

WELCOME!!

to

American Crime Prevention Institute's

CHURCH CRIME

PREVENTION

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American Crime
Prevention Institute

Churches, *by their very nature*,
have unique vulnerabilities...



Church Crime Prevention...Obstacles

- Lack of Security Consciousness
- Philosophy:
“No one would steal God’s money”
- Mission
- Openness
 - Attitude
 - Physical
- Hours of operation



Church Crime Prevention...Obstacles

- Population bases
 - Child care
 - Youth
 - Seniors
 - “Fringe” Element



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

- Physical Assets
- Financial Resources
- Iconic Representation
- Hate Crimes & Terrorism
- Fraud
 - Panhandlers
 - Misrepresentation of need
- Reliance of volunteers



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

- Rural African-American Churches
- Jewish Synagogues
- Mosques
- Arson as a statement of “hate”
- Scapegoat Mentality
 - Knoxville Shooting
 - Avenger
 - Projection



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Additionally, churches are susceptible to more traditional crimes:

- Burglary
- Robbery
- Theft
- Embezzlement
- Vandalism



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Burglary

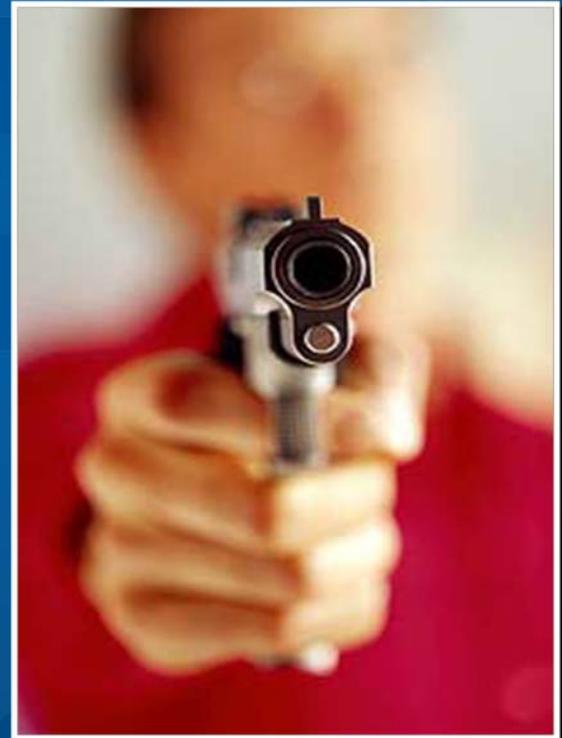
- The most frequent church crime
- Presence of valuable sound systems and audiovisual equipment, computers and office equipment, art objects, and cash



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Robbery

- On church grounds
- When making church fund deposits
- Congregation



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Criminal Assault

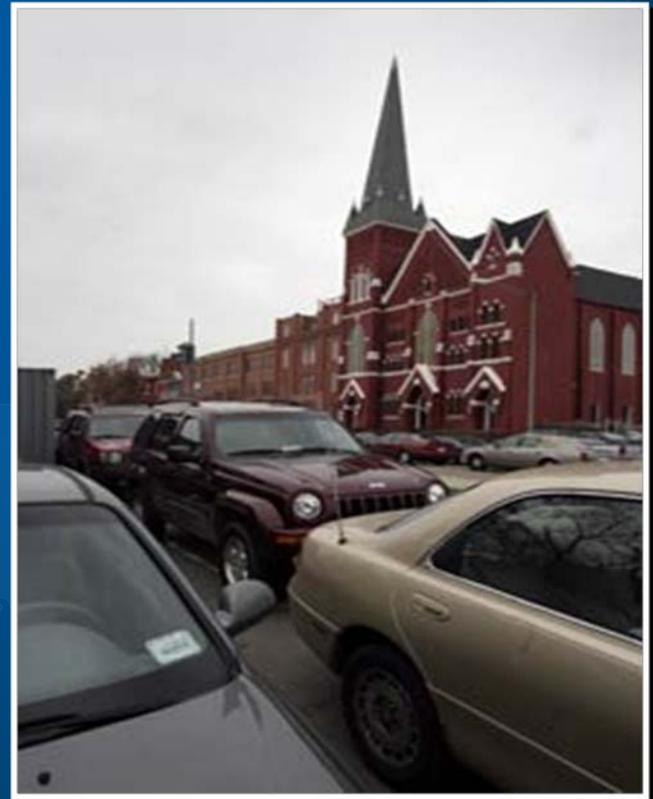
- Assault of church members, visitors and/or employees
- Recovery Workshops, Meetings, Special Events
- Vulnerability during low traffic periods



