



FAITH-BASED SECURITY STRATEGY

The Interfaith Advisory Council facilitates the Faith-Based Security Strategy for New Jersey's houses of worship, which has been shared with law enforcement and faith-based communities throughout the State. This strategy includes security guidelines for houses of worship, outlines development of security coordinators, and promotes awareness and resources provided by local, state, and federal agencies.

SECURITY GUIDELINES FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP

These guidelines were developed to coordinate and enhance information sharing practices between OHSP, partner agencies at all levels of government, and faith-based communities in an effort to identify and mitigate security concerns for houses of worship in New Jersey.

Phase One: Establish an appropriate security strategy at each house of worship

- Identify two (2) security coordinators at each house of worship.
- Coordinate intelligence briefings as appropriate.
- Conduct building site assessments to identify gaps and vulnerabilities.
- Train security coordinators to identify suspicious behavior and implement protective measures.
- Disseminate posters/flyers to the houses of worship/congregation.
- Communicate with county/local law enforcement communities.

Phase Two: Implementing the strategy and future actions

- Assessments: Perform vulnerability assessments to identify gaps.
- Trainings: Develop and implement emergency response plans in conjunction with local Offices of Emergency Management to exercise responding to a variety of scenarios, such as active shooter incidents, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), or natural disasters. *All exercise activity should be coordinated with the appropriate entities, including local police departments, emergency response agencies, and county authorities.*
- Briefings: Intelligence briefings will be coordinated by OHSP and partner agencies to inform faith-based communities of current events that may impact them.
- Security: Faith-based communities should meet with their security coordinators at least once a year to coordinate the security plan, review current events, and hold meetings with local law enforcement and first responders to continue to build trusted partnerships, maintain open communication, share information, and develop cultural awareness training.
- Public Awareness: Promote the “*See Something, Say Something*” public awareness campaign through the delivery and display of posters and other campaign materials available to community members in a variety of languages.



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- School Outreach: OHSP recognizes the importance of youth involvement in faith-based communities. As such, the community is encouraged to work with local school district superintendents to ensure educational information about each faith's culture is included in each school district's Social Studies Core Curriculum Content Standard (6.3), Active Citizenship in the 21st Century, as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. OHSP supports continuing law enforcement career days and also provides school security briefings and facility assessments at schools.
 - Grants: Although there are limited grants available to enhance building security, OHSP will provide assistance to identify available state/federal funds to houses of worship requesting financial assistance.

ROLE OF SECURITY COORDINATOR

Security Coordinators are selected to develop, coordinate, and oversee the proper protective measures needed to keep their respective house of worship, school, or community center secure.

Coordinators receive training focused on facility security and identifying suspicious activity in order to develop security measures and procedures. These individuals then instruct clergy and other members of the congregation on the developed security measures and act as liaisons with local law enforcement and first responder agencies.

Below outlines the steps needed to become an effective security coordinator:

Phase One: Development

- Contact law enforcement and first responder agencies to build a partnership and to familiarize them with the organization, its operations, and its members.
- Develop a plan to inspect the grounds/buildings for security gaps, such as inspecting the condition of vegetation/landscaping or determining if there is proper lighting around the facility to ascertain if anything gives an advantage to intruders.
- Utilize the talents of congregation members, including first responders, metalworkers, locksmiths, IT, landscapers, security experts, etc.
- Design and maintain a key inventory system for all buildings and ensure that all locks, doors, and alarms are working properly.
- Establish a visitor/contractor plan for pre-announced escorts.
- Establish a mail/delivery protocol to inspect mail coming into the facility.
- Develop a cybersecurity plan.
- Install first aid and trauma kits in the facility.
- Devise emergency response plans (active shooter, bomb, intruder, weather, hazmat, suspicious package, etc.).
- Develop a communications plan for announcing an emergency and designate a spokesperson to set the message.
- Determine a parking policy and create "stand-off" safety distance from building in the case of an emergency.



Phase Two: Training

- Attend training events offered by OHSP, DHS, and other government agencies.
- Train all employees on security procedures and identifying suspicious activity using OHSP and DHS offered courses.
- Train staff in first aid and CPR.

Phase Three: Implementation

- Coordinate monthly meetings with church leaders and quarterly meetings with the congregation.
- Consult with local first responders prior to any vigils, celebrations, and special events.
- Maintain CCTV system and make sure that it is monitored by an individual trained in identifying suspicious activity.
- Implement cybersecurity safeguards.
- Check the institution's website/social media for suspicious conversations; determine the sources and contact police in the event of suspicion or concern.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Through the Government Outreach Alliance, OHSP and its public partners offer numerous resources for faith-based communities to utilize. Below are a few examples:

- Facility Security Measures (Self-Assessment Worksheet)
- How to Identify Suspicious Behavior/Activity
- Terrorism Awareness Program (TAP)
- Active Shooter Workshops
- Non-Profit Grant Applications

We emphasize use of the contact information provided on the next page for the different members of the Government Outreach Alliance to learn more about these resources as well as many others.

More information can be found at www.NJHomelandSecurity.gov.

**“See Something, Say Something”
Report Suspicious Activity to tips@njohsp.gov or 1-866-4-SAFENJ**

