



SECURITY BEST PRACTICES FOR RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNAL INSTITUTIONS

The following are best practices which will assist institutions in being safe and secure while maintaining an open and welcoming environment. Keep in mind that global and local events may impact security. It is important to be proactive.

- 1) Make safety and security part of the culture of your institution, involving staff, leadership and constituents.
- 2) Designate a member of your staff to serve as a security manager.
- 3) Designate a member of your staff (who may be different from the security manager) to serve as an emergency/incident manager and designate a backup in the event of this person's absence.
- 4) Create security plans, regularly assess risks, and revisit your security plans to update them accordingly. It is important to be proactive in preparing for potential security scenarios.
- 5) Meet and develop relationships with public safety officials, including police, fire, and EMS.
- 6) Provide regular security training to all staff and volunteer leaders. Run regular safety and security exercises, reviewing how to respond to different scenarios.
- 7) Establish procedures for controlling access into your facility.
- 8) Encourage staff, leadership, and constituents to be mindful of suspicious activity, and ensure that they are familiar with procedures for reporting it.
- 9) Ensure everyone at your institution is familiar with suspicious mail indicators and what to do if they receive a suspicious letter or package.
- 10) Create and implement a plan for responding to bomb threats.
- 11) Establish an emergency response plan which may include evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown.
- 12) Practice your evacuation plan, including routes of egress and assembly points.

- 13) Prepare for how you would continue your institution's operations and services after an incident, such as being able to access important computer data and records off-site.
- 14) Establish a policy for your institution's website or other online communications that takes security into consideration, addressing issues such as whether to post facility and event addresses, event calendars, contact information for individuals, and photographs.
- 15) Establish an information security plan to protect sensitive data.
- 16) Ensure all technology, such as security cameras, is working properly.
- 17) Maintain facility security (ie lighting and landscaping).
- 18) Monitor news sources and be alert to events that may have security implications for your institution.

Take full advantage of all available resources, including public safety officials and ADL. For more information and resources, including requests for security training, please contact your local ADL regional office.