

September 2020

THE CHURCH GUARDIAN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM SHEEPDOG CHURCH SECURITY



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TOP NEWS STORY

ARREST MADE IN CHURCH VANDALISM SPREE IN NEW JERSEY

“A suspect has been arrested after multiple houses of worship vandalized over a two-month span in New Jersey. Police announced the arrest of 34-year-old Natalee Hamilton Tuesday. In each case of vandalism, officials say the suspect smashed out the building windows with rocks. The locations victimized include Westminster Presbyterian Church, New Monmouth Baptist Church, and Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.”

Source: [Click Here to Read](#)

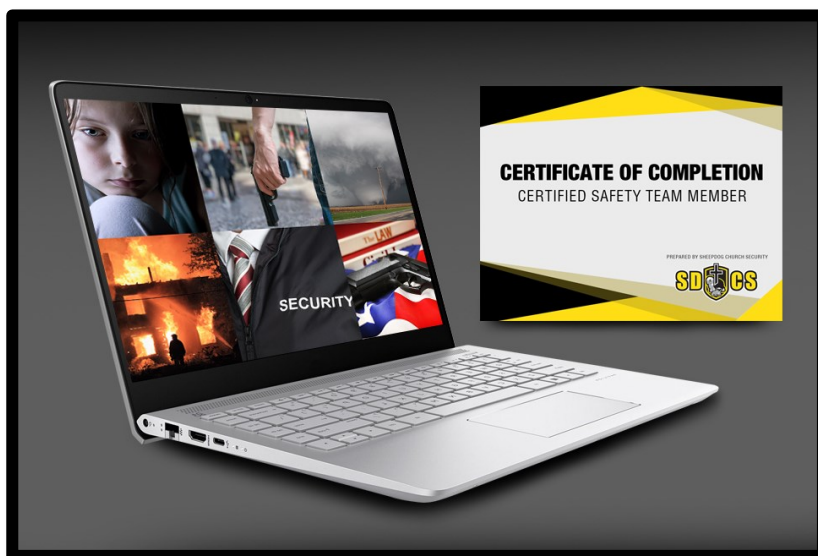
TRAINING SPOTLIGHT

Safety Member Certification

The Certified Safety Member Course brings together industry leading training materials, including courses on de-escalation, active shooters, protecting children, fire safety, and many more. The courses online video-based training makes it easy to take lessons anytime and from anywhere using your own computer. Once you've completed all the courses, you will be certified for 2-years through Sheepdog Church Security, and be prepared to safeguard your church.



Relevant, Realistic, and Easy-to-Learn Training
Materials to Defend the Flock.



**Click on
the Picture
to Learn
More!**

WEEKLY TEAM BRIEFING

Set Up for Safety

Starting a Church Safety Ministry



Do you want to start a safety ministry in your church? Do members of another church want you to help them start one? Starting a *Church Safety Ministry* has been the theme for August. The key document for the month, the *Special Resource*, is *Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry* and a *DIY Security Assessment*^[1] along with Kris Moloney's videocast^[2].

The five articles for August are "See the Need" (Why start a Safety Ministry?), "Of a Like Mind" (Bringing a Team Together), "The First Moves" (Get Easy Wins), "How Secure Are We?" (Conduct a Church Security Assessment), and "Gentlemen, This Is a Football" (Security Team Fundamentals).

Getting Started

When you envision what a *Safety Ministry* can do in your church, you need to start somewhere. First of all, take into consideration the size and economic resources of the congregation, as well as their social and theological background. Kris has outlined five practical steps for starting the safety ministry:

- #1 Start the conversation
- #2 Get an Easy Win
- #3 Schedule a Meeting with Your Pastor and Other Church Leaders
- #4 Recruit and Train Your Team and Launch the Patrol
- #5 Conduct a Security Assessment and Start Planning

Weekly Team Briefing Continued

A Few Points

1. In arousing interest in a *Church Safety Ministry*, you'll find five types of people: Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Adopters, and Naysayers. Your first supporters will be in the first two groups, and those in the next two can be persuaded. Naysayers usually won't come along unless and until they see it is working.
2. The best first active move is a safety patrol (with the blessing of church leaders).
3. When you present your case to the pastor(s) and church leaders, keep to the basics:

- ♦ Explain that you and your Team would like to implement a security patrol.
- ♦ Explain how you see it working and list your Team Members.
- ♦ Be ready to answer questions

Action Point

— — — — —

If you are considering starting a *Safety Team* in your church, or if you know someone thinking about starting one in their church, get *Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry* from *Sheepdog Church Security*.^[1] Also watch Kris's videocast, *Steps to Start a Safety Ministry*.^[2] For the initial training of your team, use the *Sheepdog Church Security* course *Security Team Fundamentals v4*.^[3]

- 1) <https://sheepdog-church-security.ck.page/9c5f2d32cc>
- 2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pDae-wV0w
- 3) <https://sheepdog-church-security.thinkific.com/courses/church-safety-and-security-volunteer-academy-training-bundle>

SEE THE NEED

Why start a Safety Ministry?

IN THE NEWS

Middletown, Ohio, January 22, 2017 - Sunday morning services in a Middletown church were canceled for January 22. The church building had been severely damaged by fire. During the night, a teen had broken into the church, stolen about \$1,000, and set a fire. Earlier in the night he had vandalized a business and a number of vehicles. While repairs were being made, services were held at another location. However, the daycare center remained closed, affecting about 45 children.[2][3]

Burlington County, New Jersey, February 11, 2020 - A volunteer working as the financial secretary for a church was arrested on charges related to embezzlement. Over a five-year period, this person had stolen over half-a-million dollars from the church for personal use, especially online purchases. This included setting up fraudulent accounts. The pastor was asked how this could happen. He replied, "We put our trust in other people as well as in God, and sometimes that trust is misplaced ... it is very hurtful for the entire congregation." [4]

Middle Tennessee, March 2-3, 2020 - Several tornadoes landed in Middle Tennessee, including the 6th costliest tornado in the U.S. There were 24 deaths and many more injuries. Several churches and Christian schools were severely damaged, especially in northern Nashville and in Cookeville.[5]

Norristown, Pennsylvania, February 20 to March 17, 2020 - Numerous churches in counties and cities in the Philadelphia area were burglarized. In late June, two men were arrested and charged with most of these break-ins. Some of the churches had surveillance cameras, and their images led to identification of the suspects.[6]

Nationwide, 2014-2018 - According to crime statistics collected by the FBI, hate crimes against religious institutions and places of worship rose by 35% from 2014 to 2018. Jewish synagogues, Christian churches and Muslim mosques were targeted. These include incidents in which four or more persons were killed. Also noted in the report were arrests made for planned attacks. The authors of the article noted that places of worship are attacked because that is where to find members of target faith groups.[7]

But when you go over the Jordan ... he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety (Deuteronomy 12:10).

