

PROTECTING CHURCH ORGANISATIONS AGAINST CRIME AND VIOLENCE

Zero tolerance for violence.

Protecting the health and safety of church members, workers, volunteers, children and the infirm is paramount. There is zero tolerance for violent, aggressive, inappropriate or criminal behaviour at church gatherings or functions.

In most of our organisations receptionists, greeters, deacons and deaconesses are the front line of both hospitality and defence. These are the men and women who first encounter visitors to our organisation - competent training in recognising and responding to a threat is essential.

WAYS TO HELP PROTECT YOUR CHURCH

- Create a Safety and Security Team. Designate a security director and define the responsibilities of that role.
- Conduct a security assessment to identify any vulnerabilities and develop a security policy with defined roles for all staff, including greeters, ushers and other frontline team members.
- Within your security plan, include lockdown procedures, a seating location for all security personnel, crisis communications and an evacuation plan.
- Work with local authorities to provide training for staff and volunteers on how to recognise, report and respond to suspicious activity or a security or safety incident. This should also include how to deal with disruptive individuals and identifying and diffusing potentially violent situations.
- Never allow staff to work alone. Always ensure that there are at least two volunteers or staff present at all times.
- A well designed and installed intrusion alarm and fire alarm system will help protect and target harden property assets.
- Keep all doors secured except when in use and limit access points as much as possible. They all need to be monitored to observe and serve the people.
- Maintain plants and shrubbery around buildings to reduce hiding places.
- Review and maintain effective outdoor lighting.
- Background checks MUST be conducted on people that have responsibility for children including volunteers and paid staff – including all the safety security team regardless of involvement with children. There should be no exception for this rule.

How to respond.

**IF YOU SUSPECT AN IMMEDIATE DANGER
CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES FIRST.**

If presented with an armed intruder, your response should be to RUN, HIDE and as a last resort, FIGHT.



ESCAPE - In the first instance have an escape plan in mind, leave your belongings behind and keep your hands visible.



HIDE - Hide in an area out of the assailants view and block entry to your hiding place and lock the door(s). Silence your phone's ringtone and vibration alert.



FIGHT - As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to incapacitate the attacker. Throw items at the assailant to help you buy precious seconds to escape.

We gratefully acknowledge our counterparts in the USA, Adventist Risk Management, in providing the above information regarding armed intruders.

READY TO HELP

Risk Management Service is a dedicated service department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific.

rms.org.au