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Theft of and from Motor Vehicles

- Large number of vehicles during church services
- Vehicles frequently left unlocked
- Valuables left in vehicle
- Security Consciousness



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Physical Obstacles to Preventing Crime:

Because churches are not perceived as a serious crime risk, security measures are frequently minimal and inadequate



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

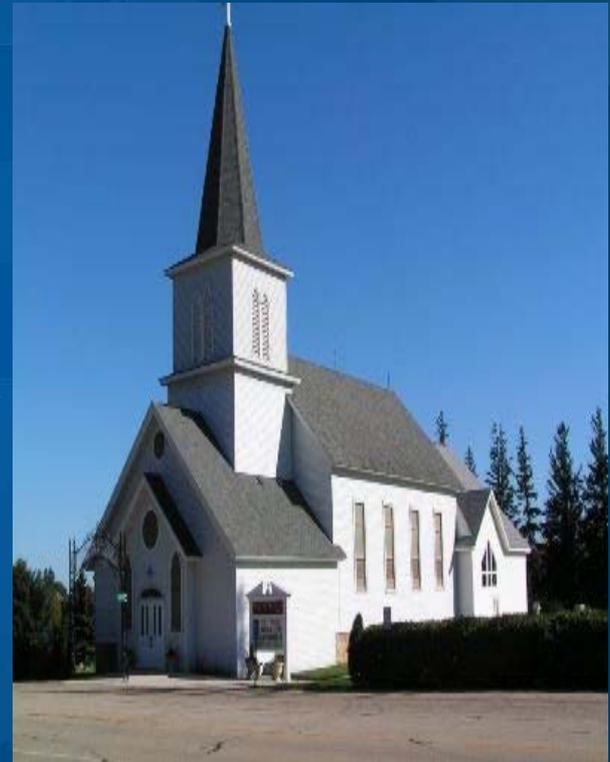


Physical Obstacles to Preventing Crime:
Church buildings are rarely designed with security features...Physical security as an after thought.

Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Physical Obstacles to Preventing Crime:

- Key control and access management is often weak
- Exterior lighting of houses of worship is often less than adequate



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

- Churches are often left unlocked for extended periods of times for members to come and go as they please.
- Buildings are often unoccupied



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

- Activity schedules are predictable and advertised



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

- Churches with day-care facilities, gymnasiums, or schools have the additional threats...
volunteers



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats



Presence of non-members at special events and services



Church Crime Prevention... Risks and Threats

Churches often minister to the homeless, drug users, gang members, and other ‘sinners’. Some of these persons may pose a threat to the well-being of the church.



Church Crime Prevention Mission

Church security should address the elements of:

- *Physical*
- *Electronic*
- *Environmental*
- *Procedural*



Church Crime Prevention Mission



Key to Success:
A balance must be achieved between the church's mission and crime prevention efforts.

