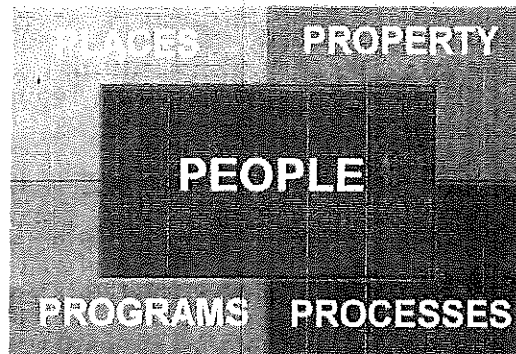


## Security and Safety for Places of Worship:

Tina Lewis Rowe

[www.tinalewisrowe.com](http://www.tinalewisrowe.com)



**Inside or outside, at any time, involving anyone or anything associated with the place of worship:**

- Disruption/Disturbance.
- Violent attack: Weapons, fists, explosives.
- Assault against an individual or group.
- Sexual crimes, misconduct and impropriety.
- Crimes against people or property.
- Vehicle and travel accidents.
- Loss or misuse of property.
- Accidents and injuries on or off-site.
- Deadly risk factors: Electricity, water, flame.
- Liability risks, concerns, allegations.
- Financial crimes or errors.

- Harm to pastors, staff, volunteers, members or visitors--all ages, all situations, all the time.
- Harm to high risk individuals and groups: Children, youth, church school, seniors, special programs, outreach, etc.
- Large events: Damage, liability, problems.
- Building and campus issues: Fire, damage, destruction, accidental or purposeful.
- Medical, weather and mechanical emergencies.
- Food handling errors and violations.
- Childcare injuries, errors, violations.
- Anything that harms the well-being and effectiveness of the place of worship.

• **Inspection:** A year-round schedule of inspections and assessments to determine the security and safety status of every aspect of the **5P's**.

• **Protection:** Anything that safeguards the Big Picture: Policies, procedures, plans, methods, rules, requirements, restrictions, building and space features, alarms, hardware, safety equipment, checklists, observation by staff or volunteers, etc.

• **Prevention:** Consistent efforts to keep harmful events of all kinds from happening by applying the elements of *Inspection, Protection and Detection*.

• **Detection:** Methods for becoming aware of a threat to security or safety in time to prevent harm to people or property or to respond to an incident more effectively. May involve hardware, alarms and monitoring equipment, as well as inspections, observations and quick assessments by aware and alert individuals.

• **Action:** Readiness for effective responses by individuals or teams, when the security, safety or well-being of any of the **5P's** are threatened or if a hazard or risk is identified.

### A Comprehensive Program of Security and Safety for the 5 P's:

1. A Safety and Security Coordinating Group (or individual)
    - Security Response
    - Emergency Medical Response
    - Security Liaisons
- } Church Life Group, Team \_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Guild, Gatekeepers, etc.  
(Or no special name at all.)
2. Year-round, regularly scheduled inspections and assessments and follow-up.
  3. Procedures and plans and training about them.
  4. A Manual or Computer Folder: Organized material, for easy reference and review. Should includes plans and procedures, checklists, instructions, information and other written material. Can just be documents and lists, kept together.
  5. Ongoing education and whole-congregation involvement in security and safety.

### Program Components

These components are easily achievable by places of worship of any size or in any setting. They can ensure a comprehensive and effective program of security and safety stewardship.

**1. Safety and Security Committee:** An advisory group that can also provide oversight for purchases, teams and sub-groups. Rotate members (including young adults and senior adults). Sub-groups for a variety of functions and interests: Pre-School, Special Events, Asset Inventory, etc. (This committee can help keep a Big Picture view and reflect the wishes of church leadership.)

**Security Response:** Two or more capable adults who are given specific responsibility for alertness and readiness to respond to emergency or threatening situations. In a 911 event, the team responds until official responders are on-scene. Decisions about armed/unarmed should reflect the law and capabilities of members.

