

SECURING THE FAITHFUL

Preventing and Planning for Violent Incidents

Chief Shaun D. Jones

Middleburg Virginia Police Department

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WHAT IS CRIME PREVENTION?



THE ANTICIPATION, RECOGNITION, AND APPRAISAL OF A CRIME RISK.



TAKING ACTION TO REMOVE OR REDUCE THE THREAT.



PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY LEVELS OF PREVENTION.

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PRIMARY PREVENTION



GOAL: PREVENT CRIME BEFORE IT HAPPENS.



FOCUS: ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRIME.



EXAMPLES: ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: LIGHTING, LOCKS, CAMERAS (CPTED) PRINCIPALS.

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PRIMARY PREVENTION CONTINUED



CREATING A SAFETY TEAM OR SECURITY MINISTRY



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PRESENCE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT



BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS



AWARENESS PROGRAMS FOR CONGREGATION MEMBERS

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SECONDARY PREVENTION

Goal: Identify and intervene early with potential risks and warning signs.

Focus: Detecting problems before they escalate into criminal acts.

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SECONDARY PREVENTION EXAMPLES

- Watching for behavioral red flags (e.g. someone acting unusually at services)
- De-escalation training for greeter and ushers
- Creating visitor tracking for childcare
- Having a clear process for reporting concerning behaviors

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TERTIARY PREVENTION

Goal: Respond to and reduce the impact of crime after it happens.

Focus: Managing incidents, minimizing harm, and prevention repeat offenses.

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TERTIARY PREVENTION EXAMPLES

<p>01</p> <p>Having an active shooter or emergency response plan</p>	<p>02</p> <p>Working with law enforcement after a disruptive event</p>	<p>03</p> <p>Counseling or support for victims</p>	<p>04</p> <p>Reviewing incidents to improve further prevention.</p>
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WHY DO WE NEED CHURCH SECURITY?

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    graph TD
      A[Places of worship are soft targets.] --> B[Increase in hate crimes and mass shootings.]
      B --> C[Moral and legal responsibility to protect lives.]
    
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VIOLENT INCIDENTS ARE NOTHING NEW

 Charleston (2015), Sutherland Springs (2017), Sikh Temple (2012).

 Violence motivated by hate, personal grievances, or mental illness.

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TYPES OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS

- Active shooter, domestic disputes, child abuse, theft, vandalism.
- Mental health crises and assaults.

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THE REALITY OF VIOLENCE IN CHURCHES

 <p>HOUSES OF WORSHIP ARE INCREASINGLY TARGETED.</p>	 <p>PREPAREDNESS AND AWARENESS ARE KEY.</p>
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WHO IS AT RISK?

CONGREGANTS, STAFF, FAITH LEADERS, CHILDREN, VISITORS.

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THE HUMAN ELEMENT

- Security begins with trained, alert people.
- Awareness is more effective than fear.

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HOW TO IMPROVE CHURCH SECURITY



START WITH A WRITTEN, FLEXIBLE PLAN.



CONDUCT SAFETY ASSESSMENTS, DESIGNATE COORDINATORS.



PARTNER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT.

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CHURCH LEADERSHIP'S ROLE

Set the tone for safety culture.

Support planning and implementation.

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WHAT SHOULD THE PLAN INCLUDE?

- Disruptions, violence, natural disasters, medical emergencies.
- Evacuation and lockdown procedures.

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BUILDING A CHURCH SAFETY TEAM

- Identify church member with related experience such as Law Enforcement, military, first responders and security professionals.
- Diversify roles: observation, medical, greeter security and logistics

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BUILDING A CHURCH SECURITY TEAM



BACKGROUND CHECKS
REQUIRED FOR ALL
SAFETY TEAM MEMBERS



DEFINE ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES
CLEARLY



MAINTAIN A CULTURE OF
RESPECT,
CONFIDENTIALITY, AND
SERVICE

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BUILDING A CHURCH SAFETY TEAM



Diverse, vetted individuals
with clear roles.



Regular training and
coordination.

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THE THREE-SYSTEM APPROACH TO CHURCH SECURITY

Number 1 Outer Perimeter Security

- Parking lots, entrances, sidewalks
- Team members watch for suspicious activity from a distance

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THE THREE-SYSTEM APPROACH TO CHURCH SECURITY

Number 2 Internal Security

- Entry points, sanctuary doors, restrooms
- Greeters/ushers with training stationed inside
- Monitor behavior of visitors

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THE THREE-SYSTEM APPROACH TO CHURCH SECURITY

Number 3 Core Area Protection

- Children's ministry, pulpit, pastoral offices
- Limited access zones with designated personnel
- Use ID badges, check-ins, and radio comms

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GREETERS AND USHERS



Trained to welcome and observe.



Identify behavioral red flags, notify
security team.

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ACCESS CONTROL



Limit entry points, secure unused doors.



