



Mountain View UMC Safety Operations Plan Protocols and Procedures

v. 7 October 2020

Introduction

Nehemiah 4:9

But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

The Safety Committee was established in January 2019 by the Church Council. The Safety Committee has prepared a Safety Operations Plan that covers fire, medical, weather emergencies and active threats.

Protecting our church from potential criminal activities requires a balanced approach that integrates crime prevention strategies and security technologies with the overall mission of the church. It is critically important to recognize that risk mitigation must complement the activities of our church and not interfere with its outreach and service ministry.

The more involved a church is in community outreach, the more potential risks that exist. For example, pastors and church support groups who provide a divorce recovery workshop are offering a helping hand to those that are involved in the traumatic experiences of divorce. From a risk perspective, a divorce recovery workshop has the potential for domestic-violence incidents.

Based on recommendations/risk assessments by various law enforcement officers and several church security leads at other churches, our Safety Team's primary security strategy is to identify and delay threats outside the church before they reach the church entrances, buying time for law enforcement to arrive and intervene.

Security cameras have been installed outside and inside the church. The security camera monitoring and the outside patrols are visible deterrents. Safety team members will identify facility safety issues, investigate suspicious activities and decide the best response to ensure congregation safety.

Target hardening is a means to reduce the opportunity of criminal activities or attack by increasing the effort that criminals must exert to accomplish their goals. The more effort that a criminal has to make, the greater the risk and the greater the chance that the criminal will be stopped and/or apprehended. Criminals look for easy targets that minimize the likelihood of being detected or caught.

Training is being provided by the Teller County Sheriff's Department, Ute Pass Ambulance Regional District and other appropriate resources.

As the name implies, the Safety Team will also be alert to any safety hazards in and around the church building (e.g. slip & fall hazards, those needing medical assistance, fire hazards, etc.).

A Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) has been formed and trained to respond to any medical emergencies during Sunday services. A 'reserved' seat has been labeled for easy identification of the MERTeam member during church services.

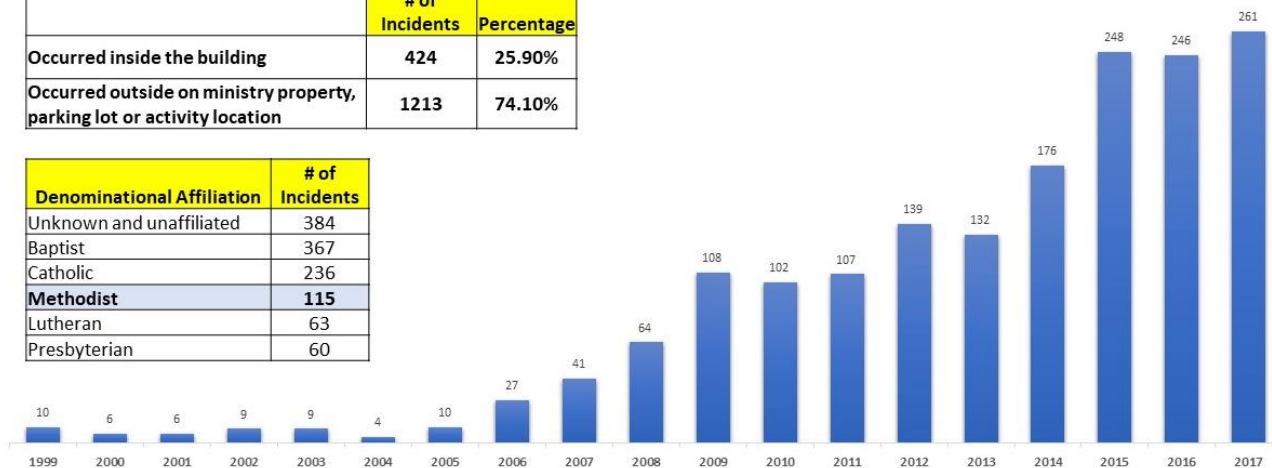
Its unfortunate and disturbing that churches and other houses of worship have to prepare for various emergencies. Even small town churches have been attacked, vandalized, burned, etc. We hope and pray that all of our training and preparations are never needed, but we are negligent if we do not prepare.

The following graph indicates that violent incidents at houses of worship are dramatically increasing. The United Methodist Churches have third highest number of incidences behind the Catholic and Baptist churches.

Violent Church Incidents

	# of Incidents	Percentage
Occurred inside the building	424	25.90%
Occurred outside on ministry property, parking lot or activity location	1213	74.10%

Denominational Affiliation	# of Incidents
Unknown and unaffiliated	384
Baptist	367
Catholic	236
Methodist	115
Lutheran	63
Presbyterian	60



Deadly Force Incidents (DFI's) at Faith-Based Organizations in the U. S. (includes abductions [& attempts], attacks, suspicious deaths, suicides & deadly force intervention / protection) from 1/1/1999 through 12/31/2017 – Carl Chinn
<http://www.carlchinn.com/deadly-force-statistics.html>

This document will be periodically updated to reflect current and future responsibilities and best practice procedures.

DISCLAIMER

The Mountain View UMC Safety Team is staffed by volunteer members of the Church and is our best attempt at providing some level of safety to our guests, congregation and staff. Safety is neither guaranteed nor assured.

Because of the limited number of current Safety Team volunteers at this time, they will only be on duty during Sunday services. The Safety Team availability at other large church special events will have to be requested with a minimum of two months advanced notice to the Safety Committee.



