



**CATHOLIC  
MUTUAL GROUP**

# **Parish Safety & Security Guide**





Our world has dramatically changed and nowadays, tragic acts of violence have become all too familiar. Although rare, our churches, schools and religious institutions of every size are vulnerable to violent attacks. That said, it should be our core mission to provide a safe refuge for those who wish to worship. Religious leadership has an obligation to recognize the need for safety and security at our parishes no matter how large or small. Understanding and implementing proper procedures such as awareness and preparedness is critical in your efforts to help minimize the risk of a violent attack or other emergencies.

It is important to provide a solid foundation of information for safety and security. We know each parish is unique and offer the following guidelines and strategies to lessen the potential for an incident and to help make your Mass and other events safer. Keeping in mind that seconds save lives, developing a Safety/Security Ministry will provide a means to recognize your vulnerabilities and potentially reduce harm to parishioners, staff and visitors. If you feel you do not have resources available to you, that is not entirely true. Catholic Mutual's Risk Management programs along with law enforcement, medical, fire and internet resources are readily available to assist you in developing a safety plan. Establishing a safety mindset will truly help foster a safety culture at your parish.

This document is to provide you with guidelines and offer you tools to develop your Safety Team/ Plan based upon your parish's setting and your own environment. Because many parishes may be in a rural setting or in an outlying area of a community, some factors may not apply to your specific situation; however, please consider all of this material when developing your Safety and Security Procedures.

**Should you have any questions or require further assistance with your safety and security needs, please contact your Catholic Mutual Risk Management Representative.**



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# Introduction

In all likelihood, the probability of an active shooter at your parish is statistically remote. You are more likely to experience a cardiac arrest or other medical emergencies. Therefore, it is equally important to create an emergency plan for medical situations as you would for security against an active shooter. Every type of emergency should be considered and planned for to include attacks, disruptions, medical, weather, fire, etc. Plans should include practices and procedures for each of these situations.

Should you experience any type of mass casualty, whether it be from fire, natural disaster or an active shooter, it is likely there will be questions of any alleged negligence from a number of different parties. When it comes to safety, security and risk prevention, the question to ask yourself is: Have you met the standard burden of care to the safety of those on your property? Having a properly executed Safety/Security Team and Plan in place, is likely to answer that question with an affirmative response.

**Have you met the  
standard burden of care  
to the safety of those on  
your property?**

If your location is in a position to hire a consulting firm for a safety/security risk assessment, we recommend first discussing and getting approval by your Arch/Diocesan representative. Catholic Mutual is available to assist in reviewing any service agreement with a properly vetted security firm to ensure they could assist you with establishing procedures tailored to your specific needs. These procedures could serve as a starting point to institute common habits in safety and security, and provide the structure for a comprehensive plan addressing all emergencies which could occur at your parish.





# Where to Start

## Developing your Safety/Security Committee



Your committee should consist of religious leadership, administration and a designated Safety/Security Coordinator. These individuals know best the needs and culture at your parish and should be responsible for regular meetings to address issues and oversee the Safety Team. It will be this committee's duty to establish a crisis management plan for all known emergencies which could occur at your parish.

The designated Safety/Security Coordinator will oversee all Safety/Security Plans developed and any training exercises implemented by the parish committee.

Safety/Security Coordinator would:

- ✓ **Develop and oversee the Safety/Security Plan**
- ✓ **Keep plan active**
- ✓ **Keep the plan updated and effective for your specific location**
- ✓ **Coordinate activities/training**
- ✓ **Schedule regular inspections and risk assessments**

The committee will then need to establish a Safety/Security Team. Since ushers and greeters are often in a position to be the first ones to closely observe people coming onto your property, all of them should be part of your Safety/Security Team and be included in regular and documented training exercises. Having a highly visible Safety/Security Team may actually prevent or reduce the potential for a threat and harm to staff, volunteers and guests.

## Developing your Safety/Security Team

### What are the necessary steps to develop your team?

Start with your best resources - People! Seek out qualified and capable members of your parish and community to establish your Safety Team. The individuals being considered for your team should be personally approached and properly vetted to ensure you have suitable people in place. In addition, these individuals should possess characteristic traits of a calm and measured demeanor to handle any type of emergency and to deescalate potential violence. First responders often possess these traits as they are trained and conditioned daily for emergency situations. During your selection process, consider conducting an interview with them as you would for a job applicant.

Ideally, a Safety Team should be a high functioning team. This team should be supported and empowered by top levels of leadership. It should be activity centered and results driven.

**The individuals being considered for your team should be personally approached and properly vetted to ensure you have suitable people in place.**



## Developing your Safety/Security Team cont.

Your Safety/Security Team should consist of individuals who are given specific responsibility for alertness and readiness to respond to any emergency or threatening situation.

### Safety/Security Team Could Be:

- **Building/Grounds Engineer**
- **Maintenance/Facility Manager**
- **Medical/EMS**
- **Law Enforcement**
- **Ushers/Staff**
- **Fire Service**
- **Mental Health/Counselors**
- **Former/Active Military**

If a candidate for your team appears to be over-eager to serve on your Security Ministry, this warrants further consideration. Caution is the best approach as it may be a situation for leadership to decline a person from serving on the team. That's not to say this person couldn't be utilized in a different capacity though.

A recommended best practice is to inform your congregation that you have a Safety/Security Team and Plan in place. This could offer a level of comfort to the parishioners, staff and guests knowing the parish is concerned for their safety and the well-being of those on the property. You would not need to disclose the details of the team's activities, but only that they are there to serve in an emergency and will assist them when necessary.

**See Appendix A:**  
Safety/Security Team



# Developing your Safety/Security Plan

All religious leaders want to mitigate risk, but some may not know where to begin. Safety and security may seem like a daunting task, but it can be completed in an organized step-by-step manner.

## FIRST STEPS TO TAKE

## Assessment of security needs based on your culture and exposures

## Development of a Safety/Security Ministry

## Safety/Security Team training

## Developing procedures that govern the Safety/Security Team

## Medical response to emergencies

## Response to natural/weather disasters

## Fire prevention and fire evacuation

## Building security/access control & camera monitoring





## Developing your Safety/Security Plan cont.

It is important to keep focus on both safety and security at your entire place of worship. Think beyond the normal operation of the Church. Try to think basic before you think high tech or high costs. Your plan and training does not have to be complex, creating a “combat” ready environment. Rather, it should consist of providing plans/materials and training on safety and security issues, high risk exposures, threats and general emergency situations.

- **Have you identified and labeled storm shelters?**
- **Do you have a medical aid station to take ill/injured people to?**
- **Do you have a first aid/trauma kit that includes tourniquets?**
- **Are fire evacuation and storm shelter routes posted?**
- **Do all egress windows and doors function properly?**
- **Do you have a bomb threat plan?**
- **Do you have and practice lockdown and evacuation procedures?**

**See Appendix B:**  
Safety Team Goals & Objective Data Sheet

## Developing your Safety/Security Plan cont.

A major objective of establishing a Safety Plan is to develop written procedures specific to your parish and/or diocesan policy. These procedures will clearly define safety and security guidelines in accordance with both the Arch/Diocese and Catholic Mutual Group. It is important to establish these procedures to provide a series of steps to be followed in a consistent manner for implementation. This will demonstrate a deliberate measure which was taken to secure your parish property, and protect staff and parishioners.

**BASIC PROCEDURES** serve as a starting point for you to begin common habits in safety and security, providing the structure for a future comprehensive plan and establishing a safety culture.

**COMPREHENSIVE PROCEDURES** are tailored to your specific location based on findings conducted through an onsite risk assessment.

The plan should also include an effective evacuation and lockdown procedure. All Safety/Security Team Members as well as your parishes' personnel should know the emergency evacuation routes for your buildings and the established assembly areas (relocation zones). Ensure there are emergency evacuation maps posted throughout your buildings to assist/direct people during emergencies. An assembly area may be outside the building for emergencies such as fire or inside the building(s) for storms, etc. Keep in mind, the original assembly area may be deemed unsafe for a variety of reasons. Therefore, an alternative location should be readily available. Have an emergency kit to take with you when evacuating to include first aid supplies, two-way radio, flashlight, etc.



## Developing your Safety/Security Training

The best way to develop any type of emergency response training is to ask:

- **What could happen at our parish?**
- **What early detection techniques can be employed?**
- **How do we respond quickly?**
- **What will we do in response?**
- **Who will do what?**
- **What will we do next?**

Utilizing these questions will assist in development of your plan and training. Then, ask yourself:

- **How can we prevent it?**
- **How can we reduce or minimize harm to others?**
- **What will we do when it happens?**

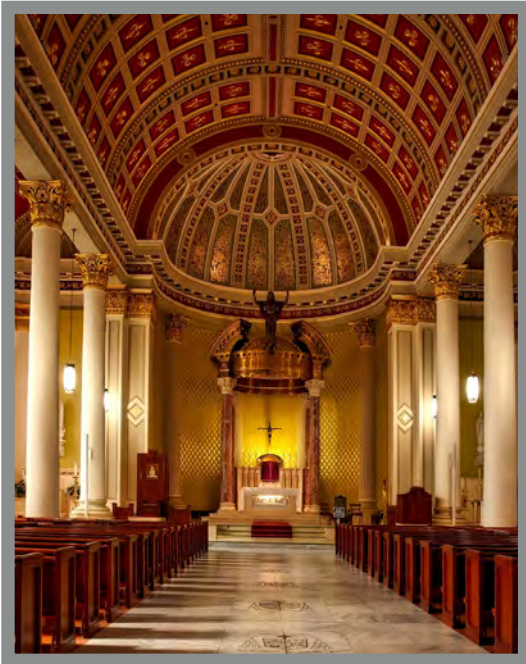
Remember, the goal is not to develop a church SWAT team, but to be ready and able to take action until help arrives.

