

Catastrophic acts of violence continue to plague our nation. Recent events from coast-to-coast have shown us that violence can occur at anytime and anywhere. There is no time like the present to increase security measures at your organization.

As you consider your options for security and emergency preparedness, you may have some of these common questions:

? WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT A VIOLENT ATTACK?

From simple steps any organization can take to in-depth emergency response planning, your preparations and actions have the potential to save lives. Start by locking all non-essential exterior doors (ensure they have panic hardware on them first), create a culture in your organization where people are encouraged to report suspicious behavior, and work with local law enforcement to complete a vulnerability assessment. Learn more on our Safety Resources and Armed Intruder pages on our website.

? WHAT DOES MY ORGANIZATION NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONCEALED CARRY?

When it comes to concealed carry by members or visitors, it is your choice to either allow or prohibit weapons in your facility. It is imperative, however, that those individuals and your organization comply with local or state laws and that you document your decision within policies, procedures, and/or signage.

It is important to note that there is a distinct difference in responsibilities between those who decide to carry a weapon on their own behalf versus those who are acting on behalf of your organization.

NOTE: As a best practice, anyone carrying a concealed weapon who is not part of a formalized armed security team should not be carrying a weapon on behalf of your organization or while serving your organization. If you choose to allow for concealed carry, members and visitors should be carrying on their own behalf and in the interest of self-defense, thus bearing responsibility for their own actions.

? WHAT DOES MY ORGANIZATION NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ARMED SECURITY?

When you ask or allow individuals to carry a weapon on behalf of your organization or while serving your organization, much of the responsibility and liability for their actions transfers to your organization.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that only highly trained individuals be allowed to carry a weapon as part of a formalized security team.

As noted in this article on [Armed Security](#), we recommend that policyholders only use an armed security team comprised of active or off duty law enforcement or military personnel. A contracted security team may also be a possible solution, especially if the team maintains appropriate licensure, insurance, and training standards. Generally, an armed security team of un-trained volunteers is the least desirable option because they often lack the training and experience to handle a weapon safely in a high-stress situation.

? WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN SECURITY TEAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES?

For any security team, whether or not weapons are involved, it is highly recommended that you establish formalized policies and procedures. Common topics to include within a security policy or manual include: vision statement; mission statement; objectives; core values; security team volunteer job description/responsibilities; training topics and frequency; medical response responsibilities; and standard operating procedures (chain of command, identification, dress and appearance, availability, assignments, incident reporting, staging and command, high risk event strategies, use of force policy, communications and more).

We recommend working with local law enforcement and local legal counsel when developing policies and procedures to ensure best practices and legal standards are followed.

? DOES MY SECURITY TEAM NEED TRAINING?

It is your organization's duty to ensure team members are operating in a safe and responsible manner and within the bounds of your policies and procedures. It is also important to ensure team members have the knowledge and expertise needed to complete the task at hand. For any security team, whether or not weapons are involved, members should receive regular training on policies, procedures, mock scenarios, and more. Check local and state laws for any minimum training requirements. If weapons are involved, members should also receive weapons proficiency training. Your organization should document and retain records for all training received.

? WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

Additional information to help you protect your people and property can be found on Church Mutual's website:

- [Crime Prevention](#)
- [Armed Intruder](#)
- [ALICE](#)
- [Firestorm](#)

Information from [FEMA](#) is also available, including its [Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans](#) and [Webinar](#).