And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon (1 Kings 4:25).

.. I will make them dwelt in safety (Jeremiah 32:37b).

Special Resource

To get our special resource for this month, *Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry* and a *DIY Security Assessment*[1] [Click Here](#). By signing up for the download, you will subscribe to future articles by email. That way you will not miss out on future information. Also see Kris's videocast, *Steps to Starting a Safety Ministry*. [8]

Why Start a Church Safety Ministry?

For a long time, that has been the question in many church leaders' minds when other congregations have security or safety teams, whether armed or unarmed, and when someone proposes such a team for their congregation. The question divides into two parts: "Is there a need for a *Church Safety Ministry*?" and "Is a *Church Safety Ministry* effective?"

*But now for a brief moment
favor has been shown by
the Lord our God, to leave
us a remnant and to give
us a secure hold within his
holy place (Ezra 9:8a).*

The Need to Protect the Church

There are many threats to us as individuals and to society in general. No matter how much we'd like to think that the church is a sanctuary from the "slings and arrows" of this world, the evidence is compelling that religious communities are not exempt, not even our church. A few generations ago, many criminals hesitated to rob churches since they were "holy places." They had enough fear of God to fear the consequences of violating the holy. Now a large portion of our population is "fearing impaired" and not hesitant to victimize places and people of faith.

Crime - from within and without - is not the only threat to your congregation and its members and guests. Natural and human-caused disasters are other hazards we face. Add to this other threats, such as fire, leaks, structural failure, traffic accidents, and medical emergencies. Now we are the midst of another threat - widespread infectious disease on a greater scale and for a longer time than annual flu seasons. If anything, churches are more aware of the need to guard against threats than they were when our grandparents grew up.

There are many risks a church faces. Today's risks are Natural Disasters, Technological Disasters, Criminal Activity, Vandalism and Arson, Theft, Hate Crimes, Physical Violence, Sexual Abuse/Assault, Drug Crimes, and Deadly Force Incidents.

Let's consider our news items:

*The prudent sees danger
and hides himself, but the
simple go on and suffer
for it
(Proverbs 22:3 and 27:12).*

Arson - The church in Middletown[2][3] was first burglarized, then torched. This was done in the dead of night. The first anyone knew that not all was right was when flames were seen. Many times, a burglar uses arson to cover his tracks. How can we detect a burglar before he sets a fire?

Burglary - Jesus said, "thieves break through and steal" (Matthew 6:19 KJV).

In the Philadelphia area, two men broke into many churches.[6] They saw churches as easy targets; most entries were through windows close to the ground. Many kinds of items were taken, then sold, some online. How can we make it harder for a thief to break in? How can we detect them if they do?

Embezzlement - Not all thieves break in. Some are already inside, as in New Jersey. [4] How can we prevent embezzlement or detect it early (before we get to \$5,000, let alone \$500,000)?

Violence - Violence ranges from a heated shove to massive deadly force. Statistics show the latter on the rise, with worshipers more frequently as targets.[7] How can we avert or neutralize violence?

Natural Disasters - The tornadoes in Tennessee a few months ago damaged or destroyed many churches.[5] They were in the wee hours of a Tuesday morning when the buildings were unoccupied. What if they came Sunday morning during services, or during mid-week meetings or weekday activities? Could they have protected their people?

*But Saul,
still breathing
threats and
murder against the
disciples of the Lord,
went to the high
priest (Acts 9:1).*

Church Safety Ministries Are Effective

Throughout the year, this page has featured many news stories in which people have been protected by volunteers trained are soundly trained, beginning with the fundamentals, as in the *Sheepdog Church Security* training course "Security Team Fundamentals." [9]

Conclusion

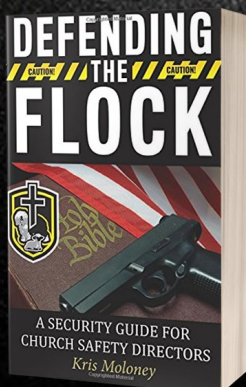
There are many risks churches face today, including an increase in deadly violence. The role of a *Church Safety Ministry* is to protect the church, its members, and its guests. *Sheepdog Church Security* is here to help you with "Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry."^[1]

*He delivered us from
such a deadly peril, and
he will deliver us. On
him we have set our
hope that he will deliver
us again
(2 Corinthians 1:10).*

There Is More

There are five articles in this series. The other four are "Of a Like Mind" (Bringing a Team Together), "The First Moves" (Get Easy Wins), "How Secure Are We?" (Conduct a Church Security Assessment), and "'Gentlemen, This Is a Football'" (Security Team Fundamentals).

[Click Here for References](#)



"A must have book for your church safety ministry."

GET IT ON AMAZON

OF A LIKE MIND

Bringing a Team Together

IN THE NEWS

White Settlement, Texas, December 29 2019 -Following the 2017 Sutherland Springs church massacre, changes in Texas law allowed armed volunteers to provide security in churches. A former reserve deputy sheriff then found like-minded persons to form a security team at his church. Almost 26 months after Sutherland Springs, a gunman opened fire in his church, killing two, and was neutralized about 6 seconds after pulling out his gun.[2]

Houston, Texas, and other places, 2019 -Concerned members of churches across the country are finding persons who share their concerns for safety and security and are organizing volunteer safety/security teams in their places of worship.[3]

Lincroft, New Jersey, July 2020 -The website of a church in Lincroft has a page called "Safety and Security." Besides safety measures for COVID-19 and warnings about scams, it also requests interested persons to sign up to be greeters as part of their Welcoming, Safety & Security Team: "We are looking for men of the Parish to be part of our new Safety & Security Team. You will serve as our Greeters prior to Mass and keep an eye open to anything that may be a security risk." They also say, "No House of Worship or workplace is immune from threats of violence." [4]



So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek" (Exodus 17:9a).

Special Resource

Our special resource for this month is *Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry* and a *DIY Security Assessment*[1] Get it by clicking [Here](#). Also see Kris's videocast, *Steps to Starting a Safety Ministry*. [5] When you sign up for the download, you subscribe to future articles by email. That way you will not miss out on future information.