We believe that safety and security at your parish is best accomplished through **PREVENTION**. You should not focus most of your energy on ways to address just an active shooter. Instead, we believe you should focus your energy on being **PREPARED** to handle all critical incidents and emergencies from occurring in the first place.



## Developing your Safety/Security Training cont.

Your team should be trained to report anything they perceive as a threat or anything that makes them uncomfortable. They should be able to identify any type of threat to take appropriate actions. Team members should be designated to observe certain areas of the church to include:



- **Narthex**
- **Nave**
- **Altar**
- **Interior Rooms**
- **Parking Lot**
- **Doors/Windows**

Take the opportunity to train with other parishes in your community. The more people involved with training, the more ideas that can surface. Keep in mind though, what works for one church, may not be suitable for yours.

Conduct regular and documented meetings and exercises as part of your training. To be effective, safety teams need to have purpose and focus with support from all levels. That means every meeting counts.

- ✓ **Set a convenient meeting time and location for all team members**
- ✓ **Keep the meeting time to about an hour**
- ✓ **Stay on agenda and avoid diversions**
- ✓ **Solicit input from all members**
- ✓ **Take notes and assign action items**
- ✓ **Ask for future agenda items**
- ✓ **Send out meeting minutes afterward**

# Developing Your Safety/Security Training (For an Intruder/Active Shooter)

## Awareness

## Preparation

## Rehearsal

**Awareness** - Involves taking the time necessary to gain a basic understanding of an active shooter or violent/emergency situation. Realizing violent incidents happen to everyday people is the starting point for developing a survival mindset.

**Preparation** - There is no substitute for preparation. It includes looking at your environment through a survival lens, focusing on the “when it happens” and not the “if it happens” mindset. The “when it happens” scenario is critical in developing effective response strategies.

**Rehearsal** - Involves practicing your plan. Practicing may include either mentally and/or physically walking through your “when it happens” plan. Rehearsing your plan will reduce response time and build confidence.

Early detection of a threat or emergency is critical to the outcome of your emergency response plan. Knowing that the majority of active shooters begin their path to the building from the parking lot, this should be a focal point when establishing your plan and training. If you see something that seems out of the ordinary, do not hesitate to investigate it to confirm your suspicions.

Team members should be trained to identify risks/threats.

- **What if an usher identifies a person in the parking lot wearing a long coat and it is unseasonable for such attire?**
- **Are they concealing an assault rifle to use in an attack?**
- **Are they donning a backpack with extra ammunition?**
- **Do you have capable individuals to identify and address a potential threat such as this?**

Always practice situational awareness so you are alert at all times and know your surroundings. Do not become complacent whereas you begin to ignore or are unable to recognize signs of potential danger.

## Developing Your Safety/Security Training (For an Intruder/Active Shooter) cont.

Be mindful of the following:

- **Suspicious persons**
- **Clothing inappropriate for the current season**
- **Unfamiliar vehicles or suspicious in nature**
- **Packages or backpacks found unattended**
- **People wandering about your property for no known reason**
- Team members could be trained to identify behavioral signs indicative of a potential threat. This might consist of someone with a nervous or angered demeanor, sweaty palms or a confused look making them appear out of place.
- **Watch for suspicious behavior**
- **Watch for signs of concealed weapons**
- **Monitor who enters the choir loft**





## Developing Your Safety/Security Training (For an Intruder/Active Shooter) cont.

- **Monitor who enters restrooms/stairwells, etc.**
- **Narthex and exterior of main entrance should be monitored always**
- If you identify someone on or near the grounds that looks out of place, make certain they know you are watching them. If they have ill intent, the mere fact that you have identified them might be enough to make them move on. It is critical to have cell phone/radio procedures in place to alert other members of your team in the event of a situation. (Report all suspicions to law enforcement. Your information might be linked to another police report with the same incident and/or individual.)
- Have regular meetings with team members about what could possibly go wrong during Mass or other events. Discuss local/national issues that have occurred at other houses of worship and consider how this may affect you.
- Practice situational roles to develop techniques and methods of handling threats or disruptions at Mass and events. Practice slow walk-throughs and real-time scenarios for your training. This will provide options for your emergency plan if scenarios are thought out in advance. Consider conducting this training during nighttime hours or turn off lights to simulate a power outage.
- Training should include assistance and protection provided to the elderly or disabled. Team members should have a method in place to assist with evacuation or protection to persons unable to quickly and safely evacuate.
- In the event of an active shooter, you will need to implement your **Run, Hide, and Fight** Plan. Identify locations inside the church/buildings that can be utilized as a hiding place and/or barricade from a threat.
- Training should be recurring with regular practice drills. The amount of training can be based upon the level of involvement of your team members. Play out an emergency scenario and review what went right as well as wrong. Utilize your first responders to assist you in determining if your trained members are proficient with these drills.
- It is vitally important to utilize your first responders in an effort to develop your Safety/Security Plan and Training. Having a plan in place will offer a level of security to your parish and give you the best chance of reducing the potential of harm to others.

# Risk Assessments

Remember, church safety and security is best achieved through prevention. Completing a risk assessment at your parish does not necessarily need to create large amounts of paperwork. It is, however, about identifying the necessary precautions you can take for your church. The level of detail required for this assessment should be proportionate to the risk. For example, larger churches will need their risk assessments to be more comprehensive reflecting the size of the parish property, the number of parishioners, volunteers or visitors you have and the nature of the activities involved there. For some hazards, you may be required to implement specific precautions.

Your risk assessment is not just for the physical buildings on your property. You should consider your environment, culture, and community as well.

- **Are you located in a high crime area?**
- **What are the demographics in your immediate community?**
- **How often do you have events after normal hours of operation?**
- **What services do you provide to the community; food pantry, homeless shelter, etc?**
- **Do you have large amounts of cash or offerings?**
- **Is there counseling on the premises where there could be confrontational meetings?**
- **Do you have television or web-based ministry where a person is frequently monitoring your Safety/Security Team's position and activities?**



# Risk Assessments cont.

As you conduct your risk assessments and start to identify potential hazards/situations, it will be important to create and cultivate a relationship with all your parish staff. Be proactive in identifying risks so it is well communicated with everyone in a timely manner. By identifying these issues, you can then determine what equipment and personnel resources are needed to mitigate these exposures.

Your initial risk assessment should also determine what your “organizational response” will be to any emergency situation. You will need to plan and coordinate a series of steps for these situations.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER:

- What is the overall safety/security and emergency preparedness condition for your buildings and events?
- Do you possess adequate communications throughout your parish property to notify everyone of an emergency?
- Develop **three circles of security** for your property. Start with the parking lot, exterior/interior doors, and the interior of your building(s). How will your plan encompass these areas?

## Three Circles of Security

PARKING LOTS



EXTERIOR/INTERIOR  
DOORS



CHURCH  
INTERIOR





# Risk Assessments cont.

- Consider your exposure to areas that are frequently accessible to the public.
- Collect crucial information by inspecting your buildings and grounds with your team to identify hazards and vulnerabilities.
- Use notes and photographs to document any concerns or issues identified to address at your meetings.
- Team members should consistently walk/view the grounds by going through the parking lot(s) and buildings in an effort to identify the potential for a threat or emergency.
- Consistently conduct a walk-through of the church/ buildings prior to each Mass or other daily event to look for signs of concern. Prior to the arrival of parishioners or guests for your Mass or event, you should conduct a briefing with your team to plan your role during the event.
- Regularly obtain information from employees and volunteers as to their observations/concerns.
- Conduct assessments of your buildings during nighttime hours as well to establish any weaknesses and to observe how a criminal may perceive you as a target.



**Prior to the arrival of parishioners or guests, you should conduct a briefing with your team to plan your role during the event.**

### FIRST STEPS TO TAKE

Identify your hazards

Identify who is at risk

Evaluate the risk from high to low exposure - what is their impact

What control measures do you have in place

Implement new or current measures to address

Record your assessment and monitor/  
record your actions

Focusing on the above will allow your Safety/Security Team to assist in the development of your plan for the parish. Working from the information gathered from your assessment, the team can then begin to analyze the risk levels of certain hazards and prioritize actions based on existing control measures, among other criteria.

Prior to any Mass or event, check each room inside the church and/or attached buildings. Look for any signs of tampering of windows and doors that may indicate forced or attempted entry. Be certain exterior doors are secured so there is no unauthorized entry during the operation of the building(s). Consider locking some interior doors where no one should have access (i.e., computer server room, supply room, etc.).

From an armed intruder perspective, think about rooms which could be utilized for protection if your Run, Hide and Fight procedure is implemented. From a theft/burglary perspective, think about the accessibility and the value of contents of these rooms.

In rooms identified as a potential hiding/protection place, consider placing objects in them which could be utilized as defensive weapons if confronted with an armed intruder. A distractive weapon could be a fire extinguisher, while blunt force weapons could be objects such as heavy candlesticks or lamps which could be thrown at the intruder.

Don't just look for hazards. Rather, think of all the potential hazards in the rooms which make up your buildings. Risk assessments involve a detailed consideration of uncertainties, not just the obvious.

