mins.)
- Inspecting Credit Card Machines (10 Mins.)

Risk Management topics, resources and procedures should be in place including (but not limited to):

- Email Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Dual verification
- Acceptable Use
- Password Management
- Mobile Device Security
- Bring Your Own Device
- Removable Media
- Physical Security
- IT Document Management
Thank You

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact your Risk Management Representative at Catholic Mutual Group.

800.228.6108