•In churches with law enforcement or military members, or a full-time or part-time paid security team, this group may have a greater presence and may possess public safety authority. It will still benefit from working with the Safety and Security Committee to ensure consistency regarding policies, attire, equipment, schedules, events, etc.

•SRT's should have regular, documented on-site and off-site training, according to their status as armed or unarmed. All teams should practice slow and real-time scenarios.

•**Expand the role of Security Response to include:** Briefings before travel, camp, special events and weather alert seasons; training for high-risk and high liability staff

and volunteer assignments and task; school and pre-school training, etc.

**Emergency Medical Response:** One or more adults can assist with minor injuries and illnesses and also provide assistance until 911 responders arrive. (Operate AEDs, administer CPR, if certified, clear the area, provide support and comfort.)

•**Expand the role of Emergency Medical Response to include:** Training for high-liability activities, such as food handling; briefings to staff about special health, medical or safety concerns; speaking to children's classes about playground safety, hygiene, classroom safety, etc.; wellness programs; blood drives; family and individual aid programs, establishing connections with local service agencies, etc.

**Safety Liaison:** This is a short-term but vital role, for occasional or regular activities when the Security Response Team or individuals are not present or not able to monitor security and safety. (Social functions, age-based groups, study groups (on-site or off-site), music practice, volunteers engaged in activities in the building after hours, etc.)

The person who gets the key to a room or who schedules the event—or one more designees—will be responsible for:

- Opening the building for the event, then locking unmonitored doors during the event.
- Being alert for security and safety issues with the building, activity or people involved.
- Ensuring satisfactory status of restrooms, equipment and appliances before lock-up.
- Being ready to call for assistance, according to need. (911, maintenance, staff, others.)
- Using a simple checklist to ensure security and safety procedures are followed.

The Liaison role is not excessive, but it can prevent and protect against many harmful situations that might develop if no one is specifically responsible for attention to security and safety matters. Remember the adage: *If everyone owns the task, no one owns the task.*

**2. Year-Round, Regularly Scheduled Inspections and Follow-Up:** This should be an ongoing, scheduled program for every aspect of the **5P's**, during varying hours and days of the week, throughout the year. *What is inspected won't be neglected.*

- A walk-through on a week-day, every few months, is not sufficient to evaluate the security and safety of the Big Picture
- Use the program as a way to engage many people, including those who may not attend regularly, those who are not usually involved in activities or volunteerism, and older-adolescent to senior-aged. Also consider members with expertise, such as electricians, plumbers, locksmiths, IT, childcare, etc.
- For each of the **5P's**, think, "What could go wrong?" Then, "What elements are in place to protect, prevent and detect harm and ensure action if something harmful happens?"

Don't assume, verify through observation, interviews and spot-checks.

### **3. Written policies, plans and procedures:**

*A policy is a guiding principle and can also be a rule or requirement.*

*A procedure details how to do something the right way.*

*A plan is a written description of the action to be taken in specific circumstances.*

*Church Security and Safety Plan* usually describes the group of policies, procedures, instructions, operating manuals, lists, rules, requirements or other information.

There is no required format for a plan or procedure. Often some explanatory text and a checklist or set of instructions is all that is needed. Plans and procedures will change over time, so they should be reviewed as part of Inspections. They should be trained about and followed consistently.

**4. A Security and Safety Manual, Binder or Folder:** This documentation of the overall program will always be a work-in-progress. Several people should have all of the written material; many people should have the portions that apply to their program, process or group; everyone should be aware of procedures for their classroom or activity and should be given written and verbal information needed by the whole congregation.

**5. Ongoing Education and Whole-Congregation Involvement:** Individuals of all ages can participate in age-appropriate ways—and will find it inspiring and enjoyable. It is a great way to develop leadership in older teens and to use the insights of senior age members.

Include crime prevention tips, short classroom briefings, website information, awards and recognition, bulletin board notices and opportunities to participate in inspections.

### **Disruption, Disturbance, Violence**

**All the time:** Apply crime prevention techniques and reasonable security and safety practices, to every aspect of the **5P's** every day.