## Risk Assessment – Perimeter

Given the importance of perimeter security, it is crucial that you provide the appearance of your property to be well secured and maintained. Attacks and shootings are not typically spontaneous, but thought out and planned based on the appearance of security or lack thereof. Do not provide an open invitation for an attack or criminal activity on your property!

Research has determined that over 60% of all mass shootings begin in the parking lot. The parking lot(s) and exterior of your parish should be the focal point for early detection and delay of a potential threat.

- **Are parking lots and buildings easily visible from the streets?**
- **Do you have landscaping which prohibits the view of the church and parking lots from the streets?**
- **Do you have adequate lighting?**

Your assessment should determine if you need to make your property more visible to help deter the potential of a threat or other criminal activity.

During arrival and departure of parishioners for a Mass or event, be vigilant and survey the parking areas for unusual activity and/or vehicles that might appear out of place. Keep in mind that although Mass or your event has ended, that does not mean your threat level has diminished. When necessary, communicate your suspicions to the safety team as quickly as possible. Never hesitate to contact law enforcement if you have suspicions.

**See Appendix C:**  
Perimeter Security





## Risk Assessment – Perimeter

It is important to have capable individuals as part of your safety team surveying the parking lot while parishioners/guests are arriving and leaving for Mass or other events. Part of your training should focus on individuals capable of identifying the signs of any potential threat and suspicious behavior such as:

- **Nervousness**
- **Anti-social tendencies**
- **Strange attire**
- **Body language**
- **Confused look**

During Mass or large gatherings at your parish, conduct a minimum of one walk-around of the parking areas and exterior of building(s). Look for people inside vehicles as you may need to approach them to inquire their purpose on the property. If uncomfortable in doing so, never place yourself in harm's way and never hesitate to contact law enforcement to be on the safe side of your decision making.

Conducting these walk-arounds can also be a deterrent for someone who may be considering an attack. Being visible to the public also offers a sense of comfort knowing your church is concerned for their safety.

Consider having a vehicle labeled with a **Safety Patrol** emblem and drive through the parking lot making yourself visible. Have the vehicle visible at your entrance(s) or front of church or buildings while people are arriving and leaving Mass or events.

Partner with your local law enforcement agency to inquire if they could afford an officer to be in the area/parking lot prior to, during, and/or after Mass or your event. They may not be able to send an officer, although, it might be possible they could provide a patrol car absent of an officer to be available in your parking lot during that time.

**Risk assessments involve a detailed consideration of uncertainties, not just the obvious.**

# Evacuation Planning

- There are people at your Mass/event that have never been to your church before. Make certain your exits are clearly labeled and visible for emergency egress.
- Always remain **calm** which will in turn have the same effect on others when evacuating.
- Everyone should follow the instructions of the Safety/Security Team.
- Leave personal items behind.
- Close doors to rooms/offices when leaving to show it has been vacated.
- Always use stairwells for evacuations (never use elevators).
- Once outside and at the designated assembly area(s), account for all personnel/occupants if applicable.
- Stay clear of parking lots, adjacent sidewalks and roadways as to not impede emergency vehicles and first responders.
- If needed, personnel should be designated to assist elderly or people with limited mobility or other impairments.
- Daycare/Religious Ed programs offer a unique challenge and will likely require special attention, therefore, utilize your first responders when establishing this evacuation plan/procedure.
- Do not return to the building(s) until an **“All Clear”** is given by a safety team member or first responders.



**See Appendix D:**  
Emergency Evacuation  
Safety Survey

# Lockdown

In addition to an evacuation plan, lockdown procedures should be implemented whenever there is a threat or potential for a threat. Whether you have an intercom system, two-way radios or cell phones to communicate, it is imperative to announce your lockdown when a potential or imminent threat is determined.

## STEPS FOR LOCKDOWN

If a threat is determined outside the building, begin your lockdown by securing all access doors/windows.

If you have determined the threat is inside the building and you cannot escape, you should immediately seek shelter in a room that you know can be secured either by locking it or utilizing barricades/devices to prevent entry.

After you have locked/barricaded the entries, turn off lights, close shades and remain quiet.

Seek additional protection from behind doors, desks, cabinets, etc.

Lie flat on the floor and out of sight if there is no other protection in the room.

Silence your cell phones.

If it is safe to do so, call 911 and give details of the occurrence and where you are.

If possible, assist students, parishioners, guests, and staff out of the open and into sheltered areas.

**Keep in mind, during an evacuation or lockdown, you may need to provide specific instruction and assistance to the visually and hearing impaired, as well as persons with mobility issues.**



## Lockdown cont.

When law enforcement arrive on the scene, their primary duty is to neutralize the situation. Even if you are injured, do not expect them to assist you until the threat has ended. Be assured that EMS is responding and will treat injuries when it is safe for them to do so.

**NEVER** run toward law enforcement unless instructed to do so.

Be prepared to have weapons pointed at you.

You may also be subject to search and/or handcuffed until the situation is ended.

If they enter the room you are in, stay calm and do not make any quick movements.

Do not have anything in your hands. Law enforcement are trained that “hands kill” and any potential threat to them may be acted upon.

## Lockdown cont.

Spread your fingers apart as well as your arms and legs.

If asked, give as much detail as you can about the shooter(s) and the events that unfolded.

Once the scene is secured, you will be asked to relocate to a safe area where law enforcement will apprise you of the situation.

Never leave the scene until law enforcement has released you.

If you have a school, ensure you have an off-site recovery zone for parents to reconnect with their children.

Along with the guidelines from Catholic Mutual, your first responders and/or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have many security resources for houses of worship. This will assist you in developing a plan where you can conduct training specific to your situation, size, location and environment.

# Active Shooter Planning

We are all familiar with the recent shootings which have occurred at our churches, schools, and other venues throughout this country. Your plan and procedures should be developed such that you have established a mindset which gives you the ability to detect, deter, and delay the potential for a violent attack. It is to prepare and protect yourself until law enforcement arrive to neutralize the attack. Having a plan in place will increase your chance of survival.

Shootings can occur anytime, anywhere and to anyone. You need to take direct responsibility for your personal safety and those around you. A shooter can be acting alone or with others. Don't assume places where you live, work or visit are immune from a violent act or active shooter. Any place of assembly can become a target whether small or large. An active shooter situation evolves rapidly and you must be able to react quickly and efficiently to reduce the potential for harm.

## Are you prepared for an active shooter on your property?

If an imminent threat is determined, your best defense is to prevent the intruder from getting inside your building. Thus, you should quickly initiate your lockdown procedures. When it is safe to do so, immediately call 911. Be prepared to keep your composure and offer as much detail as possible (i.e., number of shooters, description, type of weapon, etc.). If the intruder is in the building, determine your course of action such as **Run, Hide or Fight** scenarios and which best applies to you and your situation. As part of your response plan, you should review your **Fight** option with law enforcement to ensure it offers you the appropriate steps to protect yourself.

**See Appendix E:**  
Active Shooter  
Emergency Response





# RUN



# HIDE



# FIGHT

## RUN

If you can escape, know your escape route and seek help/shelter far away from the scene. Warn and help others on your way to safety.

Always leave personal belongings behind and keep your hands visible so you are not considered a threat by law enforcement or security.

Use every means available to escape (i.e., break out windows, fire escape ladders, etc.).

## HIDE

If you cannot escape, seek shelter immediately in a room which can be locked or barricaded. Part of your plan should have identified these rooms so you are prepared for when this incident happens.

Use door barricade devices or furniture in the room to secure the door.

After room is secured, lie flat on the floor and/or hide behind furniture.

Turn off lights, close blinds and turn cell phone ringers to **OFF**.

Do not communicate with anyone outside the door if you are unsure who they are.

Never leave the room until you have been assured it is safe to do so.

## FIGHT

You may find yourself in a position where you will have to make a life altering decision to combat the shooter. Here, you will take physical action to incapacitate the shooter in order to defend yourself.

# Situational Awareness

Part of your plan should include the following preventative measures when confronted with a potential active shooter or attack.

## DETECTION - DETER - DELAY

**DETECTION** - Early detection of a threat is a key element to the safety of all who enter upon your property. If a potential threat can be detected early, you have a much greater chance of neutralizing it. Qualified and trained individuals who can identify suspicious signs of behavior should be strategically placed at your entrances and parking lots. If a threat is identified, your lockdown procedure and emergency response plan should be activated immediately.

**DETER** - If the situation allows, there may be an instance where you will need to confront an individual to determine their intentions. If this can be accomplished in a safe manner, the mere fact that you are addressing their presence may deter them from committing an act of violence. While engaging someone, you should be able to respond calmly and effectively as to keep control and de-escalate any potential emotional conflict. If there is no opportunity to verbally engage individuals, making eye contact can also be a deterrent to someone with ill intentions.

**DELAY** - Your safety plan should consider locking and/or monitoring doors with personnel and/or cameras to delay an attack. Seconds save lives and anything you can do to delay an attack will help reduce the potential for harm.





## Law Enforcement and Other Resources



As you see throughout this document, it is vitally important to utilize your local and/or regional law enforcement resources to help you reach the goal of safety/security preparedness. If it is feasible for your parish to have active law enforcement either on your Safety/Security Team or just assisting you in the development of a plan, this will be most beneficial to you and the parish. Working with law enforcement will help you develop a sensible approach and an action plan to violent acts against the church. Law enforcement personnel are conditioned and trained on a daily basis and are best suited to handle and guide you through emergency situations.