Coming Together

When we see a need we cannot fulfill alone, we need to come together with others who share our concern. We do this in two parts: (1) Bringing up the subject, and (2) Building the team.

Bringing up the Subject

We must first know who shares our concern, then persuade others who may join us. Start the conversation about safety and security. Listen as much as talk. As you are sharing your concerns, find out what theirs are.

Who do you start with? Find like-minded individuals who have a ground-level view of safety and security. These can be active or retired law enforcement and military personnel. Others may include medical responders, firefighters, and insurance agents or adjusters.



When you find the consensus of this group, connect with others. You'll encounter five basic kinds of people: Innovators, Early adopters, Early majority, Late adopters, and Naysayers. If and when you know who these persons are, work with them in that order. As to the naysayers, they won't be persuaded (if ever) until they see the plan working successfully.

In your conversations, address their safety concerns. Tell about the success of other churches; it is just as important as showing the need for safety. The members of your church need to see more than the need -they need hope that they can do something about it.

Building the Team

Even while advancing the topic of church safety and security, become active. Do something simple, such as checking fire extinguisher tags and writing down the results -this is a lead-in to the Church Security Assessment which comes later. Ask for permission to have a few persons patrol the grounds during services and classes, keeping in touch with their cell phones (using ear buds). This way, like-minded people begin working with each other as a team.

*And [Jesus] said to them,
"Follow me, and I will
make you fishers of men"
(Matthew 4:19).*

Recruiting

Once you have the go-ahead for starting a *Church Safety Ministry*, begin recruiting and orienting the *Church Safety Team* (by whatever name you use). First ask some of the like-minded people you have communicated with to join the *Church Safety Ministry*, whether on the *Church Safety Committee* or on the *Church Safety Team*. Persons already on the team can talk with others about joining the Team. You can also advertise the need for team members, as the church in New Jersey did.

Application

All who choose to join the *Church Safety Team* must fill out an application. Besides name, address, and contact information, the application has questions about how long the person has been attending this church, what churches were previously attended, their activities in those churches, current and past employment, legal history, etc. Each applicant is expected to answer all questions truthfully.

And the Lord said to [Elijah], "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place" (2 Kings 19:15-16).

Verification

Information given on the application will be verified. A background check should also be done on every applicant for the *Church Safety Ministry*.

Selection

You need enough volunteers for your church, but you need the right people. Jesus said, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Membership on a safety & security team is a sensitive position, so there are requirements to be met.

Qualifications

Not all people meet the necessary qualifications. Here are the qualifications for *Church Safety Team* members -

A Safety Team member is a kind of deacon. In 1 Timothy 3:1-12 and Titus 1:6-9, Paul says a deacon must be:

- ♦ Above reproach,
- ♦ Faithful to his or her spouse,
- ♦ Temperate,
- ♦ Self-controlled,
- ♦ Respectable,
- ♦ Hospitable,
- ♦ Able to teach,
- ♦ Sober,
- ♦ Not quarrelsome.

There are other qualifications more specific to the job. A team member must be:

- A member and/or a regular attendee of the church,
- Physically able to complete assigned tasks,
- Able to demonstrate good character, honesty, and integrity,
- Without disqualifying criminal convictions.

Expectations

Every person joining the Church Safety Ministry is expected to conform to certain behavioral standards. The expectations for ethics and conduct are:

- ♦ Be modest, honoring others above yourself.
- ♦ Be on time and perform all duties completely and correctly.
- ♦ Be an example for others.
- ♦ Be faithful.
- ♦ Be wise.
- ♦ Be discrete.

Training

The last -and ongoing -stage of building the team is training. Boot camp for the *Safety Team* is the *Sheepdog Church Security* training course *Security Team Fundamentals*. [6] This is available in both classroom materials (training bundles) and individual online training.

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction (Matthew 10:1).

For the initial orientation and training of a new team, the classroom is best. All those attending learn the same things at the same time. This also has the advantage of discussion with questions & answers. This training should be renewed every two years, both as a refresher and to update the information.

New members coming in later can take the online course. After this, they can participate in a classroom training renewal session to benefit from learning with others. For these later members, the *Safety Member Certification* program is available for initial training.[7] It contains seven *SDCS* training courses: *Security Team Fundamentals v4*, *Deescalating Disruptive Persons v4*, *Active Shooter Response v4*, *Protecting Children from Abuse v4*, *Protecting Yourself and the Church with Use of Force Laws* (Individual Training), and *Arson Prevention and Fire Drills for Churches* (Individual Training).

"For many are called, but few are chosen"
(Matthew 22:14).

Conclusion

When starting a *Church Safety Ministry*, at some point we have to bring the team together. This actually begins before we propose the *Safety Ministry* to congregational leadership, when we find persons who are like-minded. Many of these will form the nucleus of the ministry after it receives its charter from the church. Then we will build the team through recruitment, selection, and training.

There Is More

There are four other articles in this five-part series on beginning a Church Safety Ministry. They are "See the Need" (Why start a Safety Ministry?), "The First Moves" (Get Easy Wins), "How Secure Are We?" (Conduct a Church Security Assessment), and "'Gentlemen, This Is a Football'" (Security Team Fundamentals).

[Click Here for References](#)

THE FIRST MOVES

Get Easy Wins

IN THE NEWS

Anna, Illinois, September 28, 2009 - A brutal attack on two elderly women working in a church during the week[2] spurred other churches in Southern Illinois to consider security measures to protect their congregations and staff. The first action for most of these churches was access control (locking doors when church staff and/or the pastor were in the church). It also included consideration of armed security volunteers.[3]

*"Is not this a
brand plucked from
the fire?"
(Zechariah 3:2).*

Austin, Texas, March 2020 - The Attorney General of Texas, Ken Paxton, has opened a website to provide information and other resources to volunteer security teams in places of worship. This follows changes in Texas law which first allowed unlicensed volunteers to form security teams (under certain conditions), then permitted concealed weapons to be carried in places of worship. The site provides detailed information as to what Texas law allows and what it requires of volunteer security teams.[4]

Loveland, Colorado, no date - The publishers of Children's Ministry magazine list several ways to promote the safety and well-being of the children in your church. The article begins with a scenario illustrating how access control works in the children's area of a church to prevent kidnapping by a non-custodial parent. The article also provides links to organizations with information and training in children's ministry safety and security - Sheepdog Church Security is one of the linked organizations.[5]

Gering, Nebraska, 2017-2019 - According to an article in Crux sourced from the Associated Press, concerned persons in one of the churches in Gering attempted to start a security team. This followed several thefts from the church, as well as the shootings in Antioch, TN, and Sutherland Springs, TX. On the heels of the shooting incident at West Freeway Christian Church in 2019, churches in Gering and nearby Scottsbluff were seriously considering armed security teams.[6]

Franklin, Tennessee, January 8, 2018 - According to Thom Rainer, security measures, including safety teams and surveillance technology, are becoming the "new normal" for churches. This results from reports of sexual abuse and armed attacks.[7]

Special Resource

Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry and a *DIY Security Assessment*[1] is our special resource for this month. Get it by clicking [Here](#). You can also see Kris's videocast, *Steps to Starting a Safety Ministry*. [8] By signing up for the download, you subscribe to future articles by email so you will not miss out on future information.