- Always keep doors and windows locked if they are unmonitored. Provide a buzzer or post a sign giving a phone number for contact. For evening events, unlock and lock the entrance door as individuals and groups arrive and depart.
- Limit access to unmonitored parts of the building. Have staff come to the door to meet visitors, rather than sending them to offices unescorted.
- Have a procedure for money and assistance requests that do not involve giving cash.
- Learn options for charges of Criminal Trespass; getting restraining orders; etc.

**Main Services:**

- Have a Security Response Team ready to assist and respond. Engage in friendly and observant conversation with strangers (or members) who create concerns because of their behavior or for other reasons. (Welcoming *and* wise.)
- Greeters and ushers often observe more closely than others. They should be part of training and work in partnership with the SRT.
- Assign posts for SRT members: Observation of parking lots and sidewalks leading to the entrance; the lobby before, during and after services; auditorium/ sanctuary—several locations; classrooms and offices; nursery and childcare.
- When possible, have barrier furniture or walls near the door and in the auditorium.
- Develop and practice lock-out procedures that are easy to implement.
- Only have main doors unlocked during services—if they are monitored.
- Develop a network of contacts who will call if there is a problem elsewhere.
- Guideline:** If someone acts in a way that creates enough concern that the Security Response Team is on alert, call 911. The responders can cancel if no threat develops, but even then, it may be helpful for them to know of the situation or ID the person.

### **Disruption or Disturbance, No Weapon:**

#### **Shield and Guard**

Put a barrier between the threat and the protected person or group.

Congregation  
Platform Area  
and  
Pastor



**Shield and Guard:** While 911 is being called, focus on creating a barrier. If the threat level changes suddenly, this approach makes a successful attack on the pastor or congregants less likely.

If the disruptive person can be distracted through conversation, it is an option—but stay at a safe distance. Can switch to Direct and Divert at any time.

**Direct and Divert:** While 911 is being called, guide the disruptive person toward the main doors. Sometimes conversing while walking, keeps the forward motion going. Do not try to stop the person from leaving.

#### **Divert and Direct**

- \*Distract and delay.
- \*Guide the disturbance away and outside.
- \*Leave a way out, in the direction most safe for others.

Congregation  
Platform Area  
and  
Pastor



## Violent Assailant or Disturbance

"The Assailant's Advantage" (Rowe, 2018): He knows what he will do and how he will do it; he has his weapon ready; he picks his time; he is the only one who is not startled and confused when he attacks; he is not deterred by the results; he has no one to protect.

**Consistent and continuous security and safety activities can eliminate or reduce the factors that give an assailant an advantage. We can take away:**

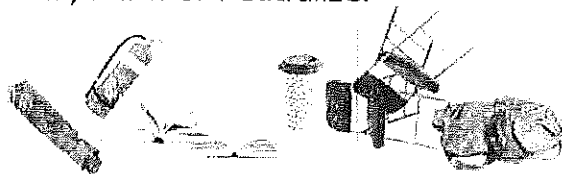
- His ability to catch everyone off-guard.
- His ability to arrive, enter and blend in without being monitored.
- His access to vulnerable or targeted areas or people.
- His ability to find unsecured or unmonitored exterior or interior entry points.
- His ability to have time on-site to prepare for an attack.
- His ability to hide inside or outside and wait.
- His ability to act without being detected.
- His ability to be anonymous or unidentifiable.
- His ability to know the location and capabilities of the security team.
- His ability to sustain an attack.

Any item can be a weapon or a distraction. Identify them *before* they are needed.

### **If avoiding or hiding isn't a good option or hasn't been successful:**

Throw chairs, books, purses or other items.  
Use fire extinguishers, flags, food or anything else. Anything!

**The goal:** Distract, startle, slow down the attack, harm or neutralize.



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## **Confront, Contain and Control**

Physical force to overpower;  
use of actual or improvised weapons.

Congregation,  
Platform Area  
and  
Pastor



**If no other options are available, a pile-on approach may be the only possible response.**

- Security Response Team members lead the way in responding, while leaders shout a direction or help others.
- Every adult should have plans of action for themselves and their families, for many emergencies. (Even if the plan cannot be carried out, it can provide a way to focus.)
- Decisions about carrying and using

weapons should be within the law and based on the totality of the situation.