This is also true with EMS (emergency medical services) personnel. Utilizing these professionals and other people in the medical field can prepare you for a range of minor medical issues to worst case scenarios such as triage for a mass shooting.

Law enforcement, Fire and EMS should all be included in your team/training and development of your Safety/Security Plan.

Along with Catholic Mutual's risk management materials on church security, there are numerous resources available to you through the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA. Each of these governmental agencies have excellent materials on violent acts against Houses of Worship. Please consider incorporating these materials as well into your Safety/Security Plans.

**Law enforcement, Fire and EMS should all be included in your team/training and development of your Safety/Security Plan.**



## Armed Security

If you decide that armed security is needed at your parish, it is highly recommended that you use either current law enforcement agencies/personnel or a qualified and licensed security firm, each of which, carry professional liability insurance. Before any agreement is reached or signed by the parish representative, it is recommended you contact your Arch/Diocesan contact and follow your established contract review process to ensure the language and coverage is providing adequate protection to the parish/diocese.

A benefit to utilizing these professions is they are required to receive regular and current methods of training to handle emergency situations. They are conditioned to make split-second decisions and can diffuse a stressful situation from escalating into a tragic outcome.

Whereas non-professional persons engaging an attacker, are most likely not qualified to do so and could cause increased risk to themselves and others.





### Is your parish in a position to hire armed professional security or active law enforcement?

This is a very important question that many parishes struggle with in terms of finances. If this is an option for you, it will be important to ensure any contractual agreement is specifically customized to your particular needs and dynamics of your parish.

Oftentimes the wording in these agreements can be adverse and it will be important to remove any unfavorable language. Adequate liability insurance must be in place to protect you from the actions/negligence of these hired entities.

Non-professionally trained security persons are most likely not qualified to engage an attacker. This could cause increased risk to themselves and others. Some state statutes allow conceal carry in a house of worship while others do not. Others allow but with restrictions. Some states allow conceal carry in a house of worship but also allow a parish to deny that right based on the state's amendment to their conceal carry law. While others allow conceal carry only with permission granted by religious leadership. As you can see, it varies from state to state so you must know what your state statutes are. It will be imperative that you know your law in your state of residency.

## Armed Security cont.

An advantage to hiring armed or even unarmed security, is that these individuals are trained and conditioned regularly to utilize and apply less lethal options when combating a violent situation. Thus, reducing the potential for a devastating outcome.

**Catholic Mutual strongly recommends that employees or volunteers not be armed as part of your Safety /Security Plan. An armed employee or volunteer acting as security may place themselves at great personal risk should they be involved in an active shooter situation. Rather, we strongly recommend hiring armed security firms and/or active law enforcement whom require training and carry professional liability insurance.**

**In the event Professional Armed Security is not obtained, anyone in your parish acting as armed security must be in compliance with state/local firearms licensing and training requirements. Licensing laws vary throughout the country but they all ensure that gun owners have passed a background check and are certified to carry.**

**See Appendix F:**  
Church Security





# Severe Weather Planning

Whether you are in a designated hurricane zone, tornado alley, wildland fire zone, a high density lightning area, heavy snow fall or simply in areas of common storms, plans should be in place to take action in order to protect your property and people from harm. The following are just a few examples of steps to take for these events.

## STEPS TO TAKE FOR WEATHER

Be certain you have a written evacuation plan and designated routes.

Create a safety/first-aid kit with ample supplies to include radio, flashlight, etc.

Have a shelter-in-place plan to include designated safe areas.

For heavy snow/ice, have large accumulations removed from rooftops by a qualified contractor.

Know what an ice dam is and how to avoid those damages associated with them.

If your area is prone to wildland fires, clear dry/dead vegetation away from buildings, keep roofs and gutters free of debris. Consider removing trees that are within 10 feet of your buildings.

Do you have frequent lightning strikes and electrical surges causing damage? Consider the installation of surge protection throughout the exterior/interior of your buildings.

If you are in a vehicle and caught outdoors during a storm with strong winds, do not park under trees or large poles/signs that could be toppled onto you.

You can find our **CARES** documents on these topics under the Resources tab in the CMG Connect training platform. Additionally, the **Catholic Mutual Emergency Response App** has basic steps to take for these events as well.  
(See Appendix G on how to download this app)

# Fire

Fires can be very devastating for our Catholic Mutual Members. The leading cause of fires in homes (or other buildings), is cooking and heating sources followed by candles, smoking and damaged electrical cords. Plans and best practices should be in place to reduce your exposure to fire.

## See Appendix H: Fire Protection Safety Survey

### BEST PRACTICES FOR FIRE PROTECTION

Develop an electrical preventative maintenance program.

Have regular inspections of your HVAC systems.

Keep storage/combustibles away from HVAC, appliances and other heat sources.

Practice candle safety by protecting the flame from nearby combustibles.

Do not leave lit candles unattended.

Ensure you have adequate and properly functioning fire extinguishers and/or fire suppression systems and heat/smoke sensors.

Never leave cooking unattended and ensure proper procedures are in place when deep frying.

Ash material from heat stoves/fireplaces should be disposed of only into metal containers and placed outside and away from any buildings.

Ensure your electrical appliances and power cords are UL listed and free of any frayed or cracked insulation on their cords. **Do not use electrical tape to repair electrical cords.** Either replace the cord or the appliance if necessary. Not only is this a fire hazard but also an electrocution hazard.

Use of space heaters are usually discouraged as they are frequently known to cause fire due to heat impingement onto nearby combustible materials.

# Fire Alarm Procedures

When a fire alarm has been activated, it will be important to keep people calm and follow through with your action plan as quickly and safely as possible. Begin evacuating the building(s) using the nearest means of egress. Instruct people to walk quickly, but not to run. As we all know, panic can worsen the situation as it can create injuries and impedes the flow of a safe evacuation.

Here are a few safety tips to consider should you need to evacuate for a fire alarm:

- **Be certain your plan includes evacuation procedures for the disabled and visually/hearing impaired.**
- **Your plan should include a reunification zone (assembly area) for all occupants.**
- **Keep in mind, you may have visitors/service people in your buildings that you will need to accommodate during this process.**
- **Leave personal property behind.**
- **If possible, close all windows/doors from the room which you are exiting.**
- **If you encounter smoke, you should cover your mouth/nose and take short breaths. If heavy smoke, you may need to crawl on the floor to your exit. Prolonged inhalation of smoke may affect your mental capability and reduce your judgement when trying to evacuate.**
- **Before opening any doors, feel the door to see if it is hot/warm. If so, do not open and seek an alternative route. If it is normal to the touch, open slowly to ensure it is safe to enter.**
- **When outside the building, quickly move away and assist others, if necessary.**
- **Do not gather around the buildings, parking lot or sidewalks as this can interfere with emergency vehicles and/or first responders. Ask for assistance from your local fire jurisdiction to establish a safe reunification zone.**
- **Never re-enter the building until an "all clear" is given by authorities.**

**See  
Appendix I:**  
Fire Prevention  
Checklist



# Large Scale Events Planning

When considering a community Mass or festival, take into consideration the volume of people to be in attendance.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR LARGE EVENTS

Establish your team

Assign responsibilities

Conduct a risk assessment of area(s) to be used

Monitor social media

Communicate with law enforcement

Hire qualified and insured security

Strategically place team members to oversee activity in the crowd

Have emergency response and evacuation plan in place

Have EMS available



# Medical Emergencies



Your Safety/Security Plan should include practices and training for all medical issues. The medical response team should consist of EMS and/or medical professionals in your congregation. You can also have non-medical volunteers on the team to assist your team members and EMS when they arrive.

It is important to utilize this team not only for responses to medical issues, but also as your team that will assess risks on the property. The medical people on the team are often exposed to injuries and illnesses in their line of work, thus, giving them knowledge of how and where injuries can occur.

Some locations that may have frequent or high exposure to injuries include:

- **Classrooms**
- **Stairwells**
- **Kitchens**
- **Playgrounds**
- **Day Care**

How should you prepare for medical issues at your parish?

A medical emergency action plan should be well thought out to encompass your emergencies. Use your first responders when developing this plan. You should continuously monitor and keep stock of your medical supplies. Some supplies can expire and need replacement on a regular basis. Furthermore, familiarize yourself on how to use/apply these supplies. Take basic life support training courses such as First Aid, CPR and AED certification. And remember, always stay calm during an emergency. Your calm or nervous demeanor can be contagious to the injured person.



## Medical Emergencies cont.

Even though you may have professional medical personnel on your team, remember that you should always call 911 first when there is an elevated medical emergency. EMS should be responding even if there is any doubt in the severity of the person's condition. Oftentimes, an injured person refuses assistance from your team and does not want an ambulance to respond. **You should call 911 regardless.** You and the injured are likely not qualified to make a diagnosis, therefore, let EMS do so to be on the safe side of proper care to the injured. This is especially true with head injuries. If the injured person still refuses treatment from EMS when they arrive, let **them** sign the EMS refusal of treatment waiver stating they do not wish treatment. In this case, there is documented evidence that you have done your due diligence to offer care to the injured thus, reducing your liability exposure.



# Mental Health



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one out of four people will be affected by mental illness at some point in their lives and two-thirds of them will not find any medical help. You should consider having mental health first aid as part of your training in an effort to recognize and find assistance to individuals that may be experiencing a crisis. Current research has found that mental health has factored into the epidemic of mass shootings. There are many mental health first aid programs available to assist you in identifying, understanding and responding to this illness.

