



Risk Management and Physical Security

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The Three P's of Congregational Physical Security

- Property
 - Systems for physical security needs for the property, both during use and when not in use
- Religious Professionals
 - Supporting Religious Professionals with physical security risk mitigation due to the nature of public ministry
- People of the Congregation
 - Risk mitigation practices and techniques for when the congregation is gathered together



Property

- Effective “Lock up” procedures, and either staff or volunteers who are trained to secure all the entrances and exits upon leaving the building
- Good access control, including good discernment on who has access to the building
- Potential for a monitored security system (not every congregation needs this, and it can be a significant cost)
- Strategies and equipment to secure some internal doors in case of an emergency situation (and training and practices for doing so)



Religious Professionals

- Religious Professionals (ministers, religious educators, other church staff) can be at particular risk due to the public nature of their roles
- Good physical security support can include:
 - Ensuring they are not left alone in the building
 - Practice of “checking-in” with them if they appear to be in a difficult interaction
 - Volunteers trained in de-escalation techniques in the congregation
 - Plan to increase security support in case of a specific threat
- Be in conversation with your RP's about their needs on this



People in the Congregation

- Good Risk Management Practices when the congregation is gathered can include:
 - Training greeters and ushers to be aware of the body language of visitors
 - Having a few volunteers who are willing to befriend and “sit with” visitors who may appear to be uncomfortable
 - Having greeters and ushers trained to help people get to safety in case of an emergency
 - Having volunteers trained in de-escalation techniques and practices within the congregation



A Note on “Responsive” Security

- In some situations, it is an appropriate risk management steps for congregations to have intentional security that can respond to a potential threat
- While having professionally licensed and bonded security is often best, it may not be possible due to cost or the conflict with a congregation’s values of such agencies
- When a congregation uses a non-licensed or bonded response security, they accept the insurance risk
- ***It is rarely the right answer for unlicensed congregants to fill this role***



Reach out to your Congregation's UUA Staff Primary Contact

- Physical security risk mitigation practices, needs, and procedures are different for every congregation
- Your Primary Contact can connect you with resources to understand your congregation's needs and develop a good plan
- Also, physical security risk changes over time, depending on the situation in the community and the risks inherent in a congregation's religious mission
- Your congregation's insurance provider can also be a useful partner



Resources

- Church Mutual Guide to Security --
<https://www.churchmutual.com/resources/the-ultimate-guide-to-security-and-crime-prevention-for-your-organization>
- CISA Resource on Protecting Houses of Worship --
<https://www.cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/protecting-houses-worship>
- VANCO – Church Security Best Practices --
<https://www.vancopayments.com/egiving/blog/church-security-best-practices>