

When Your Place of Worship is in Session

- Be visible.
- Greet your members.
- Have staff monitor general gathering areas as members enter your place of worship.
- Have staff monitor all points of entry.
- Look for suspicious individuals or activity.
- Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency immediately.



Common Violence Myths

- That won't happen here.
- We can handle it.
- The matter was too minor to report.
- The matter was a private one.
- There is no way to tell when it will happen.
- It is not worth the effort.
- That type of person will not come here.
- We do not have that type of person here.

Further Steps

Together we can help combat violence or the threat of violence and keep our community safe.

If you would like a deputy to conduct a security survey for your place of worship, or if you would like us to review your existing crisis plan and make recommendations, please contact the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention team or your local law enforcement agency.



As law enforcement professionals, we pledge to serve the Jefferson County community, build trust and confidence, and respond to community needs with:

Integrity

We interact with each other and the community we serve with honesty, dignity, and respect.

Innovation

We respond to the community's needs with vision and initiative, relying on both traditional and non-traditional problem-solving methods.

Partnership

We actively promote a spirit of teamwork and cooperation through open communication and the free exchange of ideas.

Service

We continuously develop our skills and talents to provide top quality, responsive, effective law enforcement services.

Accountability

We ensure judicious management of human, financial, and physical resources.

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office

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Golden, CO 80401

Office Hours: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri.

Phone: 303.277.0211

Emergency: Dial 911

www.jeffcosheriff.com

P A T R O L

Safety in Your Place of Worship



Preventing violence at your religious facility



Safety & Security

There was a time when places of worship were not considered potential targets for violence. Tragically, we now know that places of worship -- like schools and other public buildings -- are susceptible to violence as well. No matter what religion it represents, your place of worship could become a target. It is important to take preventive steps to lessen the chance for violence, and to ensure better response to violence if it happens.

Violence at Religious Centers



There are a variety of reasons for violence at places of worship. Every religion espouses beliefs that may be controversial to someone. This can result in

threats, vandalism or violence. Family violence may spill over into a place of worship if someone in the family is a member. Or, someone who is unstable may seek help at a place of worship and become upset with the response there. There are no simple solutions or simple formulas in predicting who will commit acts of violence.

Violent behavior often develops progressively. Threats represent a stage in the evolution of violence. There are often observable signs that occur along the way and we must do our best to recognize them.

It is essential to react to threats -- either written, spoken or symbolic -- by reporting them. It then becomes vital to assess whether the person who made the threat has the intent, means and the motivation to carry it out.

Places of worship cannot ignore any threats of violence. Direct, hidden, plausible or not, every threat must be taken seriously and reported to your local law enforcement agency immediately.

“That Won’t Happen Here”

Unfortunately, the reality is that violence can happen anywhere. Here are some examples of violence at religious centers in recent years.

- In 2008, a man shot his wife and two other people as they worshipped at St. Thomas Syrian Orthodox Knanaya Church in Clifton, New Jersey. The wife had apparently been the victim of domestic violence and had left her husband.



- In 2007, a man opened fire at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville during a children’s play, killing two. He cited the church’s views in a note.

- In 2007, the Youth With a Mission (YWAM) center in Arvada and the New Life Church in Colorado Springs were targeted by one shooter, who killed four people in his rampage before killing himself. The shooter was a former member of the YWAM center.

- In 2006, three college students were arrested for setting fires at nine churches in Alabama. They had no religious vendetta and described the arsons as “a joke that got out of hand.”

What You Can Do To Prepare

- Create a comprehensive all hazards crisis plan.
- Disseminate your plan for use by personnel in emergency situations.
- Train staff members and volunteers in your crisis plan.
- Share your plan with your congregation
- Ensure that a process is in place for controlling access to your place of worship.
- Make sure you have adequate lighting inside and outside of your place of worship.
- Review landscaping. Ensure that your building is not obscured by overgrowth of bushes or shrubs that can hide contraband or persons.
- Check and inspect emergency building systems, fire alarms, emergency exits and exit lights.
- Report all suspicious individuals, phone calls, or activity to your local law enforcement agency immediately.

Remember, the worst time to plan on how to react to a critical situation is during the event. Have a pre-conceived plan as to how you will react during a crisis.

Include Your Members in Your Plan

Members of all ages can help protect themselves and others if they understand how to respond to various situations. Let members know how they can help and what is expected of them.

Children: Teach small children to tell an adult immediately about people or situations that are strange or scary.

Adults and Teens: Adults and teens should be briefed on the overall security plan of the facility and the role of greeters, ushers, or other representatives. Share with them tips on how to react to fire, medical emergencies, suspicious devices and violence. Urge them to be observant inside and outside the building and report anything suspicious to a church leader, or call 911 in an emergency.

For More Information

Contact the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office
Crime Prevention Unit:

303-271-5363 (North Jeffco)

303-670-8125 (Mountains)

720-377-2002 (South Jeffco)