Surveillance and lighting as deterrents.

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COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Use radios or code words.
- Designate emergency contacts and pre-service briefings.

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DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

- Remain calm, maintain distance, use respectful tone.
- Call law enforcement when necessary.

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CHILDCARE AND YOUTH SECURITY



Check-in systems, background checks.



Restricted access and two-person rule.

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DRILL PLANNING

- Conduct regular drills: lockdown, evacuation, medical.
- Debrief and revise procedures.

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MEDICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

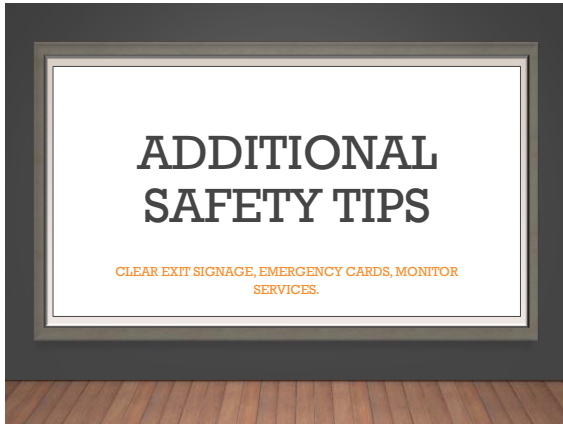


IDENTIFY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, PROVIDE CPR/AED TRAINING.



MAINTAIN ACCESSIBLE EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT.

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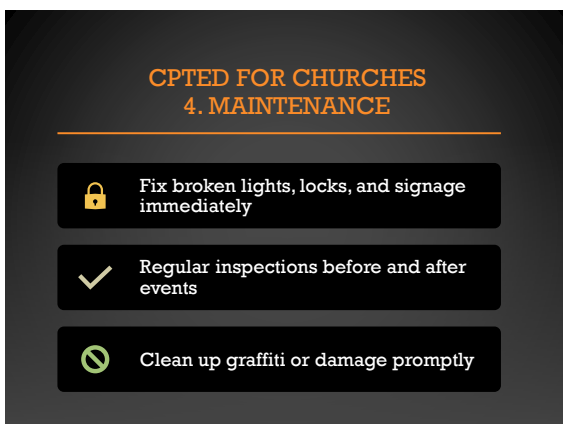
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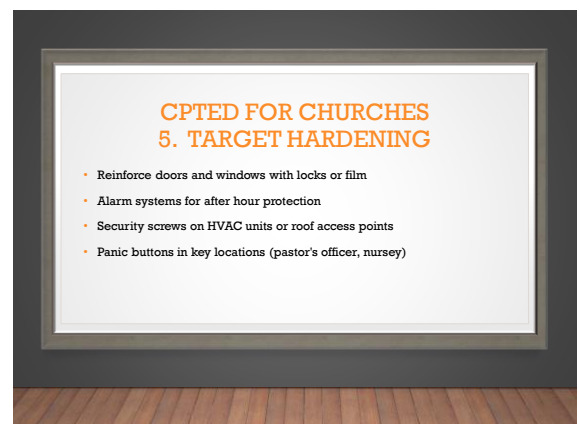
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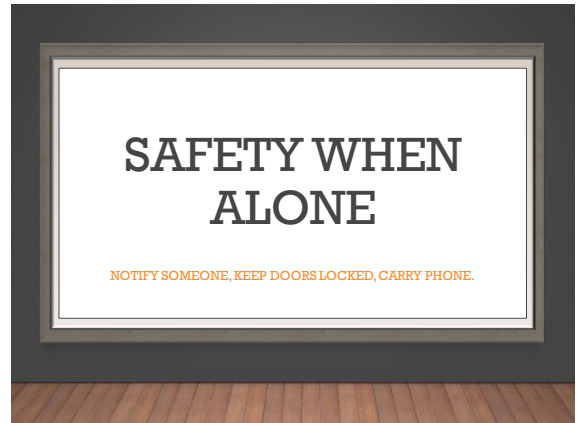
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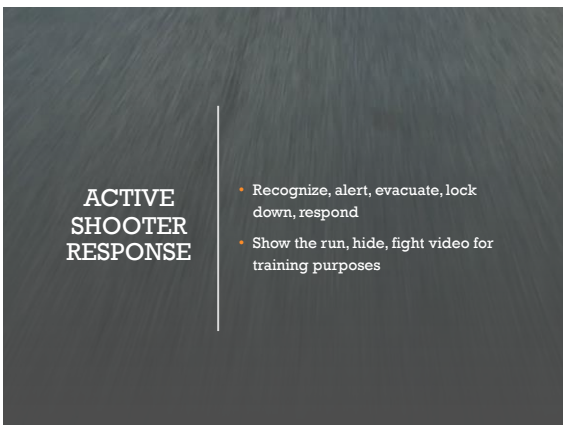
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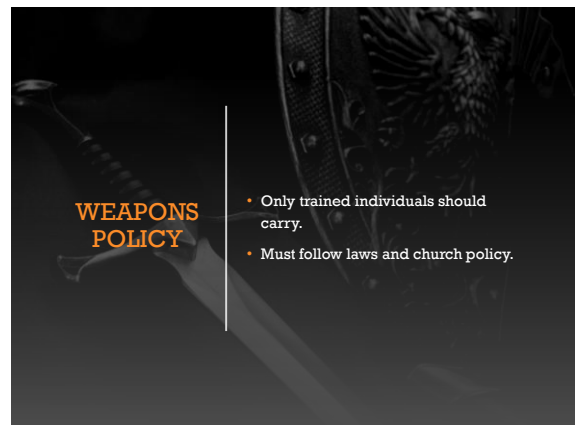
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THE THREE R'S OF CHURCH SECURITY