The following are just a few examples of what should be included in these programs:

- **Looking for signs and symptoms of depression**
- **How to talk to someone with suicidal thoughts/intentions**
- **How to give assurance and support**
- **Where to seek help**
- **Grant assistance for nonprofit organizations that wish to provide this training**



## Mental Health cont.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released funding opportunities for nonprofits and educational agencies. These include Mental Health Awareness Training grants. We recommend that someone on your staff and/or Safety/Security Team enroll into a mental health first aid program.

Training and benefits will provide the following:

- **Increase awareness of mental health issues, especially serious mental illnesses and serious emotional disturbances.**
- **Train personnel to identify people with mental disorders and respond to crisis situations.**
- **Connect individuals and their families who need specialized help to school and community services that provide treatment and recovery supports.**
- **Educate individuals about resources in the community available to those experiencing mental health or substance use challenges.**



# Religious Education/Faith Formation

The safety of children in our parishes is the highest priority. Here are some safety precautions to cover when it comes to your Safety Plans and Procedures to keep children of all ages safe during religious education classes, day care and/or other events.

Ensure that all employees/volunteers have a background check and have successfully completed your Arch/Diocesan Safe Environment training requirements.

Signing a child into your classroom can be as simple as a sign up sheet with the child's and parent's name on it. As an alternative, recommend utilizing a childcare check-in & check-out program for classes and/or your daycare/nursery. A numbering system can remove the potential for an unauthorized pick up. Use a manual or computerized system based on the number of children (i.e., KidCheck or ChurchTrac).

Classrooms and daycare/nursery must have sufficient staff and exceptional policies and procedures to ensure the children are safe from both internal and external threats. A very serious issue would be to release a child to the wrong person. This scenario has happened with estranged spouses.

Consider the "rule of two," where no one person accompanies a child to the restroom or is ever alone with a child.

Doors leading to classrooms/nursery should always be secured. Only authorized personnel should be able to access areas without being identified prior to being admitted.

Doors leading into these areas should be monitored by cameras and access limited to authorized personnel.

# Religious Education/Faith Formation cont.

All doors into classrooms, nursery/daycares and play areas should have a means of observation (windows) into them.

If cameras are installed and operated in a nursery/daycare, inform the parents/guardians that the area is being recorded and the information may be stored.

Panic buttons should be considered at public reception areas, children's areas and remotely carried. This will allow employees to initiate emergency procedures during security events.

If feasible, staff, child, and family identification cards can assist in controlling access and be integrated into card access control systems. Card access control systems also assist in reunification procedures after an incident.

Staff and volunteers should be prepared to protect children in the case of all emergencies.



# Conclusion

**For centuries, the church has been a place of peace and refuge to those in need. Let us all pray for the protection of God's children and especially for those in need of His love and guidance throughout these challenging times.**



We hope this material contained in the booklet will be useful to you and provide a means of improved safety/security at your parish. It is designed to guide you on how to plan, prepare and deliver a systematic approach to safety at your parish. This material should be considered as a guide and not all inclusive for your specific needs.



**CATHOLIC  
MUTUAL GROUP**



# Resources

## Catholic Mutual Group

### CMGConnect

This training and educational platform is designed to provide you with a variety of curriculum for your staff and volunteers. It is a customized reporting and tracking system with safety training videos, safe environment training, etc. for your Arch/Diocesan specific training requirements.

[cmgconnect.org](http://cmgconnect.org)

## Dept. of Homeland Security/FEMA

Here you can find many resources and training modules with respect to the safety and security in houses of worship. Utilizing these safety/security measures will proactively reduce risks and provide a safe and secure environment for all.

[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

## Public Officials

As we mentioned throughout this document, your public officials such as Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, etc., are crucial to the development of your overall Safety/Security Plans and Procedures at your parish. Having first responders involved in the development and implementation of your plans will provide you with an adequate response to any type of emergency that could occur. Your initial steps in developing a safety culture should include the use of these professionals.

# **Catholic Mutual...CARES**

## **Church Security Safety/Security Team Best Practices**

Having a highly visible safety/security team may actually prevent or reduce the potential for a threat and offer comfort to your parishioners. Since volunteers, such as ushers, greeters etc., are often in a position to be the first ones to closely observe visitors coming onto your property, they should all be part of your safety/security team and should have regular and documented training exercises. It is important to keep focus on both safety and security at your entire place of worship. Try to think basic before you think high tech or high costs. Your training does not have to be complex, creating a “combat” ready environment; rather, it should consist of providing resources on safety and security issues, high risk or threat situations and general emergency situations.

### **Trained vs. Untrained**

- During an act of violence, all individuals may experience anxiety but the untrained will likely panic.
- The trained individual will recall their training, whereas the untrained will be in disbelief or shock.
- The trained individual will be prepared to act, whereas the untrained will become lost in denial and unable to react placing themselves and possibly others in harm's way.
- The trained will commit to action and the untrained will descend into helplessness.

### **Awareness – Preparation – Rehearsal**

- **Awareness** – Involves taking the time necessary to gain a basic understanding of an active shooter or violent/emergency situation. Realizing violent incidents happen to everyday people is the starting point for developing a survival mindset. Conducting a security risk assessment at your parish will help establish what your threat level is.
- **Preparation** – There is no substitute for preparation. It includes looking at your parish through a survival lens, focusing on the “when it happens” and not the “if it happens” mindset. The “when it happens” scenario is critical in developing effective response strategies. : It is important to identify what your overall preparedness level is. Are you prepared for any type of emergency?
- **Rehearsal** – Involves practicing your plan. Practicing may include either mentally and/or physically walking through your “when it happens” plan. Rehearsing your plan will reduce response time and build confidence.

### **How to Develop your Team and Training**

The best way to develop any type of emergency response training is to ask yourself these questions:

- *What could happen?*
- *What early detection techniques can be employed?*
- *How do we respond quickly?*
- *What will we do in response?*
- *Who will do what?*
- *What will we do next?*

Utilizing these questions will assist in the development of your plan.

Then ask yourself:

- *How can we prevent it?*
- *How can we reduce or minimize harm to others?*
- *What will we do when it happens?*

Remember, the goal is not to develop a church “SWAT” team, rather, to be ready and able to take action until help arrives.

### **The Team**

- Your safety/security team should consist of capable adults who are given specific responsibility for alertness and readiness to respond to emergency or threatening situations. They could include:
  - Building/Grounds Engineer
  - Medical/EMS
  - Law Enforcement/Fire Service/Public Officials
  - Ushers/Greeters
  - Other Staff/Volunteers
- Assign a safety/security coordinator to oversee all safety and security plans developed and implemented by the church. This person would:
  - Develop and oversee the safety/security plan
  - Keep the plan active
  - Keep the plan updated and effective for your specific location
  - Coordinate activities/training
  - Schedule regular inspections/assessments of your property/buildings
- Create and develop a plan with team members to address all relevant emergencies including weather-related, medical, and violent acts. Seek outside assistance from your first responders to develop and organize a logical approach to all emergency situations.

- Your team should be trained to report anything they perceive as a threat or anything that makes them uncomfortable. They should be able to identify any type of threat to take appropriate actions. Individuals should be designated to observe certain areas of the church.
  - Narthex
  - Nave
  - Parking lot
  - Doors
  - Altar
  - Interior rooms
- Take the opportunity to train with other churches or entities in your community. The more people involved with training, the more ideas that can surface. Keep in mind though, what works for one location may not be suitable for yours.

### **Training and Best Practices**

- Early detection of a threat or emergency is critical to the outcome of your emergency response plan. Knowing that the majority of active shooters begin their path to the building in the parking lot, this should be a focal point when establishing your plan.
- Develop three circles of security for your parish properties. Start with the parking lot, exterior/interior doors, and the interior of the church. Ask yourself how your plan will encompass these areas.
- Team Members should be trained to identify risks/threats.  
***Example:** What if an usher identifies a person in the parking lot wearing a long coat and it is unseasonable for such attire? Are they concealing an assault rifle to use in an attack? Are they donning a backpack with extra ammunition? Do you have capable individuals to identify and address a potential threat such as this?*
- Team members should consistently walk/view the grounds by going through the parking lot(s) in an effort to identify the potential for a threat. They can give the appearance as a greeter but at the same time, they are surveying the parking lot.
- Team Members could be trained to identify behavioral signs indicative of a potential threat. This might consist of a nervous or angered demeanor, sweaty palms or a confused look making them appear out of place.
  - Watch for suspicious behavior
  - Watch for signs of concealed weapons
  - Monitor who enters the choir loft
  - Monitor who enters restrooms/stairwells, etc.
  - Narthex and exterior of main entrance should be monitored always



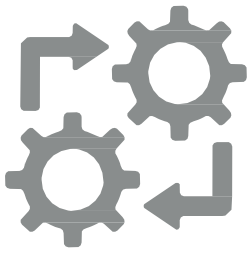
- If you identify someone on or near the grounds that looks out of place, make certain they know you are watching them. If they were planning an act of violence, the mere fact that you have identified them might be enough to make them recant their decision. It is critical to have cell phone/radio procedures in place to alert other members of your team in the event of an emergency situation. (*Report all suspicions to law enforcement. Your information might be linked to another police report with the same incident and/or individual.*)
- Have regular meetings with Team Members about what could possibly go wrong during Mass or other event. Discuss either local or national issues that have occurred at other houses of worship.
- Conduct a walk-through of the church/property prior to each Mass or other event to look for signs of concern. Prior to the arrival of parishioners, you should conduct a five minute briefing with your team to plan your role during Mass or the event.
- Practice situational roles to develop techniques and methods of handling threats or disruptions at Mass. This should be done for all ranges of incidents including weather related emergencies, medical emergencies, disruptive and/or threatening individuals. Practice slow walk-throughs and real-time scenarios for your training. This will provide options for your emergency plan if scenarios are thought out in advance.
- Training should include assistance and protection provided to the elderly or disabled. Team members should have a method in place to assist with evacuation or protection to persons unable to quickly and safely evacuate. In this case, you might implement your *Run, Hide, and Fight* plan. Identify locations inside the church that can be utilized as a hiding place and/or barricade from a threat.
- Evacuation procedures within designated zones should be reviewed and practiced. Design evacuation zones with your church floor plan. It is important to establish an alternative evacuation area as the threat or emergency may make it unsafe to evacuate in that area.
- Training should be recurring with regular practice drills. The amount of training can be based upon the level of involvement of your Team Members. Play out an emergency scenario and review what went right as well as wrong. Utilize your first responders to assist you in determining if your trained members are proficient with these drills.