### **Additional Resources**

- [www.tinalewisrowe.com](http://www.tinalewisrowe.com): The first post has a link to some other items.
- [www.churchlawandtax.com](http://www.churchlawandtax.com). (An excellent resource with several booklets for low prices.)
- *The Church Safety and Security Guidebook*: Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company.
- [www.carlchinn.com](http://www.carlchinn.com): A great site for statistics, as well as other information. Carl Chinn also wrote, *Evil Invades Sanctuary*, an excellent personal perspective.
- [www.kingswoodsc.com](http://www.kingswoodsc.com): Kingswood Security Consulting. Simon Osamoh and his team offer a wide range of information, training and assistance.
- Nationally and locally advertised training for church security teams: These are often focused on armed responses to active shooters. Make sure you apply the information within local laws and the guidelines of your church's leadership.
- Public safety resources (Security assessments offered by public safety agencies are usually weekday walk-through observations and are offered as a foundation for your church's more detailed inspections of the **5P's** throughout the year.)

**Security items to consider:** Motion-activated cameras, monitored from a tablet or phone; Buddy Bar Door Jammer (very heavy-duty); [www.lockdownshades.com](http://www.lockdownshades.com); non-lethal chemical sprays for staff; other ideas developed in discussions.

### **You and Your Place of Worship Can Do It!**

If you have a well-established security and safety program already, it can be strengthened and improved. If you do not have a program, it can be developed and implemented more easily than you might think. Focus on the Big Picture and engage as many people as possible!

## NOTES BY PIERCE – FEB 2018

Alan,

The security training course was really instructions for a program director who can devote 60 hours a week to facilitate ongoing training and facility modifications to ensure the safety of our parishioners from all aspects -- not just security but safety, first aid, liability, embezzlement, vandalism, theft, on and on.... This program director must be a people person of the highest order. This is not me. Below are is a short list of my takeaways, my notes from the meeting, and attached is a copy of the 8-page handout. Oddly, the security guy had half the presentation and gave out no handout.

My Takeaways: Actions we should take:

- 1) Train greeters and ushers to watch for threats
- 2) Have a duress gesture that is known by any and all who serve.
- 3) Install the camera system (It looks to cost \$3400, approximately.)
- 4) Get some 1st aid, CPR, and AED (defibrillator). Get an AED if not have.
- 5) Check out smoke detectors and other fire prevention methods.
- 6) Others should review my notes and the attached document to see if there are other appropriate actions to be taken.

Church security:

Need 1st aid training.

Train greeters& ushers to spot threats.

Have a duress sign gesture

Have a need usher sign gesture

Hours of examples of people doing unsafe activities.

#1 church destruction is fire. Need people to look for fire prevention. Rule: No real flames

25% fire = arson

Develop security team

Inspect and assess big picture

Cleaner churches are maintained better.

Need written policies, procedures, & plans. To cover: high risk activities, high liability situations. Things done often. Things done by different people. Check lists for special services & events. Number of adults with children,

Safety & Security:

Be responsible

Be aware & alert

Follow & enforce rules

Be ready to call 911.

Active Killer Response:

Principle based, no cookbook solution. RUN,HIDE, FIGHT

If escape path run.2

If not , block door, lights offs



Active shooter definition: more than 3 harmed per site.

11.4/year: 2001-2017.

6.? The 1st 6 Year's

16.? Last 6 years

No identifiable profile of killers.

Of 63 attacks: 44 less than 5 min; 23 less than 2 min.

General rules:

DONT PANIC

Don't negotiate unless no option

Don't pull fire alarm

Your never helpless do something.

Learn first aid

Call 911

Be prepared with plan

Look for suspicious people& stuff

Educate train.

Use other resources

Know your policies.

