



Security tips for religious institutions

Religious institutions have the dilemma of wanting to be open and accessible to people and at the same time needing to protect their buildings and staffs. Consider the following suggestions with your particular needs and priorities in mind.

Exterior security

1. Make sure all exterior doors have good deadbolt locks and heavy-duty strike plates.
2. If doors can be opened from the inside without a key, reinforce or replace glass in or near the door.
3. Secure basement or ground-level windows with bars, grilles or polycarbonate material.
4. Provide good exterior lighting around the building and in all parking areas. Replace burned-out bulbs immediately.
5. Have an effective key control system. Know who has which keys. If you tag keys, use a number, not a location. Keep the master list separate from the keys.



Controlling access

1. There are two major options for controlling access while staff are on the premises:
 - A. Lock all exterior doors and provide some combination of the following:
 - Speaker system to allow staff to communicate with anyone coming to the door;
 - Mirrors, windows and/or cameras which will allow office staff to see who is at the door;
 - A buzzer system which will allow staff to open the exterior door from the office.

OR

- B. Leave one door unlocked near the area where staff normally are. Install a bell, buzzer or other audible signal to let staff know that someone has entered the building.
2. In both cases, limit access within the building. Lock interior doors; install gates to close off hallways not being used; consider locking bathrooms.
 3. Secure valuable items when not in use (religious supplies, office and electronic equipment, etc.).
 4. Consider installing a “hold-up” alarm. These can be activated in the office by pressing a button located near an employee’s feet or legs. The alarm could signal a nearby location (parsonage, adjacent school or other occupied building) where someone hearing the alarm could call the police. (If there is an existing central station alarm, the hold-up alarm can be tied directly into the monitoring station.)



Security procedures for staff

1. If it appears the building has been broken into, **do not enter**. Go to another location and **call 911**.
2. If you are inside and discover signs of burglary or other suspicious action, **leave immediately** and **call 911** from another location.
3. Keep **911** and other emergency numbers posted at each telephone in the building.
4. On phones outside the offices, consider blocking long distance and other services that could be billed to you.
5. If you have a cordless or cellular phone, carry it with you when you are away from the office.
6. Don't hesitate to **call 911** if there is a suspicious person present, especially if you are alone in the building.
7. Keep hallways well-lit when people are in the building.
8. Be wary of strangers who claim to be visiting pastors, students of architecture, musicians or anyone who wants to tour your building. Ask for identification before allowing access.
9. Make sure there is no one in the building before closing up for the day. Check bathrooms, unlocked rooms and other possible hiding spots. **If possible, don't do this alone.**



Money handling tips

Many religious institutions are robbed on days when services are held, because thieves expect that there will be a large amount of money present. To minimize your risk of loss, consider the following:

1. Limit access to money between the time it is collected and counted.
2. Have one person responsible for the money at each service.
3. Have money counted by at least two people in a secure location which is not visible to others.
4. After counting, secure the money in one of these ways:
 - Have someone take it directly to the after-hours depository at the bank. Try to do this at slightly different times each week.
 - Place it in a drop box safe at the church for later deposit.
 - As a last resort, have someone take it home and secure it there for deposit the next day.



In all cases, it is wise not to have a predictable pattern of when money is transported.

Contact your crime prevention specialist if you want assistance in developing a specific security plan for your building or for additional prevention information. Call 311 (or 612-673-3000), or see www.minneapolismn.gov/police/crimeprevention/police_outreach_safe-teams to locate your neighborhood crime prevention specialist.

For further crime prevention resources, please visit www.minneapolismn.gov/police/crimeprevention.



English: Attention. If you want help translating this information, call 612-673-3737

Spanish: Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700

Somali: Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500

Hmong: Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800

Sign Language: TTY 612-673-2626

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact the Minneapolis Police Department at 612-673-2912.