**SITE SECURITY ASSESSMENT**

This questionnaire is intended to help parishes evaluate physical security and current practices. The questions may or may not apply to your parish, but are provided to generate discussion and consideration for a variety of security areas. The discussions should be based on your existing security practices and resources with consideration for how you might improve your current level of security.

Address only the questions that pertain to your parish and include those items in your emergency operations plan security annex. You may organize the annex by the security areas listed in this document and include actions necessary to ensure that each item addressed is carried out by an assigned responsible party.

Include participation from parish priests, staff, school staff and teachers, parishioners, and parents. Discuss the specific challenges with each security area and develop strategies to address these challenges based on your unique needs.

**SECURITY – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

1. Does the parish have a security manager?

The Security Manager is responsible for the effective implementation of security policies, programs, directives and training.

1. Does the parish have a threat assessment team to respond to behavior that raises safety concerns?

An assessment team analyzes communication and behaviors to determine whether an individual may pose a threat. The team serves as a central convening body so that warning signs that multiple people observe and report are not dismissed as isolated incidents when they actually may represent escalating behavior that is a serious concern. Threat assessment team members should include parish leadership, mental health professionals, law enforcement personnel, and security team members, where applicable.

1. Does the parish have an emergency operations plan?

A security plan provides direction on the parish’s security management and policies. It is a critical component of an effective security program. An emergency operations plan addresses threats and hazards and safety needs before, during, and after an incident.

1. Are staff, volunteers, and parishioners trained on the security and emergency operations plan?

Training may include presentations from local first responders. Often, guest speakers or presentations from security subject matter experts are beneficial. Providing checklists, flip cards, or other routinely updated and refreshed reference material may also aid training. Some training is available online at <https://www.fema.training.gov>

1. Does the parish exercise the security and emergency operations plan?

An exercise is a way to train for, assess, practice, and improve performance in a risk-free environment. Exercises can be used for testing and validating policies, plans, procedures, training, equipment, and agreements; clarifying and training personnel in roles and responsibilities; improving coordination and communications; and identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement.

1. Does the parish have mass notification capabilities?

The goal of these systems is to broadcast information rapidly to facilitate appropriate response and action to parishioners, staff, visitors, first responders, families, and the public. New technologies have created the ability to reach people using multiple methods such as email, text message, desktop notification, etc.

1. Does the Parish coordinate with first responders for enhanced emergency preparedness?

A crisis response kit provides easy access to relevant information for first responders to enhance emergency response. Crisis kit contents usually include floor plans, point-of-contact lists, evacuation routes, and assembly area locations, among other components. (2) Facility numbering systems clarify locations communicated by first responders during incident response and by individuals relaying information to first responders. One example would be to number exterior doors above doorways in a clockwise scheme, beginning with 1 at the main entrance and using identical numbering inside the building.

1. Does the parish provide security information to staff?
2. Does the parish have procedures for suspicious packages (including mail)?

A suspicious package may contain harmful and dangerous materials. Suspicious packages vary in size, shape and can be boxes, envelopes, backpacks, bags, or other items, but are usually left unattended and seem out of place. They may have powdery substances felt through or appearing on them, oily stains or discoloration, strange odors and/or excessive packaging material, like tape or string.

1. Does the parish have policies for conducting searches for weapons, drugs, or other contraband?

Parish personnel are encouraged to seek legal advice before implementing any policy on the search or seizure of property.

**SECURITY TEAM**

1. Does the parish have a security team?

A security team is a group of volunteers whose sole responsibility is to practice situational awareness during church events and notify law enforcement when necessary. This may include observing parking lot activities or participating as greeters during mass to observe visitors.

1. What training related to active intruder situations and general security issues does the parish provide to the security team?

No single response fits all active-intruder situations; however, making sure that each individual knows his or her emergency options and can react decisively will save valuable time. Depicting scenarios and considering emergency options in advance will assist individuals and groups in quickly selecting their best course of action. In general, three basic options are available in an active-intruder situation: run away, hide in a secure place, or fight back. As a situation develops, parishioners may need to use more than one option, but often they will have to rely on their own judgment to decide the best option.

1. Does the Security Team conduct security-related inspections of the parish?

It may be beneficial for the team to develop a check list of areas or items that should be checked regularly or immediately before or after church activities.

1. Does the Security Team have a means to communicate with each other and/or parish leadership?

The ability to communicate and respond during an incident is crucial to first responders and those involved in the incident. This may be particularly relevant on large campuses or during outdoor activities.

1. Has the Security Team designated a command post?

The command post serves as a control center for security operations. It serves as a meeting place should an event occur or discussion and collaboration be necessary.

1. Does the parish have assignments for personnel to monitor during times of critical vulnerability?

Actively monitoring activity includes observing interactions, watching for suspicious or unusual activity, and providing an alert presence that may provide for early observation of a possible attack or may deter an attack entirely.

1. Does the parish share or exchange security and threat information with law enforcement?

It may be necessary to share information regarding threats or suspicious behavior with law enforcement. Local agencies can provide valuable information regarding in addressing the threat, alleviate some concern, or address the threat directly to reduce potential harm.