*"You shall know that
your tent is at peace,
and you shall inspect
your fold and miss
nothing" (Job 5:24b).*

Talking Turkey

"Now we're talking turkey" - our conversation really matters. When we see the need, have shared our concerns with others, and have gathered a group of like-minded individuals, we can make practical moves toward starting a safety/security ministry in our church. In our key resource *Practical Steps*, Step #2 is "Get an Easy Win," and Step #3 is "Schedule a Meeting with Your Pastor and Other Church Leaders."

Once the *Church Safety Ministry* is established, all members of the ministry can take the basic *Sheepdog Church Security* training course, *Security Team Fundamentals*. [9]

Get an Easy Win

Kris says in Steps to get an "easy win." This means doing something which does not require a lot of planning, training, and coordination, yet has positive results with almost no chance of failure. What works best in your church can be influenced by current events.

We'll present three potential demonstration projects here: Security Patrol, Access Check (Lock Patrol), and Fire Extinguisher Check, then mention a couple of others.

Security Patrol

In the document and the videocast, Kris recommends a security patrol. Select some of the like-minded persons to go around the premises during services with the knowledge and blessing of the church leadership, having their cell phones with them. They will take note of anything out of the ordinary. If it is serious enough, call 911. At least call the coordinator to come take a look.

How does this work? As with the church in Vienna, IL, it meets a known need. Thieves and other intruders seek unauthorized entrance into the church building. Their greatest threat and deterrent is detection. An advantage of this project is that it would be a regular activity using a known team.

Access Check (Lock Patrol)

A variation on this is a "lock patrol" during off-hours or when only pastors and/or staff are in the church. Show up and do an access check on all doors and windows to see if they are locked, watching for any signs of attempted forced entry or preparation for such (such as a hidden item for prying a door or breaking a window). Like the Security Patrol, this is a regularly recurring activity. Schedule a different team member for each day during the week. Over a few weeks, this will use the entire team.



Fire Extinguisher Check

If a recent fire in another publicly-accessed facility in the community has aroused concern for fire safety, arrange a fire extinguisher check. Your like-minded volunteers break into teams of two or three to locate every fire extinguisher in the church. Each extinguisher is checked for date of last inspection, the pressure indicated on the gauge, and whether it has been discharged. These findings are recorded in a log. This project can be done with minimal training. The only actual expense is the log sheets on clipboards. Finding just one or two fire extinguishers that do not pass the check enables correction and shows the worth of a safety team.

The disadvantage of the Fire Extinguisher Check is that it is infrequent, being done only one, two, or three times a year, though eventually it could be monthly. This opening project could be a lead-in to the Security Patrol.

Other possible win-win projects include a health check or a CPR demonstration after the morning service. This may be especially welcome with older members of the congregation. The CPR demonstration (plus the Heimlich Maneuver) may catch the attention of young people. These are infrequent, but could raise interest in a medical response team.

*The four chief gatekeepers, who were Levites, were entrusted to be over the chambers and the treasures of the house of God. And they lodged around the house of God, for on them lay the duty of watching, and they had charge of opening it every morning
(1 Chronicles 9:26-27).*

Schedule a Meeting

Request a meeting with the Pastor(s). This may include a few others of the church leadership. The purpose of this meeting is to secure the permission and blessing of the church for the project. Your choice of the first project may depend on the mindset of the congregation. Some Christian communities are very wary of any active security. Some traditionalists may even object to locking doors, though locked church doors are more acceptable now than they were 50 years ago. The idea of the meeting and the introductory activity is to accustom the congregation and its leadership to promoting safety and show them that they can take responsible measures.

This step requires more preparation on your part. Know what to tell in your presentation. Introduce the topic by explaining that you and the team want to begin a security patrol. Focus on the value of the patrols and/or inspections. For now, stick to the proposed initial project (such as the security patrol).

Try the "Think like a criminal" tactic. Case the church. Take notes and photos of things both inside and outside which make your church inviting to criminals. This will be a natural if the church has been burglarized, since the leadership will be more receptive. They know how that thief got in - you've just discovered other vulnerabilities.

If your project is the Fire Extinguisher Check, disclose fire hazards and evacuation barriers you have seen. They may be ready for more than checking extinguishers and ask for a fire hazard cleanup.

Be ready to answer tough questions. The pastor or board member may ask how the team will be organized, who will lead it, and what kind of people will be on the team. Other questions may be about biblically justifying taking security measures, such as, "Can't we just trust God to protect us?" Someone will want to know how much this project will cost or how long it will go on.

If someone wants to know about the risks of crime, have statistics ready. You can find them at Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics^[10] and other sources, such as Carl Chinn's Faith Based Security Network website.^[11]

Key leaders like to stay in the loop. After the go-ahead to plan the project, get back with the pastor. Keep him or her up-to-date on the project's development.



Conclusion

When proposing a Church Safety Ministry, it pays to work with church leaders and to start with an easily doable task. Success in a needed area helps build support for more involvement of the Safety Ministry. From this start in one area of church safety & security, the Safety Ministry can eventually address all the safety needs of the congregation.

There Is More

The other four articles in this five-part series on starting a Church Safety Ministry are "See the Need" (Why start a Safety Ministry?), "Of a Like Mind" (Bringing a Team Together), "How Secure Are We?" (Conduct a Church Security Assessment), and "'Gentlemen, This Is a Football'" (Security Team Fundamentals).