Safety Team Responsibilities

Responsibilities

- * Arrive Sunday morning 30 minutes before services.
- * Identify who the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) member(s) that are present in the church that day.
- * Set up **channel 14** two way radios in rooms to be occupied by Sunday School, Youth and Nursery.
- * Confirm and take up assigned safety positions based on number of Safety Team members available
- * Safety Team members will be alert for slip & fall hazards, fire hazards, those needing medical assistance, parking lot traffic control, etc.
- * For Sunday services Safety Team will lock all entrances 10 minutes after service starts. Before leaving the church after Sunday services, the Safety Team will verify that all entrance doors are locked even if there are meetings or people still remaining in the church. The Safety Team was directed to ensure all entrance doors are locked before leaving the church.
- * During services Safety Team monitors main Narthex entrance doors for any late arrivals and allow them to enter.
- * The East door will be locked. A sign on the East door will direct late comers to use the Narthex entrances. (We do not have enough Safety Team members to monitor the East door and monitor the security cameras.)
- * A Safety Team member will patrol all parking lots for traffic safety and suspicious activities.
- * A Safety Team member or volunteer will monitor security cameras, during services, providing important overwatch for the Safety Team.

Requirements for Safety Team Members

- * Must complete a background check. Background check results will be reviewed by the Safety Team Committee Chairman, Safety Team Lead and Pastor.
- * Must attend all required training sessions and periodic drills as established by the Safety Committee to include Safe Sanctuary training.
- * Must view all online prerequisite training courses/presentations/videos as identified by the Safety Committee.
- * Must agree to all Safety Operations Plan protocols and required training.
- * Must commit to a Safety Team schedule at least 50% of the Sunday services during a calendar year. This will be adjusted as more volunteers join the Safety Team or volunteers for security camera monitoring

Security Camera Monitor Job Description

Security camera monitor will sit in the Admin Office, watching the security cameras before, during and shortly after Sunday church services. This is their only commitment to support the Safety Team. We would appreciate their assistance at least once per month.

They are able to hear the church service in the admin office using the online church service link on the admin office computer.

It is very important that the security camera monitor is attentive at all times while monitoring the cameras and communicating with the Safety Team via the two-way radio. This is a very important support role for the Safety Team. The security camera monitoring helps keep the Safety Team members safe....!

The security camera monitor person will communicate via two-way radio with the Safety Team patrolling the parking lots and the Narthex team members about any activities viewed on the security camera monitor (e.g. suspicious persons or cars in the parking lots, watching for anyone that may fall or needing assistance in the parking lot or driveways, cars arriving or leaving to keep the parking lot patrol team member alerted and safe, cars not properly parked that are blocking traffic, occasionally making notes in the Safety Team Journal relayed by the Safety Team members via the two-way radio, etc.).

The security camera monitor person may be directed by a Safety Team member via two-way radio to call 911. The security camera monitor person will call 911 from the admin office phone and pass on information to the 911 dispatcher from the Safety Team member and relay information from the 911 dispatcher to the Safety Team via the two-way radio (e.g. fire emergency, medical emergency, weather emergency, suspicious person/vehicle/package, disruptive person in the church or active threat).

The ability to stay calm and maintain communication with the 911 dispatcher and Safety Team members is very important.

Requirements for Security Camera Monitor Team Members

All Safety Team members to include the security camera monitor team members must have a background check and renewal every 12 months.

As soon as background checks are verified, a training session will be scheduled to show how the security cameras work and expectations for the security camera monitor.

The security camera monitor will not be required to do any security patrols or Narthex duty. Only the security camera monitoring.

- * Must attend all required training sessions and periodic drills as established by the Safety Committee.
- * Must view all online prerequisite training courses/presentations/videos as identified by the Safety Committee.
- * Must agree to all Safety Operations Plan protocols and procedures.

Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT)

In any medical emergency, any Safety Team member can call for the **Medical Emergency Response Team** (MERT) to provide immediate first aid, CPR, or AED response. At the start of the Safety Team shift, each Safety Team member will verify which MERT members are available that day.

The current MERT lead is Rusty Merrill. Anyone interested in volunteering for the MERTeam should contact Rusty. Current and retired nurses, EMTs, doctors, etc. are courage to join MERT.

When an emergency medical incident occurs, one of the Safety Team members will contact the MERT member sitting in the MERT ‘reserved seat’ in the Sanctuary. If no MERT members are available, they will call 911.

See Medical Emergency Protocols and Procedures document on the Safety Committee web page.

Training & Drills

Periodic training and drills that will include the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) so that all Safety Team members know who they are and how to find them in an emergency during Sunday services and so that they learn what they need to do during and after an incident.

Training is provided by the Teller County Sheriff’s Department for the Safety Team, UPRAD and other resources for MERTeam.

A special Safety Committee web page has been created to post and update the Safety Operations Plan (SOP) which will include the following:

- * Safety Team Protocols and Procedures
- * Backpack/Package Carry-in Protocol and Procedures
- * Medical Emergency Protocols and Procedures
- * Fire Emergency Procedures
- * Bomb Threat Procedures
- * Weather Emergencies

The web page has links to all online training videos and various Homeland Security, FEMA and FBI documents for ‘Faith Based Organizations’.

This document will be periodically updated to reflect current and future responsibilities and best practice procedures.