We believe that church security is best accomplished through PREVENTION! You should not focus all of your energy on ways to handle just an active shooter. Instead, we believe you should focus on being prepared to prevent all critical incidents and emergencies from occurring in the first place.

It is vitally important to utilize your public officials and first responders in an effort to develop your safety/security plan. Having a plan in place will offer a level of security and comfort to your parish and give you the best chance of reducing the potential for harm to others.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact your Risk Management Representative at Catholic Mutual Group.

(Revised 9/2019)



# Safety Team Data Sheet

GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

OBJECTIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	RESOURCES NEEDED	TARGET DATE	COMPLETION DATE

**Remember, to be an effective Safety Team you should:**

- Have a clearly stated mission
- Include all levels of authority
- Outline member roles or responsibilities
- Be preventative in nature rather than only reacting to incidents
- Follow through on actions
- Gather safety data to produce change

# **Catholic Mutual...CARES**

## *Church Security*

### *Perimeter Security*

*Based on law enforcement findings, an active shooter typically does not decide one day they are going to attack a church, school or large event. This is a process that may involve years of issues or disturbances with this individual which leads them to their actions. These are thought out and planned attacks by scoping out locations. Given the importance of perimeter security, it is crucial that you provide the appearance of your property to be well secured. As you can see by the recent school, church, and large event shootings, these were all well planned over time by the shooter finding such easy targets. Keep the importance of perimeter security at the forefront of your safety/security plan and do not give an open invitation for an attack on your property. Churches have always been a sanctuary for those in need of refuge. These are uncertain times and it is important to recognize the potential for threats at your parish. As part of your overall church safety and security program, the following procedures should aid you in reducing the potential from harm at your church events.*

*"A prudent person sees danger and takes precautions."*

#### Awareness

We often talk about having "situational awareness." It is important that one does not become complacent in their everyday responsibilities. Be observant of your surroundings when arriving at the church for Mass or other events. Always look for signs of disturbances and investigate them immediately. If property such as security cameras, windows/doors, etc. are found damaged, don't always assume it is was vandalized just for the thrill of doing so. It could be a precursor to a break-in or active shooter situation at some point. Report these damages and concerns and replace/repair immediately if they pose a security issue for the buildings and people on your property.

The following are best practices to consider for your perimeter security plan. If feasible, conduct a security assessment of the exterior of your church prior to and/or during Mass and other events. As part of your safety/security plan, monthly assessments of the following should be considered:

- Parking lot(s)
- Doors
- Windows
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Neighbors
- Other structures

## Exterior Security Assessment

### Parking Lots

Research has determined that over 60% of all mass shootings begin in the parking lot. The parking lot(s) and exterior of your parish should be the focal point for early detection and delay of a potential threat and/or active shooter. Are parking lots and buildings easily visible from the streets? Do you have landscaping which prohibits the view of the church and lots from the streets? Do you have adequate lighting? Your assessment should determine if you need to make your church more visible to help deter the potential of a threat or other criminal activity at your parish.

- During arrival and departure of parishioners, be vigilant and survey the parking areas for unusual activity and/or vehicles that might appear out of place. Keep in mind that although Mass or your event has ended, that does not mean your threat level has diminished. When necessary, communicate your suspicions to the safety team as quickly as possible. Never hesitate to contact law enforcement if you have suspicions.
- It is important to have greeters and other capable individuals as part of your safety team surveying the parking lot while parishioners are arriving for Mass or other events. Part of your training should focus on individuals capable of identifying the signs of any potential threat and suspicious behavior such as:
  - Nervousness
  - Anti-social tendencies
  - Strange attire
  - Body language
  - Confused look
- During Mass, conduct a minimum of one walk-around of the parking areas and exterior of building(s). Look for people inside vehicles as you may need to encounter them to inquire their purpose of being on the property. If uncomfortable in doing so, never place yourself in harm's way. Always contact law enforcement to be on the safe side of your decision making.
- Conducting these walk-arounds can also be seen as a deterrent for someone who may be considering an attack. Being visible to the public also offers a sense of comfort knowing your church is concerned for their safety.
- Consider having a vehicle with a "Safety Patrol" emblem on it and drive through the parking lot making yourself visible. Have the vehicle visible at your entrance(s) or front of church while parishioners are arriving and leaving Mass.
- Partner with your local law enforcement agency to inquire if they could afford an officer to be in the area/parking lot prior to, during, and/or after Mass. They may not be able to send an officer although, it might be possible they could provide a patrol car absent of an officer to be available in your lot during that time.



### Doors

Does your church have doors that can be properly secured? Are there any points of weakness with the potential of easy access to the interior of the church by unauthorized persons? Your findings based on your assessment may require improvements or replacement of doors to provide proper security during church events and after hours. It is important to note if you are updating or replacing doors, the door and/or locking mechanism must comply with all fire codes.

- We recommend that during Mass or other events, all secondary doors should be locked/secured to prevent access (*so long as this is not a fire code violation*). If the main entrance to the church cannot be locked during Mass, we recommend that it be safeguarded by your team/staff for individuals that may be considered a threat. These main entrance doors should be locked immediately if you have determined there is a threat.
- Conduct an examination of the doors. Ensure they can be properly secured after Mass or your event has started. It is important to note that persons with criminal intent are usually not spontaneous and their actions are such as to “*scope out*” your property before they act on their intentions. (For example: *criminals are known to place a pebble/stone at the foot of the door giving the appearance it is closed/secured; however, this is enough to prohibit the latch to engage. In addition, they may place tape over the latch for this same reason.*)
- Always, for all security reasons, you should have a Key Control Policy in place to ensure the protection of your property and all who enter. An open door policy is no longer conducive to today's society. When the church and other buildings are not in use, you should consider having them locked at all times if this does not interfere with other prayer vigils needed by anyone.
- If you have glass doors, you may want to consider the installation of safety and security window film. This film acts as a deterrent and can reduce intruder access by up to 1½ minutes. Although it does not “prevent” an intruder access, it allows ample time for you to initiate your emergency action plan and allow more time for a law enforcement response prior to access. Please consider watching this two minute video to learn more about providing safety to your church. (*It is important to know that CMG does not endorse this particular brand of product, it is merely for your consideration as part of your security assessment on your property.*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96x2tO9Xuxw>

### Windows

Do windows pose an issue at your church? Are they accessible from ground level?

- Inspect the windows for signs of damage. Look for tool markings, pry marks, cracked glass etc. that may be an indication of an attempt to gain access. Criminal intent may be to enter the church in an inconspicuous area and time without detection.
- Ensure that all windows open/close properly and they possess adequate locking mechanisms.

### Landscaping

Landscaping can add beauty to your property but can also be a refuge for an intruder. Make certain it is well maintained so that it does not allow hiding places for a threatening person. Does your landscaping (i.e. boulders, trees, bushes, etc.) hide windows or block view of your entrances? If so, these are invitations to an intruder who may consider your church an easy target. As part of your perimeter security assessment, you will need to identify these potential issues and modify to eliminate these concealing areas.

- As you conduct walk-arounds of the church prior to and during Mass, search behind these locations for persons or signs of disturbances such as indications of someone sleeping or hiding in the area.
- If it is not feasible to remove questionable landscaping, consider reducing their size by trimming the vegetation allowing increased exposure to your windows and doors.

### Lighting

Do you have adequate parking lot and exterior building lighting?

- Lights for the parking lot and exterior of the building should be illuminated during nighttime hours at all times.
- Although a violent act/active shooter is unlikely during nighttime hours, with exception of evening Masses, this can act as a strong deterrent to a predator and portray the image that your facility has a great sense of security in place.

### Neighbors

A neighborhood wants their community to feel and be safe from harm. Consider developing a Neighborhood Watch Program as part of your Safety/Security Ministry. Your local law enforcement agency can assist and develop your program specific to your community.

If one is already in place, look for ways to enhance it with respect to the current culture on the need for security at our churches.