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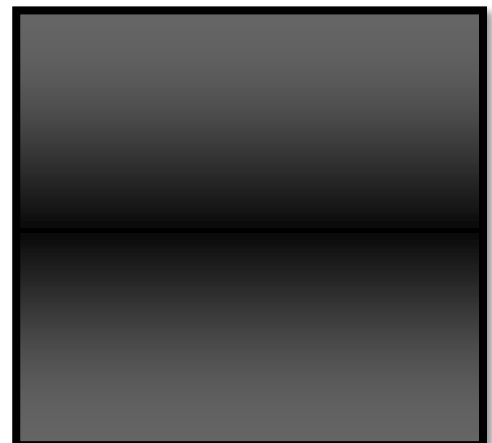


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HOW SECURE ARE WE?

Conduct a Church Security Assessment

IN THE NEWS

Pikeville, Kentucky, January 2018 - Jason Lowe, the Director of Missions for the Pike Association of Southern Baptists, conducted a survey of churches in Southeastern Kentucky. There were 34 senior pastors answering survey questions. Since there are only 24 member churches in the Pike Association, 10 of the responding churches were either not Southern Baptist or were not in the association's territory. This was a small sample, but the results do mirror national statistics.

The results were divided according to the sizes of the churches - those with an average attendance of less than 100 were smaller churches, those with 100 or over were larger churches. The answers led to two general observations:

1. The majority of churches are not as prepared as they should be.
2. Smaller churches are less prepared than larger churches.[2][3]

Omaha, Nebraska, May 2018 - A thesis by Matthew Spicka investigated the safety of churches in Omaha.[5] In presenting the results of the research, he said, "Churches in Omaha are lacking in the safety procedures. This is in line with what is anticipated in churches due to the lack of funding and training ... The majority of churches involved had little to no organized safety plan. They had not practiced fire drills, active shooter drills, or tornado drills" (page X).

Waynesville, North Carolina - The office of the Haywood County Sheriff offers to help churches in conducting "church site surveys," including building safety and security. This also includes help in setting up a safety team, teaching those in a safety ministry, understanding crime, and child safety.[5]

You shall know that your tent is at peace, and you shall inspect your fold and miss nothing (Job 5:24).

Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds (Proverbs 27:23).

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts (Psalm 139:23)!

Special Resource

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Assessing Risk and Readiness



A church security assessment looks for and evaluates risks the church faces. It also determines how ready the church is to counter these risks.

What are the risks facing the church, and how do we measure these risks? There are many kinds of risks for a church. Some are internal; some are external. Risks are measured on two scales: likelihood and severity.

Kinds of Risks

Two church risks immediately come to mind for most people: active shooters and fires. Residents of half the country will also think of tornadoes. These get news coverage. Church shootings make national news, and many communities have experienced at least one notable fire in a church or other public accommodation in recent years. Tornadoes are a seasonal threat in the Midwest and South. However, there are other risks to property, to people, and to the church's reputation and legal standing. Here are some of the risks which may be discovered and evaluated in a *Church Safety & Security Assessment*:

I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire....Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned (Nehemiah 2:13,15).

♦ Fire, both accidental and arson

Fires are largely preventable, but the chance of a fire cannot be entirely eliminated. Some common accidental causes of fire are electrical (wiring, overloaded outlets and circuits, careless use of extension cords, faulty equipment), gas or oil furnaces, gas leaks, open-flame uses (candles, oil lamps, dining table pan warmers), space heaters (electrical, gas, kerosene), and smoking (even when the church is a non-smoking facility). An infrequent weather cause of fire is lightning.



♦ Slips, trips, and falls

For a long time, personal injury has been one of the top three claims in lawsuits against churches.[7] Many of these personal injury lawsuits are from slips, trips, and falls. That was the basis of a lawsuit filed this past February when someone slipped on wet grass after getting out of her car.[8] The top causes of falls are slippery or uneven surfaces, and obstacles, and these are largely preventable.

♦ Working accidents, staff and volunteers

Accidents while working for or at the church are more common than we might think. Most resulting injuries are very minor, easy to forget. However, there are more serious accidents, often arising from the same causes. Custodians and service persons have fallen from ladders. Volunteers in the kitchen have cuts and burns. Several injuries may result from yard work. Does your church promote safe ways of working?

*I went down to the nut
orchard to look at the
blossoms of the valley, to see
whether the vines had
budded, whether the
pomegranates were in bloom
(The Bride in Song of
Solomon 6:11).*

*Then the prophet came near
to the king of Israel and said
to him, "Come, strengthen
yourself, and consider well
what you have to do, for in
the spring the king of Syria
will come up against you"
(1 Kings 20:22).*



♦ **Medical emergencies**

This is the wild card. People come into the church with all kinds of health conditions. You never know if someone will have a heart attack, stroke, or epileptic seizure, or if they will choke on food (more likely now with food service in the vestibule). Does your church have people trained to respond to a medical emergency?

♦ **Severe weather and natural disasters**

Every part of the country has its own typical severe weather or other natural hazards. Kinds which may be of concern to your church - depending on location - are tornadoes, hurricanes, extreme heat or cold, blizzards, excess snowfall, nor'easters, earthquakes and/or tsunamis, flooding, landslides, drought, and wildfires.

♦ **Property damage due to climate and aging**

This is a largely preventable category of risk. Timely inspection and maintenance can prevent damage and deterioration from leaks and mold. Replacing worn materials and fixing damage can prevent structural failure. Sometimes older buildings need upgrading for better integrity, especially if there is a substandard foundation. Recently a small church in Ohio had their building renovated while they were closed due to the pandemic. This included replacing roof trusses from the inside - the roof had been bowing out. This made the structure greatly safer, as well as saving a historic building in the neighborhood.

♦ **Theft**

Many churches are burglarized. Unattended personal items are stolen. Pockets of coats hung on racks are picked. Items are stolen from cars in church parking lots - often parts of the cars or the vehicles themselves. Embezzlement is more common than we'd like to believe. Yes, theft is a definite risk for churches. Many congregations don't harden their buildings until after they've been broken into. Policies for safe handling of money and the church's accounts are often absent or not followed.

Unfortunately, the damage of a burglary is not always confined to breaking in and opening locked cabinets and desk drawers. Many times it is accompanied by vandalism. Arson is often used to cover the burglary, such as happened in Middletown, Ohio.[9]



♦ Vandalism

Casual vandalism - bored youth with nothing to do - is old stuff. It's been going on for many decades. Now we have many serious vandals whose defacement or destruction is out of hatred or to fulfill an agenda, and many times churches are in the crosshairs. Measures can be taken to discourage vandalism.

♦ Violence

We do not like to think of church as the scene of violence, yet there is the risk of a violent disruption in or around the church or at a church-sponsored event. How well is our church prepared to deal with any level of violence, from an overheated argument to an active killer incident? Is our church equipped to prevent violence, such as with verbal de-escalation? Are we ready to defend against an active shooter?