Church Crime Prevention Mission

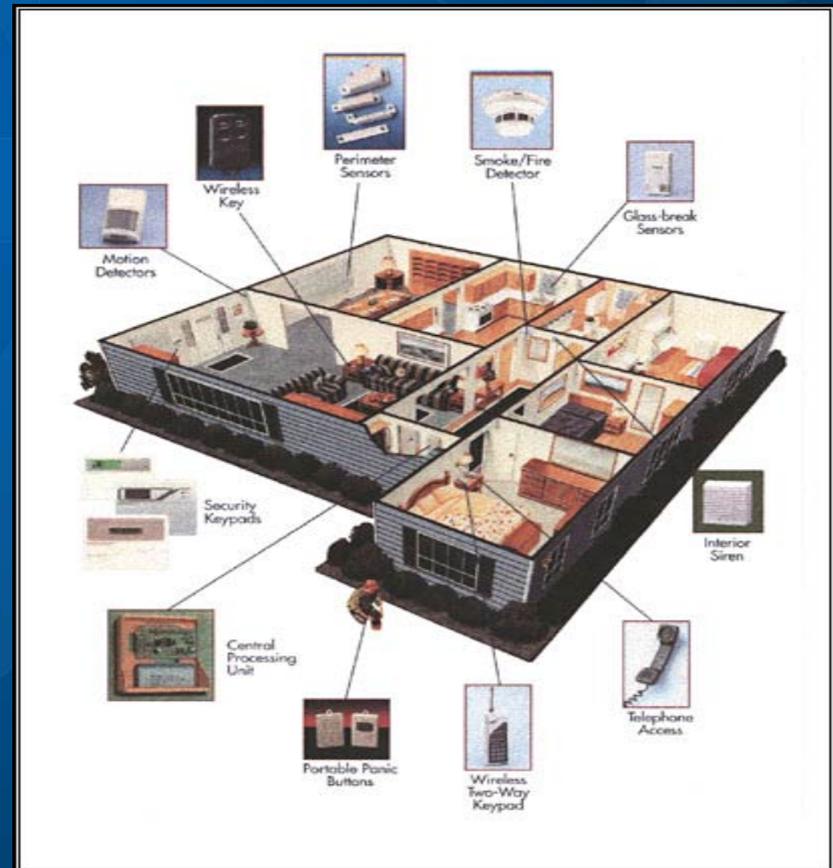
A church security plan must strike a workable balance between maintaining the church's mission and protecting its congregation and assets.



Church Crime Prevention Mission

Comprehensive Physical Security Survey

A security survey is a critical *on-site* examination and analysis of a site that determines:



Church Crime Prevention Mission

- The present security status,
- Identifies deficiencies or excesses,
- Determines the protection needed,
- Makes recommendations to improve the overall security of the facilities.



Church Crime Prevention Mission

Target Hardening

- Locks
- Key management
- Access Control
- Alarms
- Lighting
- CCTV
- Signage
- Landscaping
- Safes



Church Crime Prevention Mission

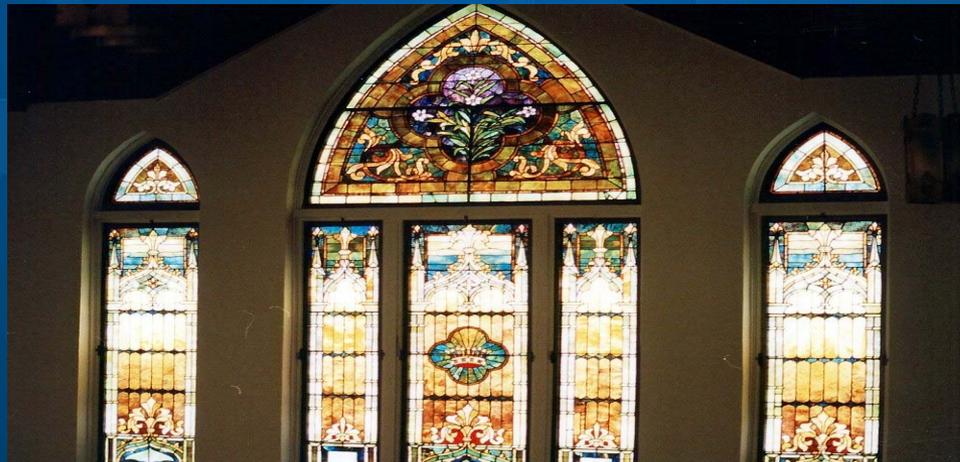
The goal of Target Hardening is to eliminate opportunity and send a message that risks outweigh potential rewards for criminals.



Church Crime Prevention Mission

Remember:

Vulnerable stained glass windows should be protected externally by polycarbonate or other break resistant glazing material



Church Crime Prevention Mission

Related Issues:

Children's playgrounds on church property should be fence enclosed and have clear sight lines



Church Crime Prevention Mission

Church Records and Archives:

- Church records and archives should be stored in a fire resistant safe (not security safe) or cabinet
- Particularly valuable or non-replaceable church records and archives should be photocopied and stored off-site



Financial Management

The financial assets of a church transcends the actual monetary value of those assets.