- Reach out to the adjacent neighbors that border your property. Ask if they would consider being your eyes and ears for suspicious activities around the property during and/or after events.
- Consider providing an email address for these neighbors to report instances that may be occurring on your property either during events or after hours. Provide them a contact name/number to report unusual activity around the church.
- Either audible alarms and/or strobe lights installed on the exterior of your buildings could also be a deterrent and notify neighbors of an intrusion. Individuals with a threatening plan seek out easy targets and could be “staging” their attack based on the security or lack of security at your parish.

#### Detection – Deter – Delay

**Detection** – Early detection of a threat is a key element to the safety of all who enter upon your property. If a potential threat can be detected early, you have a much greater chance of neutralizing it. Qualified and trained individuals who can identify suspicious signs of behavior should be strategically placed at your entrances and parking lot. Keep in mind, if a threat is identified, your lockdown procedure and emergency response plan should be activated immediately.

**Deter** – If the situation allows, there may be an instance where you will need to confront an individual to determine their intentions. If this can be accomplished in a safe manner, the mere fact that you are addressing the individual may in fact deter them from committing any acts of violence. While engaging someone, you should be able to respond calmly and effectively as to keep control and de-escalate any potential high emotional conflict. If there is no opportunity to verbally engage individuals, making eye contact with them can also be a deterrent to someone with ill intentions.

**Delay** – Your safety plan should include locking of all doors during Mass. If this is not possible for Mass or other events, your plan should include emergency lockdown procedures to help delay the intruder. If a threat is imminent, lockdown procedures need to be activated immediately. Seconds save lives and anything you can do to delay an attack will help reduce the potential for harm.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact your Risk Management Representative at Catholic Mutual Group.

# ***Catholic Mutual...CARES***

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EMERGENCY EVACUATION SAFETY SURVEY**

All of the question in this survey should be answered by checking **Yes, No, N/A** (not applicable), or **U** (undetermined). If any answer has a negative response or the column **U** is checked, then the specific area that needs correction, the person responsible for the correction, etc., should be noted, as well as the time frame for the corrective action to be accomplished.

	Yes	No	N/A	U	Date of Planned Correction
<b>Floor Diagram</b>					
1. Are floor plans prominently posted on every floor?					
2. Is each plan legible?					
3. Does the plan indicate every emergency exit available on the floor?					
4. Is a person looking at the plan, properly oriented by an X (that is, "You are here now")?					
5. Are room number identifications for the floor as well as compass directions given?					
6. As an example, are particular areas identified, such as the cafeteria, specific offices, washrooms, classrooms, etc.?					
<b>Exit Paths to Stairwells</b>					
1. If color coding of pillars and doors is utilized or stripes and marking on floors are utilized, are they properly explained?					
2. Is additional clarification needed?					
3. Are paths to exits relatively straight and clear of all obstructions?					
4. Are proper instructions posted at changes of direction en route to an emergency exit?					
5. Are all ventilation systems operational?					
<b>Elevators</b>					
1. Are signs prominently posted at and on elevators warning of the possible dangers in use of elevators during fire and emergency evacuation situations?					
2. Do these signs indicate the direction of travel to emergency exit stairwells which are available for use?					



	Yes	No	N/A	U	Date of Planned Correction
<b>Elderly and Physically Handicapped</b>					
1. Are there elderly or physically handicapped persons who will need assistance during a fire and emergency evacuation of the premises?					
2. What provision has been made for their removal during an emergency situation?					
3. Who will assist in this emergency evacuation?					
4. How will the handicapped individuals be moved during the evacuation?					
<b>Emergency Exit Doors</b>					
1. Are all emergency exits properly identified?					
2. Are exit door location signs adequately and reliably illuminated?					
3. Do exit doors open easily and swing in the proper direction (open out)?					
4. Are any exit doors blocked, chained, locked, partially blocked, obstructed by cabinets, coat racks, umbrella stands, packages, etc.? (NOTE: This practice must be prohibited)					
5. Are all exit doors self-closing?					
6. Are there complete closures of each door?					
7. Are all exit doors kept closed, or are they occasionally propped open for convenience or to allow for ventilation? (NOTE: This practice must be prohibited)					
<b>Emergency Stairwells</b>					
1. Are stair treads and risers in good condition?					
2. Are stairwells free of mops, pails, brooms, rags, packages, barrels, or any other obstructing material?					
3. Are all stairwells equipped with proper handrails?					
4. Does each emergency stairwell go directly to ground floor exit without interruption?					
5. Does the stairwell terminate at some interim point in the building?					
6. If so, are there clear directions at that point which show the way to the exit?					
7. Is there a provision for directing occupants to refuge areas out of and away from the building when they reach the ground floor?					
8. Are directions provided where evacuees can congregate for a "head count" during and after the evacuation has been completed?					

Emergency Preparedness-Emergency Evacuation Safety Survey  
(Page 3 of 4)

	Yes	No	N/A	U	Date of Planned Correction
<b>Emergency Stairwells Cont.</b>					
9. Is there adequate lighting in the stairwell?					
10. Are any bulbs and/or fixtures broken or missing?					
11. Where are these fixtures missing? (NOTE: Describe all locations).					
12. Are exits properly identified?					
13. Are they illuminated for day, night and power loss situations?					
14. Are any confusing non-exits clearly marked "Not An Exit"?					
15. Are floor numbers displayed prominently on both sides of the exit doors?					
<b>Emergency Lighting</b>					
1. In the event of an electrical power failure or interruption of service in the building, is automatic or manually operated emergency lighting available?					
2. If not, what type of lighting system will be used?					
3. Where are stand-by lights kept?					
4. Who controls the stand-by lights?					
5. How would the stand-by lights be made available during an emergency?					
6. Is there an emergency generator in the building?					
7. Is the emergency generator operable?					
8. Is the emergency generator tested on a regularly scheduled basis?					
9. Is the emergency generator tested on a regularly scheduled basis?					
10. Is there an emergency lighting system available for the exit stairwells that will function automatically in the event of total power failure?					
11. Will this emergency lighting system provide enough light for the entire evacuation process?					
12. Is the emergency lighting tested on a regular monthly basis with results recorded?					
13. Are these records maintained and are they available for review?					

Emergency Preparedness-Emergency Evacuation Safety Survey  
(Page 4 of 4)

	Yes	No	N/A	U	Date of Planned Correction
<b>Communications</b>					
1. Is there a method to notify building occupants that an emergency evacuation is necessary?					
2. Is one or more forms of communications systems available to each floor? (P.A. system, intercom, phones, battery-operated "pagers", etc.)					
3. If messengers must be used, have they been properly instructed?					
4. Is the communication system(s) in good working condition?					
5. Is it clearly understood under what emergency conditions this system will be utilized?					
6. Is it clearly understood who will operate this system in an emergency situation?					
7. Can the announcements be prerecorded by someone with a calm but authoritative voice?					
8. Is the communication system protected from sabotage?					
9. Do all occupants know how to contact building control to report a dangerous situation?					
10. Is the building's emergency communication system tested monthly?					
11. Is one individual designated to complete these tests?					
12. Is this a complete and comprehensive test of the entire system?					

(Revised 10/2018)

# **Catholic Mutual...CARES**

## **Active Shooter Emergency Response**

Please be advised, in an effort to provide more detailed assistance to our members with preparing and responding to an active shooter situation, in addition to the following, Catholic Mutual has completed training videos on this subject. These videos are available at [www.CMGconnect.org](http://www.CMGconnect.org) under the School Safety Curriculum.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of viewing these online courses as part of your Active Shooter Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.

### **Active Shooter**

**Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so.**

**Provide as much of the following information as possible:**

- Number of shooters
- Location of shooters
- Physical description of shooters
- Number of victims and potential victims
- Types of weapons held by shooters

### **Run-Hide-Fight**

1. **Evacuate the Area** - If you can safely leave the area, do so
  - a. Have an escape route and plan in mind.
  - b. Leave your belongings behind.
  - c. Keep your hands visible
2. **Hide** - If you are unable to leave the area, hide.
  - a. Hide in an area out of the shooter's view. Give critical priority to areas you can best secure.
  - b. Block entry to your hiding place.
  - c. Lock the doors, if possible
  - d. Move objects in front of doors, if possible
  - e. Silence cell phones
  - f. Remain in place until released by law enforcement officer



**Run-Hide-Fight cont'd**

3. **Take Action** – If unable to leave the area or hide, take action only as a last resort.
  - a. Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
  - b. Act with physical aggression
  - c. Look for items to throw at the shooter or to use in an attack.

*\*As part of your Active Shooter response plan, it is recommended to first review Take Action -Fight Back measures with local law enforcement.*

When law enforcement arrives, their first priority will be containing the shooter, not helping victims. Do not stop officers to ask for help or direction when evacuating. Evacuate the premises as quickly as it is safe to do so.

- Remain calm and quiet.
- Follow instructions.
- Keep your hands visible at all times.