♦ Child abuse

Child abuse was for a long time the top claim in liability lawsuits against churches. It is still in the top three.[7] In our Church Safety & Security Assessment, we consider not only the chance of a lawsuit, but the well-being of the children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our church. Do we have workable policies and required practices for caring for children and leading youth? If we do, are they being followed? What safeguards do we have in place? Do we have surveillance cameras? Are they monitored in a timely manner? Do we train our volunteers in this subject area? There is more on this in Sheepdog Church Security's training courses[10][11] and resources.

Likelihood

What is the probability that the church will encounter any specific situation? Obviously, we need to address the more likely issues - that is if they really matter (wearing mis-matched colors should not be a safety/security concern, no matter how much it irritates you). We need to focus on the more critical issues, the ones that matter most. The 28-page *Do-It-Yourself Security Assessment* that is part of *Practical Steps to Start a Safety Ministry* and a *DIY Security Assessment* (this month's special resource[1]) covers the most important items in the assessment.

*The spiritual
person judges all
things ...
(1 Corinthians 2:15).*

Severity

The severity of a risk is how bad it will be if it happens, even if the probability at any one time is very low. Take, for instance, a tornado strike. You have two levels of probability: (1) how likely it is for a tornado to touch down in your general location, and (2) how likely it is for the tornado to hit the church if it touches down. The probability that a tornado will hit your church might be very low. For it to hit during classes, services, or events is even lower, but if you are in a tornado zone, it is not zero. However, the severity if one hits is very high. Another way to view the probability is to consider the probability over a period of several years, which is higher than for any one time. "Better safe than sorry" applies here. If you are in a tornado-prone area, it is wiser to provide shelter and supplies just in case than to ignore the threat as too remote. This principle also applies to other risks.

In another instance, fires have high potential severity, and they also have a higher probability than a tornado or earthquake, so fire protection is a high priority on both scales.

Conclusion

The Boy Scout motto, "Semper paratus," means always prepared. The first step in preparation is finding out what the need is so we know what to prepare for. When starting a *Church Safety Ministry*, we need to know what the ministry should do. This is the role of a *Church Safety & Security Assessment*.

There Is More

The other four articles in this five-part series on starting a *Church Safety Ministry* are "See the Need" (Why start a Safety Ministry?), "Of a Like Mind" (Bringing a Team Together), "The First Moves" (Get Easy Wins), and "'Gentlemen, This Is a Football'" (Security Team Fundamentals).

[Click Here for References](#)

"GENTLEMEN, THIS IS A FOOTBALL"

Security Team Fundamentals

The Object Lesson

The Super Bowl trophy bears the name of Vince Lombardi, the winningest coach in the NFL. He has a .750 career average and is very quotable. Lombardi's best-known quote is from 1961. He started his third training camp with the Green Bay Packers by holding up a pigskin and saying, "Gentlemen, this is a football." This statement is widely quoted to emphasize, as Lombardi did, the importance of the basics, the fundamentals. Not surprisingly, the first and basic *Sheepdog Church Security* training course is Security Team Fundamentals v4.[3]



IN THE NEWS

Troy, Alabama, February 29, 2020 – The police chief of the City of Troy reviewed videos of the White Settlement church shooting.[4] He was concerned about what responding law enforcement officers would find as they arrived. People were leaving the building, and several congregants had drawn their guns. The Chief said, "Officers are going in not knowing who's the good guy, who's the bad guy."

The chief and the police chiefs of the local university and a nearby town set up an active shooter response training course for churches.[5]

*Great are the works of
the Lord, studied by all
who delight in them
(Psalm 111:2).*

Henrico County, Virginia – The Henrico County Police Department has posted a PDF titled Church Safety and Security. The areas it covers are Getting Started, Having a Plan, Forming a Team, and Understanding Active Shooter and Violence. Throughout the document, they outline several fundamentals in starting and operating a church safety ministry.[6]

New Jersey, 2017 – In Circuit, a magazine for security & protection specialists, Dr. Andrew P Surace wrote “Church Security: The New Frontier,” a two-part article which outlines several fundamentals for making the church a safe place.[7]

Krugerville, Texas, 2020 – Church volunteers are being trained by NOCSSM in responding to active shooters. Other, more fundamental, aspects of church safety & security are also involved, but the shootings in Sutherland Springs and White Settlement have spurred interest in the training.[8]

Dallas, Texas, January 3, 2020 – An interview by Hady Mawajdeh with places-of-worship security experts Jimmy Meeks, David Riggall, and Brad Orsini, originating from radio station KERA in Dallas, aired on NPR’s Morning Edition. They emphasized a “layered approach” to church security, which includes training in prevention, detection, and response. The immediate concern was defense against armed assailants – this was right after the White Settlement church shooting – and the response included medical attention.

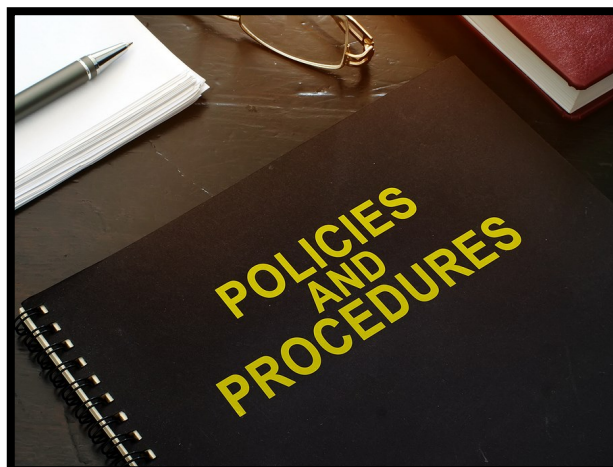
For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel (Ezra 7:10).

However, a layered response applies generally in all areas of church safety, including fire safety, child protection, medical emergencies, severe weather readiness, and theft prevention.[9]

Special Resource

Our special free downloadable resource for this month is *Steps to Start a Safety Ministry* and *Do-It-Yourself Security Assessment*. [1] Click [Here](#) to get it, and be sure to watch Kris’s [videocast](#). [2]

Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel ... and to teach them ... (Daniel 1:3-4).