Offerings by church members represent a tangible trust between the member, congregation and church

Financial Management



Cash Management begins with the collection of donations from the congregation and concludes with the funds being used for their intended purpose.

Financial Management

The first step in developing a financial security policy is to identify how money should be handled, counted, deposited, reported and audited.



Financial Management



This policy prevents the misappropriation of funds and ensures both staff members and volunteers protection in the event they are ever accused of theft.

Financial Management

In addition, a financial policy is more likely to deter employees and members from stealing since they know a cash management system is being carefully observed.



Financial Management

Financial threats include the crimes of:

Robbery

Embezzlement

Theft

Fraud

Each potential vulnerability represents unique challenges to the church body.



Financial Management

Financial threats can be :

External
or
Internal



Financial Management

Cash

Cash is problematic for several distinct reasons:

It's easy...not complicated

Disposability

Not traceable

Easily assimilated into the thief's possession

No waiting period



Financial Management

Cash

In addition to the “Sunday Offering”, churches routinely receive money throughout the week:

Vending machines

Mission trips

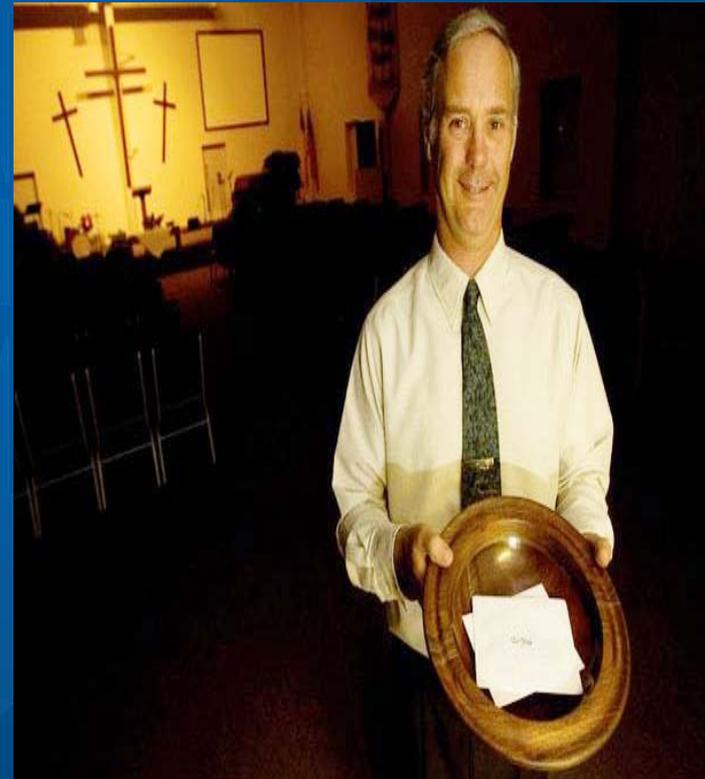
Book sales

Special offerings



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Maintain an accurate accounting of all cash funds... especially those that are collected throughout the week.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Keep all available cash in an appropriate safe.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Limit access to available cash funds.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Never allow a member to take home funds for any reason.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Always have at least two people present when counting the offering. It's best to use longtime church members who've established a reputation of being trustworthy. Develop a list of such people, and periodically rotate those on the list when offerings are counted.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Train Volunteers and Employees

In most churches, ushers play key roles in the collection process.

Since safeguarding funds begins with these men and women, train them how to keep funds safe during and after collection.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Counting Room Security

At least two people, serving on some type of rotating basis, should be involved in the counting of church offerings and other funds.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Church collections should be deposited in a bank as soon as possible after collection.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

Monitor

Screen workers and monitor the books

To help protect funds, be sure to conduct background checks and screen all volunteers and employees who handle funds. At minimum, select people who exhibit integrity, and make sure they are able to practice discretion with sensitive financial information.