**ENTRY CONTROL**

1. Are exterior non-essential doors locked during business hours?

Intrusion detection can be a standalone system, but it is often part of an access control system. Intrusion detection system sensors include, but are not limited to, balanced magnetic contacts (used on doors and windows to detect when they are opened or closed) and motion detectors (long-range combination passive infrared and microwave detectors often used in corridors and hallways). The intrusion detection system sensors described are connected using dedicated wiring that is often protected by a metal conduit to prevent tampering or rendering a device inoperable by simply cutting the wire. These sensors are usually monitored to detect tampering. Intrusion detection systems usually have control panels located throughout a building in secure locations; these panels also should be monitored for tampering.

1. Can office doors remain locked if necessary, for example, during an active-intruder event?
2. What type of locks does the parish use for interior and exterior doors?

Are there staff assigned to confirm necessary doors are locked during non-operational hours? Also consider other types of locks that can assist with access control. Various types of access cards exist, as do a number of different types of card readers. Common access cards include magnetic stripe, Wiegand wire, passive proximity, active proximity, and smart cards (both touch and touchless types).

1. Does the parish issue identification cards to staff?

This is particularly important to parishes with schools. Visitors must check in and be issued a visitor’s pass before accessing school premises. Anyone not displaying a visitor’s pass should be questioned by staff.

1. Is access to non-church events on parish grounds controlled?

There may be community or private events that take place at your facility. Contact information for the event organizer should be available. Organizers should be provided with information regarding limited access to the building, participant roles and responsibilities, and security responsibilities before, during, and after the event.

1. Does the parish control visitor access?

There should be clear signage on parish grounds instructing visitors where to check in when visiting the parish office or school.

**FENCING AND GATES**

1. Does the parish have fencing? What is the purpose of the fence?

Fencing can provide a means to control access to the property, or it can provide protection for children. If the parish has a fence, it should be inspected regularly and maintained.

1. Does the parish have gates?

Like fencing, gates can provide a means to control access to the property or it can provide protection for children. If the parish has a gate, it should be inspected regularly and maintained.

Parking and Barriers

1. Are vehicles parked at the church monitored?

This may be important if there is a history of vandalism or robbery in the parking lot. The presence of a security team may be sufficient to address this problem.

1. Does the parish have a policy to address vehicles parked for an extended period (e.g., reporting to law enforcement or tow company)?
2. Does the parish control parking and circulation of traffic?
3. Does the parish have a high-speed avenue of approach?

A high-speed avenue of approach is a road or flat area that would allow a vehicle to gain sufficient speed to crash into the building before it can be detected, deterred, or interdicted (stopped). A high-speed avenue of approach generally must lead to a critical or heavily populated area: if a road or flat area simply leads to a generally unoccupied corner of a brick building, it may not be considered a high-speed avenue of approach.

1. What is the minimum standoff distance between the parish and a vehicle?

Standoff distances refer to the space between the building exterior to the nearest point that an explosive device can approach from any side. The recommended minimum distance is 70 feet. Effective barriers may be used to enforce the standoff distance.

BUILDING ENVELOPE

1. Does the construction of the exterior doors deter or delay an attack?

To deter is to discourage an action or prevent an occurrence. To delay is to slow down an intruder enough to force them to give up or to provide enough time for an effective response.

1. Does the construction of the interior doors deter or delay an attack?
2. Does construction of exterior windows deter or delay an attack?
3. Are utilities such as gas, electric, and communication protected or secured against tampering?

An attacker may attempt to damage utility assets to create diversions or complicate response efforts.

1. Do hallways, stairwells, and common areas have hidden areas that are hard to observe?
2. Is the exterior of the building free of objects that could be used for hiding contraband or for climbing to other floors or the roof?
3. Are the fire alarm locations clearing marked?

In an emergency, a visitor to your building should be able to easily locate the fire alarm or fire extinguisher. Make sure adequate signage indicates the location of each from multiple directions.

**CLOSED CIRCUIT CAMERAS**

Skip this section if your parish does not have a camera system

1. Is the system monitored?

The monitors should be placed in a location that is easily viewed and accessed. Monitors placed out of direct line of sight are typically not watched.

1. Is the information recorded and reviewed?

Staff should know if the information is recorded and how long that information is stored.

1. Does the system use an effective combination of camera types?

Fixed cameras are mounted in a stationary position and typically focused on one particular area of interest. Fixed cameras generally are less expensive than pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) cameras and require less maintenance since they have fewer moving parts. PTZ cameras typically can be turned and tilted on two axes (i.e., up and down, side to side). PTZ cameras offer more flexibility for viewing and capturing images in real time than fixed cameras. PTZ cameras can be operated manually or in an automatic scan mode. Design considerations must include lighting, since illumination levels affect system requirements. Exterior cameras often require lenses with automatic apertures to compensate for changes in light levels. Interior cameras may require internal software to compensate for backlight (i.e., the contrast between low interior light levels and high exterior daytime light levels).

1. What is the overall condition of the camera system?