Learning the Fundamentals

Learning the fundamentals is fundamental to almost every organization:

- ♦ When a person enlists in the military, their first assignment is Boot Camp.
- ♦ A new player in a professional sport goes to Rookie Camp, and each year after that starts with Training Camp. The fundamentals of that sport are emphasized in Rookie Camp and reinforced in Training Camp.
- ♦ Most colleges and universities have an Orientation Week for first-time students. They learn the fundamentals of higher education in general and the institution in particular.
- ♦ New employees in a company have an orientation to introduce them to the company and its operations, procedures, and expectations. If this is a new company, the orientation is for everybody.

Fundamentals in Church Security

It is the same for a *Church Safety Ministry*. In starting the ministry, we get to the point where we have these people willing to serve. They may have backgrounds in law enforcement, the military, or security. They may be firefighters, educators or medical professionals. They may be lawyers. They might not have experience in any of the above fields. It is obvious the last group needs to learn the basics of safety and security. However, all need the fundamentals of church safety & security.

*Let the wise hear and
increase in learning, and
the one who understands
obtain guidance
(Proverbs 1:5).*

First of all, this is a ministry, not just a security service or a medical response unit. The goal of a *Church Safety Ministry*, besides protecting the Flock and the assets of God's place, is enabling the church's other ministries to operate effectively without disruption.

Additionally, as deacons (those whose work in the church is hands-on service), they – like the first deacons in Acts 6 – also have a role in encouraging, guiding, and teaching. If, like some congregations, the safety ministry includes the greeters, this part of the role is more visible.

There are also special considerations for promoting safety and security in a place of worship. Some of these are legal. The laws of different states address church security in different ways. This means that, no matter what your experience is, you need to know how this works out in the setting of a church or other religious institution. One example is Texas and how changes in its laws impact volunteer safety teams in churches. Just compare Sutherland Springs in 2017 to White Settlement in 2019.

*I do not turn aside from
your rules, for you have
taught me (Psalm 119:102).*

Liability is a serious issue for churches.[10][11] While a *Church Safety Ministry* plays a role in limiting liability, it can also be a liability risk if something is not done properly.

Fundamentals Training

The Church Safety & Security version of Boot Camp is the *SDCS* training course *Security Team Fundamentals v4*: “This Training Bundle contains everything you need to teach this course. It contains downloadable files which include the unlocked Power-Point presentation and Instructor Guide. You also get access to the online course's Streaming Video.”[3]

*Make me to know your
ways, O Lord; teach me
your paths (Psalm 25:4).*

The training materials in this packet are intended for classroom training, which makes it ideal for instructing the entire starting group of *Church Safety Ministry* members, whether they are on the *Church Safety Committee* or the *Church Safety Team* (including, of course, the *Church Safety Director*).

Classroom training has the advantage of interpersonal interaction and questions & answers with the instructor. This makes it ideal for a new team.

The online course[12] is individual training intended for new recruits joining an established team, those who cannot attend a class, and as a refresher course.

What Are the Fundamentals?

Briefly, the fundamental of church safety in the *Security Team Fundamentals* training course[3][12] are:

1. Why Churches Need Security Teams,
2. Getting the Safety Team Up & Running,
3. Selecting & Training the Safety Team,
4. Safety Team Operations, and
5. Reports and Forms.

A few of the topics covered are:

- ♦ Organization and Duties of the Safety Team
- ♦ Working with Other Ministries
- ♦ Qualifications for Membership on the Safety Team
- ♦ Application, References and Background Check Training
- ♦ Discipline and Dismissal
- ♦ Introducing Safety Team Members to the Church
- ♦ Team Membership and Communication
- ♦ Creating Procedure Manuals
- ♦ Emergency Response Plans
- ♦ Patrolling
- ♦ Staffing and Scheduling
- ♦ Uniforms
- ♦ Safety Equipment
- ♦ Medical Equipment
- ♦ Other Equipment

Obviously, some of these topics apply to the Safety Ministry leadership, but it pays for everyone to know what this entails. Some of these topics will be covered in more detail in other articles.

Conclusion

"Brothers and sisters, this is Church Safety & Security." When it comes to protecting the church and the flock, remember the fundamentals.

There Is More

In this five-part series, the other four articles are "See the Need" (Why start a Safety Ministry?), "Of a Like Mind" (Bringing a Team Together), "The First Moves" (Get Easy Wins), and "How Secure Are We?" (Conduct a Church Security Assessment).

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40).

[Click Here for References](#)

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CHURCH SECURITY ROLL CALL

WEEKLY TIPS AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CHURCH SECURITY TEAMS BASED ON THE RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE OF KRIS MOLONEY AND THE SHEEPDOG CHURCH SECURITY TEAM. HOSTED BY KRIS MOLONEY.



Episode #218: See the Need

In this Church Security Roll Call, we discuss why churches need a Safety Ministry.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LISTEN ON SOUNDCLOUD

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE



Episode #219: Of a Like Mind

In this Church Security Roll Call, we discuss Recruitment and Selection of our Safety Team Members.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LISTEN ON SOUNDCLOUD

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE



Episode #220: The First Moves

In this episode of the Church Security Roll Call, I share with you the most frequent conversation I have with those Starting or Expanding their Church Safety Team.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LISTEN ON SOUNDCLOUD

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE



Episode #221: How Secure Are We?

In this episode of the Church Security Roll Call, we discuss assessing our church's specific risks by looking at Severity and Probability.

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LISTEN ON SOUNDCLOUD

[CLICK HERE](#) TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE



FREE MONTHLY DOWNLOAD

STEPS TO START A SAFETY MINISTRY

How to Start a Church Safety Ministry in 6 Simple Steps to Make Your Church Safer, One Step at a Time.

Protect God's People with Our Church Safety Resource [Free Download] to get this resource, Click the Picture (Link) and enter your Email Address. You will receive an email with a download Button. Click the Button in the email to Download the Safety Ministry Resource. (The Download is in PDF format.)

MAIL CALL

Messages from Sheepdogs across the country

Kelley Meadows

"It [sheepdog church security] gives info about the activities in churches and on church property nationwide. This allows security teams to adjust security protocols and assignments to be better prepared to ensure our churches are safe."

Jimmy Tran

"With the change in climatic society, large gathering for worship requires protection. As a war veteran, I have seen worship locations (especially at mosque) heavily guarded by Iraqis or Afghan security. This provided a safe environment for worshippers and their families. Some churches have large numbers ranging from 100 to 1000 men, women and children. Yes, I believe in Sec for churches. Retired USAF, OIF/OEF veteran."



SHEEPDOG'S MONTHLY GUEST ARTICLE

PFA's in The Church

BY TERRY B.