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Recognize threats,

2

Repeat training,

3

Respond effectively.

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OUTREACH AND SAFETY



Balance compassion with preparedness.



Train volunteers serving food/clothing pantries.

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POLICY, TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT



Develop clear safety policies and training modules.



Include clergy and staff in development.

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VISITATION SAFETY

- Establish protocols for home and clerical visits.
- Always notify someone, never go alone if avoidable.

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LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR VISITATION



RESPECT PRIVACY LAWS AND OBTAIN PERMISSIONS.



DOCUMENT VISITS AND FOLLOW GUIDELINES.

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PARTNERING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT



Build strong PD relationships.



Include LE in planning and drills.

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ESTABLISHING A WORSHIP WATCH PROGRAM

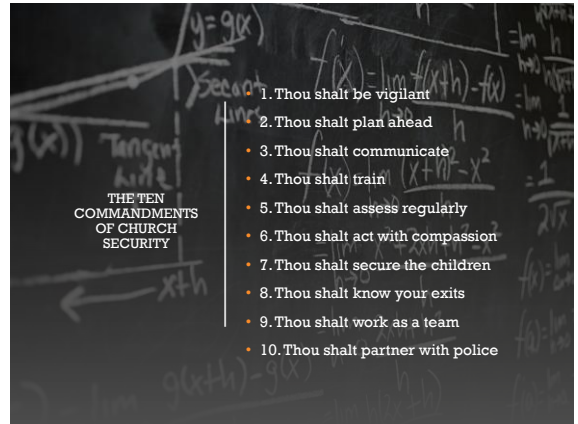


Similar to Neighborhood Watch but faith-based.



Shared alerts, safety tips, and partnership.

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THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF CHURCH SECURITY

- 1. Thou shalt be vigilant
- 2. Thou shalt plan ahead
- 3. Thou shalt communicate
- 4. Thou shalt train
- 5. Thou shalt assess regularly
- 6. Thou shalt act with compassion
- 7. Thou shalt secure the children
- 8. Thou shalt know your exits
- 9. Thou shalt work as a team
- 10. Thou shalt partner with police

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ACTIVE SHOOTER RESPONSE: RUN, HIDE, FIGHT

- Watch the 'Run, Hide, Fight' video produced by the Department of Homeland Security.
- Key points:
 - RUN: Escape if possible.
 - HIDE: Lock and barricade if escape isn't possible.
 - FIGHT: As a last resort, fight with aggression and improvised weapons.
- Video available at: <https://www.dhs.gov/video/options-active-shooter-preparedness-video>

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WORSHIP WATCH

WORSHIP WATCH PROMOTES AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS, AND COORDINATED RESPONSE.

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PROGRAM GOALS



FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN FAITH COMMUNITIES AND POLICE

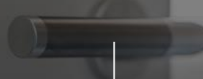


IDENTIFY VULNERABILITIES IN WORSHIP SPACE



TRAIN LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS ON RESPONSE PLANS

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HOW TO IMPLEMENT

1. Conduct a Risk Assessment
 - Access control, doors windows, security camera placement
2. Create a Safety Team
 - Volunteers with clear roles (greeters, observers responders).

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HOW TO IMPLEMENT

3. Develop an Emergency Plan

- Lockdown procedures, evacuation routes, shelter in place areas

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HOW TO IMPLEMENT

-  Train Congregants
-  Suspicious behavior recognition
-  Medical emergencies
-  Crisis communication

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HOW TO IMPLEMENT

5. Coordinate with Law Enforcement

- Conduct walk throughs and table-top drills
- Assign liaison officer for rapid response

6. Utilize Technology

- CCTV systems, panic buttons, radios and text systems

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BENEFITS

- Peace of mind for congregants
- Faster response to emergencies
- Reduced risk of theft or disruption
- Cultivates a culture of vigilance, not fear
- Encourages interfaith and interagency collaboration

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CONCLUSION

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Chief Shaun D. Jones

540-216-1221

sjones@middleburgva.gov

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