Financial Management...Prevention Strategies

It is recommended that a qualified accounting firm be retained to conduct an operational or procedural audit of all church funds on a periodical bases.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

The following initiatives are building blocks of a comprehensive strategy for churches:



Proactive Prevention Strategies

8 Point Church Security Plan Template:

1. Risk Assessment

What aspects of the church environment presents potential vulnerabilities

- Internal
- External



Proactive Prevention Strategies

2. Security Awareness

What is the security culture or consciousness of the church?



Proactive Prevention Strategies

3. Physical Security

Is the physical structure of the church facilities, parking lot, and grounds secure?

- Security assessment and surveys
- Target Hardening
- Property Inventory



Proactive Prevention Strategies

4. Policy and Procedures

How the business aspect of the church is managed and operated will have a profound impact upon the general safety and security of the facility.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

5. Crisis Response

Maintaining the safety of all church members and guests as well as the integrity of the church should be a paramount concern.

- Lockdown
- Evacuations
- Notifications



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Internal communications
- Threat response and abatement
- Notification of emergency responders
- Crowd control
- Traffic control
- Church vehicle accidents
- Personal injury



Proactive Prevention Strategies

6. Media Response

Does the church have a media plan? Is the church prepared to respond to media enquires concerning events or incidents at the church

- Immediate
- Follow-up
- Spin Control



Proactive Prevention Strategies

7. Training

No plan will be effective if church staff, volunteers, and members are not aware of their individual role or responsibilities

- Internal
- External



Proactive Prevention Strategies

8. *Executive Protection*

- Are the church leaders safe from physical injury or accusations?
 - Ministry staff
 - Visiting dignitaries
 - Controversial speakers



Proactive Prevention Strategies

*Bringing It All Together:
Three Phase Internal Church Oversight
Guidance*



Proactive Prevention Strategies



Unfortunately, there is no single strategy or preventive measure that will ensure that a church will not be a victim of a violent crime or traumatic incident.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

However, most security professionals concur that institutions (churches) must be prepared to respond to negative occurrences within their environments.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

*Doing
Nothing
Invites
Criminal
Opportunity!!*



Proactive Prevention Strategies

Remember the Boy Scouts motto...
Be Prepared!



Proactive Prevention Strategies

The one aspect of prevention that is uniformed sited as a prerequisite to providing a safe church environment is planning:

Before

During

After



Proactive Prevention Strategies

Any comprehensive security management program, regardless of venue, blends physical, electronic, and procedural aspects of protection. The above listed organized committees are fundamental to the process of development of a comprehensive security strategy.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

***Without internal policy and procedures,
as well as a proactive security
consciousness, physical and electronic
security hardware and features will fall
short of their intended goal.***



Proactive Prevention Strategies

The final step in the process of building a church crime prevention plan is the initiation, organization, and development of internal duties and responsibilities:



Proactive Prevention Strategies

The formation of a:

- **Church Protection Committee**
 - **Church Watch**
 - **Church Safety Team**



Proactive Prevention Strategies

The primary purpose of organizing a formal planning and oversight authority is to:

- Place Responsibility
- Ensure Compliance
- Facilitate Training
- Review & Update Policies and Procedures



Proactive Prevention Strategies

Establish a Church Protection Committee:

This committee should have comprehensive oversight concerning the activities and policies and procedures that are designed to ensure the safety and security of the church, it's employees and members.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Committee consists of lay members and church administration
- Develop, maintain, and serve as direct liaison with local police or sheriff
- Develop a guidebook of church security policies and procedures
- Crisis Response Planning
 - Shelter in Place
 - Evacuations
 - Responding to disruptive individuals
 - Responding to criminal occurrences
 - Active events
 - Reporting suspicious behavior
 - Reporting criminal events



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Interacts with insurance and risk management representatives
- Train all employees and volunteers in their role in protecting the church
- Ensure that established policy and procedures are adhered to
- Review key control and access management procedures
- Responsible for church access control policies
 - Opening and closing
 - Visitor identification and registration



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Ensure that items of value within the church are properly marked for identification and appropriately inventoried
- Assist in a comprehensive physical security survey of the church and implementation of recommendations
- Oversees use of security guards or off-duty police officers for traffic control or special events