Last month we discussed child abuse and how to allow convicted child abusers safely into your church. We all agree that these people need to hear the forgiving gospel of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross for our sins.

But let's look at another type of visitor that we may have difficulty accepting into our neat and pretty little organizations. What about people that have a PFA or restraining order against a member of your church.

Let's start with what a PFA is...

A PFA stands for Protection From Abuse. It is a civil procedure available to someone who is a victim of domestic violence from an intimate partner, household member, or family member. Abuse is defined as physical injury or the threat of physical injury.

A PFA is a court order for no contact between the victim and the defendant for a period of time up to 36 months. The length of time can vary depending on the circumstances, the needs of the victim, and the judge's decision.

A PFA is a civil matter, so it will not show up on a criminal background check. This also is a significant issue because law enforcement may not be able to access civil legal records as easily as they can criminal records. There is a good chance that law enforcement that respond to your organization may not be able to access the civil legal system and thus you need to have a physical copy of the PFA available to present to them upon arrival.

So you say "no one in my church would ever have a PFA!"

Well, that may not be true. We all try to put on our best appearance while at church. We very rarely see what is going on in the lives of that cute couple that drop off their kid in Sunday school.

How to establish if a person has a PFA?

Many times a person with a PFA will discuss with the children's ministry leader or teacher to advise them not to dismiss their child to anyone but themselves. The other way of finding this information out is via the pastor or counselor services. Many times this information is given in confidentiality so the way this information is distributed is very challenging. It is vital that there be communications between the church leadership and the security team lead. It is vital to share information amongst the leadership of the church and security team leads. This information must be obtained and distributed only to those that need to know and be advised of the importance of strict privacy of the information.

So both parties want to attend church!?!? ...That's a good thing!...But How??

The first option would be to have the two parties involved be directed to attend different services. But what happens if your church only has one Sunday service?

We discussed last month the concept of Car Door to Car Door escorts for people that have a history of child abuse. The same can be used for people with PFA's or Restraining Orders.

The person which the PFA that wishes to attend the series at the same time as the person that it is issued for will need to communicate their intentions to the church leadership and then have that passed onto the security team. There will be a preset time and location that the person will have them meet in the parking lot and be escorted into the building. The two parties should be located as far away from one another as humanly possible with the escort person between the two parties.

This not only protects the church and the person that has initiated the PFA, but it also protects the person that has the PFA filed against them because there is no way that any accusations can be made due to there being witnesses. This also means that the proof is there if there is an infraction.

As with all information given prior and here after...This should all be discussed with your churches attorney as the information here is for informational use only and is not to be taken as legal advice.

To quote a wise man...The topics discussed here are for informational purposes only and are not intended for legal advice.



Terry Berringer is the owner/operator of Church Emergency Consulting. He was the founder, developer, trainer and director of the security, parking and medical teams of one of the largest congregations in south-west Pennsylvania for over 20 years.

To learn more, click on the image below:


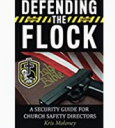







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terry@churchemergency.com

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MICHAEL MERCER

Location: South Windham, Maine 04082

Website: <https://michaelmercerconsulting.com>

Email: michael@michaelmercerconsulting.com

Phone: [\(207\) 699-8840](tel:(207)699-8840)



BRIAN STOLT

Location: Belle Plaine, Minnesota 56011

Website: <https://stolttacticaldefense.com/>

Email: brian@stolttacticaldefense.com

Phone: [\(952\) 292-8758](tel:(952)292-8758)



MICHAEL & DESERÉE KENNEY

Location: Upper Deerfield Twp. New Jersey 08302

Website: <https://www.kenneyprotectiveagency.com/>

Email: info@KenneyProtectiveAgency.com

Phone: [856-283-8481](tel:856-283-8481)



JEFFREY TOEPPE

Location: Racine, Wisconsin 53402

Website: <https://www.personal-defense-training.com/>

Email: jeff@personal-defense-training.com

Phone: [262-994-0242](tel:262-994-0242)



SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

PROTECT YOUR FLOCK SEMINAR

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THIS SEMINAR

This seminar will be "hands-on," emphasizing the skills you need in order to be ready to respond to a crisis in your house of worship. Subjects include such topics as; Verbal De-Escalation, Recognizing the "clues" that indicate something may be wrong, Protecting the flock from sex crimes, Responding to an active attack, How to form a safety team at your church, Where to station team members during church and so much more...

DATE: October 24 (Saturday morning)
8:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

COST: \$30.00 PER PERSON

SPEAKER: [Retired Police Officer and Minister Jimmy Meeks](#)

LOCATION: [H2O Church](#)

16615 county rd. 1560
Ada, OK. 74820

Seminar will be at the new location of H2O Church, located on south side of Ada.

Pre-Registration Required. [Click Here](#) to get your Ticket!!

If you know of any other Church Safety Seminars or Conferences and would like to see them featured on the Church Guardian, Please Contact us via Email at

KRIS@SHEEPDOGCHURCHSECURITY.NET

SHEEPDOG CORNER

Hi Sheepdog,

I have some really good news for you, especially if you are responsible for maintaining your Safety Team's training records. We are working on a brand-new Safety Member Training Record which has ALL the different training recommendations for Safety Team members.

The primary goal was to create a record system that would be easy to use for both the computer savvy and for those who prefer pen and paper. We decided that you would be best served by creating the record in a spreadsheet that can be used either as a database or as a printable document.

As a database, you simply duplicate the spreadsheet tabs for each one of your team members. Then you update training for them as you train. As a pen and papers person, you can print the record for each one of your team members and keep them on file.

This new Safety Member Training Record tracks all your annual and biennial training events, along with the recommended yearly drills. Teams using this Safety Member Training Record and completing all the recommended training will be highly trained and prepared for any emergency that could arise.

The goal is to make this new Safety Member Training Record available sometime this week. Stay tuned...

Your Loyal Companion in Christ,

Kris P. Moloney



Address:

**712 Maple Circle Belle Plaine, MN
56011**

Phone:

612-470-7364

E-Mail:

Kris@sheepdogchurchsecurity.net

Website:

**[https://
sheepdogchurchsecurity.net/#](https://sheepdogchurchsecurity.net/#)**



Kris P. Moloney

A Police Officer with over 18 years of experience and a retired Army Captain and Company Commander. He has certifications in Crime Prevention, Security Assessments, and the Crime Free Program. He also has a Bachelor's degree in Ministry and a Master's degree in Organizational Leadership.