Have people trained

Run drills

Most frequently stolen:

Sound systems

Audio visual

Computers

Art objects

Cash

Copper fittings

Trailers

Problems:

Bounce house

Eating Spicy food

Fall off trailer

Security and Safety for Churches - 2/24/2018  
by Douglas County Sheriff's Dept. & Black Police Officers Association  
Lt. Shan Millikan was an excellent presenter.

Consider 5 P's: property, places, programs, processes and people. Even members who smile and seem wonderful might steal from the church or sexually assault youngsters, etc. **Greeters** are first to see people, so should watch for any strange behaviors. They should be cognizant of indicators of concealed weapons: backpacks, bulges in clothing, overcoats & hoodies, esp. in warm weather.

Whole-church focus can help, even with little money or resources:

1. Have a year-round schedule of **INSPECTIONS** & assessments for each of the P's. Take pictures of exits, obstacles, hiding places. Include members with training in plumbing, electrical, locksmiths, IT, childcare, etc. Occasionally turn off all lights and try to get to the exits in the dark. Don't stop doing this, as complacency kills.

2. **PROTECTION** of the big pictures: via alarms, policies, procedures, plans, methods, rules, requirements, restrictions. Develop a **MANUAL** for easy reference & review: checklists, information, instructions, plans, procedures. Several church members should have the manual & review it.

The whole congregation should be trained occasionally & be told where the manual is kept. Have drills.

3. **DETECTION** of threats via alarms, hardware, monitoring equipment. Other?

4. **ACTION:** Readiness for effective response by individuals (every adult should have a plan, but may have to adapt to the situation) & by a **MEDICAL & SECURITY RESPONSE TEAM**, which should include seniors & young adults. This group or other relevant adults should brief other adults and kids before they go on trips or social events away from the church, especially if weather is threatening. Remind kids to observe safety warnings near dangerous places (like waterfalls) and wild animals.

It would be good to know which church members have medical training, and military or police experience. [Keep a list with cell phone numbers in the manual.]

Have **1st aid supplies**, including a bleeding control kit: (tourniquet, trauma bandage, chest seals), and an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for heart.

In every group that uses the church, there should be a designated liaison who:

1. Opens the building, then locks doors **during** the event.
2. Check restrooms and equipment before locking up.

**FIRES** destroy more churches than any other cause (25% arson, 30% mechanical or wiring failures). Candles should NEVER be left burning unattended!

If someone creates a **disruption or disturbance** (no weapons): call 911, create a barrier between him & congregation; distract person with conversation; try to escort him to door.

In case of a **violent assailant**: 1) RUN away as far as possible. A moving target is harder to hit. Even if you are shot, you have an 80% chance of surviving!

2) HIDE behind or under anything that covers you completely, & be still.

If possible TAKE COVER: anything that will stop a bullet: solid concrete, strong steel, full file cabinet, thick books, dense layered items (not a car door).

3) or FIGHT if you have no other options.

If you hear a shot, DON'T assume that it is fireworks or a car backfire, etc.

1) Run away if possible.

2) Lock & barricade doors (even tying a belt or telephone cord around the automatic closing arm may stop assailant from getting into a room), turn off lights & silence cell phones, call or text 911 and give as much relevant information as possible: address, number of assailants & types of weapons, number of casualties.

DO NOT: stand in an open space, pull fire alarm, nor negotiate unless there is no option.

3) Any item can be a weapon or distraction, so identify them before needed. Throw chairs, books, fire extinguisher, flag, food, etc. to distract, startle, slow down, harm or even kill.

Remember that you are not helpless. DO SOMETHING!

#### RESOURCES for FURTHER INFORMATION

Free materials at [www.tinalewisrowe.com](http://www.tinalewisrowe.com) - Tina was one of the presenters.

[www.ChurchLawandTax.com](http://www.ChurchLawandTax.com) (several booklets for low prices)

[The Church Safety and Security Guidebook](#) - Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company

[www.CarlChinn.com](http://www.CarlChinn.com) - Chinn wrote [Evil Invades Sanctuary](#).

[www.KingswoodSC.com](http://www.KingswoodSC.com) - Kingswood Security Consulting offers a wide range of information, training & assistance.