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Develop security policies and procedures for ushers, greeters, and Safety Team
- Develop church emergency response plans
- Periodically monitors local or state sexual offender registry



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Develop, organize, and coordinate a “Church Watch” program
- Develop, organize, and coordinate a “Church Safety Team”



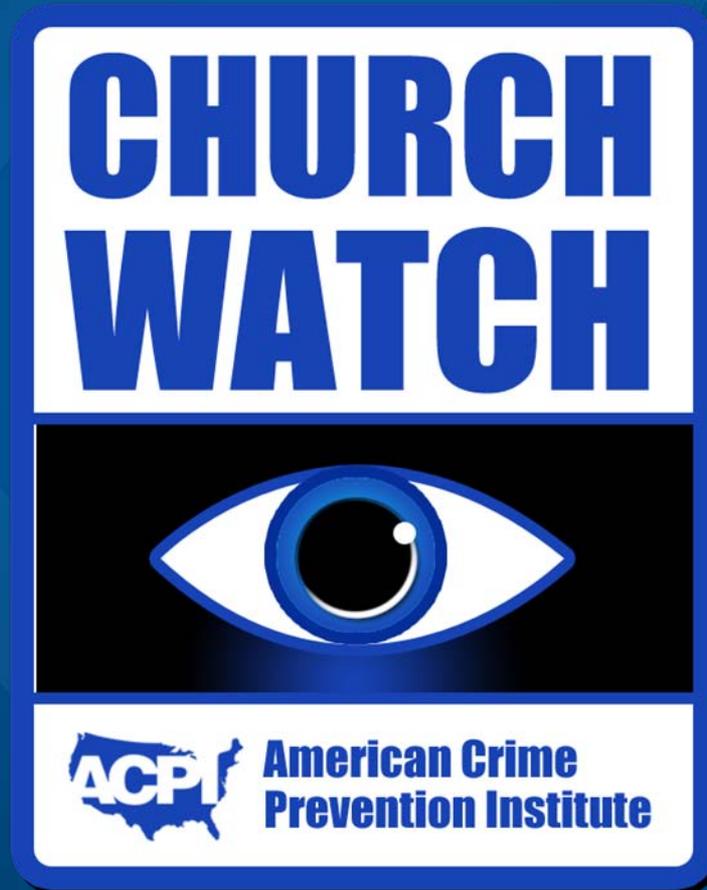
Proactive Prevention Strategies

Church Watch Program:

The goal of the Church Watch Program is to minimize or reduce criminal opportunities on church property.



Proactive Prevention Strategies



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Request that members of the congregation drive by the church and through the church parking lots whenever possible
- Encourage church members to be alert for unusual or suspicious activities, and contact the police if they believe something is out of the ordinary



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- **Contact neighbors of the church and request they watch the church property for any unusual or suspicious activity**



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Contact local businesses to watch church property for unusual or suspicious activity
- Request church members make night time security checks of the church
- Maintain an emergency contact list for first responders



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Request local police to routinely patrol church grounds, especially at night
- Participate in local Neighborhood Watch and Business Watch programs
- Offer church facilities for local “Watch” meetings
- Report security deficiencies, incidents, members concerns, and criminal occurrences



Proactive Prevention Strategies

Church Safety Team:

This team consists of volunteers who actively “patrol” church facilities and grounds during church services and events. They are responsible for deterring inappropriate behavior, reporting suspicious behavior and responding to emergencies.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Comprised of church lay members who monitor church facilities
- Should be easily identifiable....arm band or logo shirt
- Monitor church parking lot
- Monitor internal church activities
- Respond to emergencies



Proactive Prevention Strategies

- Have the knowledge and ability to summon emergency responders
- Observe for unusual or suspicious behavior or activity
- Coordinate with church ushers, greeters, and financial counters
- If possible the church Safety Team should have the ability to communicate with each other



Proactive Prevention Strategies

A church body should not worship in fear, nor should the worship experience be altered to the point of distraction from guard dogs, metal detectors, or armed security officers guarding the entrances to the sanctuary.



Proactive Prevention Strategies

Being prepared for the “worst” can go “a long way in preventing negative incidents occurring in your church.



Questions??