# **Catholic Mutual...CARES**

## *Church Security*

*In the wake of many recent tragedies, mass shootings and other violent acts have become all too familiar. Our churches are not immune from shootings and other violent attacks. Yet the data suggests churches are not any more or less likely to be sites of violence in the U.S. What we should not do, is let these acts of terror cause us to be fearful of gathering with our fellow worshippers. The Church can develop and implement plans to keep your property and, more importantly, all of God's children safe from harm. Among your other ministries, your parish could develop a Safety and Security Committee to address potential violence.*

### Awareness and Prevention

*Our world has dramatically changed and nowadays, tragic acts of violence have become a daily occurrence. Awareness is critical in your efforts to help minimize the risk of an active shooter situation. As such, here are a few strategies you should implement to lessen the potential for an incident and make your Mass and events safer. Keeping in mind that seconds save lives, any action you can plan and prepare for will be helpful.*

### Locking Doors

- If you are unable to provide a watchful eye for each entrance door, please consider securing these doors (*if not a fire code violation*). If this step is too challenging at this time, a good start would be to lock the doors during the week for school Mass. Entrances directly from parking lots, along with the narthex, should be monitored by a member of your Safety/Security Team at all times. Unfortunately, to keep our churches safer, we can no longer maintain the theme of an open campus. It provides an all too easy setting for a shooter and our mindset must change on this. Fifteen to twenty years ago, our schools were unlocked and open for anyone to walk into. We would never consider unlocking our schools today. We should hold these same principles for all places of assembly including our churches.

### Safety/Security Team Members

- Some of your Safety/Security Team members providing security assistance should be clearly identifiable and wear some type of visible insignia representing who they are. This insignia should be large enough to see from a distance and, could be designed to give the appearance of a badge. When standing outside of the church, and clearly visible, this could be a deterrent to a potential threat. It is a must that all members of the Safety/Security Team are equipped with cell phones to make an emergency call when necessary and/or radios to communicate to other team members any concerns. It may benefit to have team members carry a loud horn that could be sounded if a threat turns real. Not only will this alert everyone in the congregation, it may also distract the intruder.

### Perimeter Security

- It is important to provide a high level of perimeter security to the church before, during, and after Mass. Perimeter security will provide early detection of a threat and reduce the potential for harm to the congregation. This consists of having team members frequently walk the exterior of the church before and during Mass. This is especially true if you have wood/solid doors with no means of visual observation to the exterior. If the weather is intolerable, a vehicle placed up front by the church entrance can be utilized by the team member to maintain surveillance.

**Example:** *If a team member is outside the church and an individual is approaching (after Mass has started and looks/acts nervous/suspicious), the team member can immediately notify the other team members of what is occurring. The result is giving you a faster response to contact emergency responders and activating your plan in a timely manner if needed.*

### Cell Phones and Radios

- Communication devices *must* be a part of your emergency response procedure. Every team member should have a cell phone to immediately contact law enforcement in the event of a threat. No one person should be assigned to call 911, it should be done so by anyone that is available to do so. These phones should be programmed so that one single button dials 911 in an effort to expedite the call.

### Clearly Marked Exits

- Anticipate the fact that many people in attendance in the church may have never visited your location before. Look at and consider improved signage at exit doors and/or pathways to quickly evacuate people when necessary. Preventative measures should be taken such as ensuring your hallways and pathways leading to exit doors are not obstructed with tables, storage, etc. Hardware on doors should be inspected regularly to ensure the panic bar is working properly and the door opens freely with minimal effort. Consider the fact you may have to repair/replace some doors to enhance your security. Ensure all possible routes are clearly labeled, especially exits that are not always clearly visible. Consider large exit signs for improved visibility.

### Threat and Course of Action

*It is important to understand there is no simple formula for survival in a threatening situation. Although, a survival mindset will give you a much stronger foundation upon which you can base your decisions and actions.*

- When a threat is identified, any and all persons that are available should call 911 immediately and give specific details to the event occurring. Examples include identification of the shooter(s); ethnicity, clothing, type of weapon(s), location of threat, etc.
- When a person poses a threat, it may be necessary to confront them if the situation allows. This should be done as a team approach whereas someone is already calling 911 to report their suspicion while someone else is assessing the situation. If you are uncertain whether or not to call 911, it's better to call so law enforcement can be readily available and able to assess the threat level.
- When necessary, activate your plan for quick emergency egress from the church. Team members should direct the crowd of people out of the building as quickly and safely as possible.

***Catholic Mutual strongly recommends that employees or volunteers not be armed as part of your Safety and Security Plan. An armed employee or volunteer acting as security may not be protected under the diocesan insurance program; thus exposing them to great personal risk should they be involved in an active shooter situation. Rather, we strongly recommend hiring armed security firms and/or active law enforcement whom require training and carry professional liability insurance.***



*In the event Professional Armed Security is not obtained, anyone acting as armed security as a volunteer or could be construed as a volunteer; should obtain personal firearms liability coverage from a qualified carrier for their own self-defense coverage.*

*To have an effective safety/security team and an overall presence of safety in the church, you should develop a sense of "situational awareness." Become aware of your surroundings and do not let complacency rule. People often believe "it will never happen" to them. It's time to change that mindset and develop new procedures to prepare for a situation "when" it happens and not "if" it happens. In the event of a threat, having no safety/security plan in place creates chaos and fear. With a plan in place, there is structure and organized actions.*

Catholic Mutual Group offers an excellent active shooter training geared for our schools. This information could also be useful for you to construct your plan for the church and other parish buildings. You may access this training on our CMG Connect platform at [www.CMGconnect.org](http://www.CMGconnect.org).

We also have a CARES document labeled "*Active Shooter Emergency Response*." This can be found through CMG Connect or on our website by clicking on Member Login, enter your *Username* and *Password*, Select the Risk Management Info icon, Property, and then select the Security tab to find the Active Shooter Emergency Response document as well as several other security documents to assist you.

Another helpful tool to utilize is Catholic Mutual's *Emergency Response Procedures App* for cell phones and tablets. The instructions to download this app can be obtained from previous correspondence with your Arch/Diocese and/or by contacting your Claims/Risk Manager or Loss Control Representative.

These links to the Department of Homeland Security could also be utilized for your training purposes:

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/33007>

[https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing\\_EOPs\\_for\\_Houses\\_of\\_Worship\\_FINAL.PDF](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.PDF)

<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/active-shooter-emergency-action-plan-guide#>

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact your Risk Management Representative at Catholic Mutual Group.

(Revised 9/2019)

# Catholic Mutual Group



## Emergency Response Procedures

Instructions to download the Catholic Mutual Emergency Response Procedures mobile application:

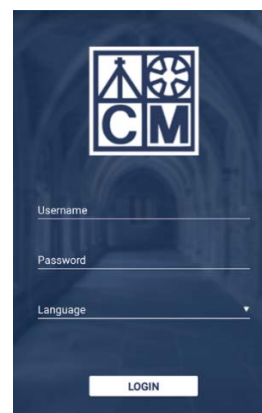
1. **Search** for Catholic Mutual Group in the “App Store” (Apple iOS) or the “Play Store” (Android devices).
2. **Install** Catholic Mutual Group Emergency Response Procedures (ERP) on your device. Accept app permissions.



3. **Open** ERP app—sign-in and select language option. You will only be asked to sign in one time.

Username: cmgerp

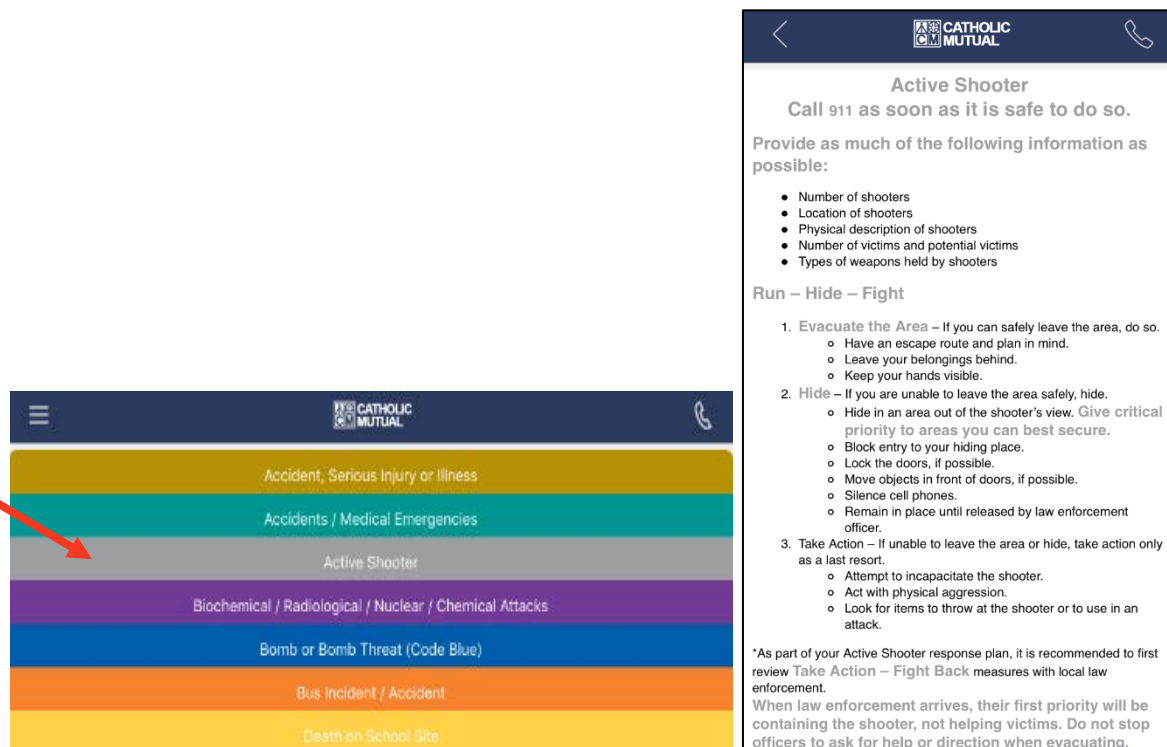
Password: cmgsafe



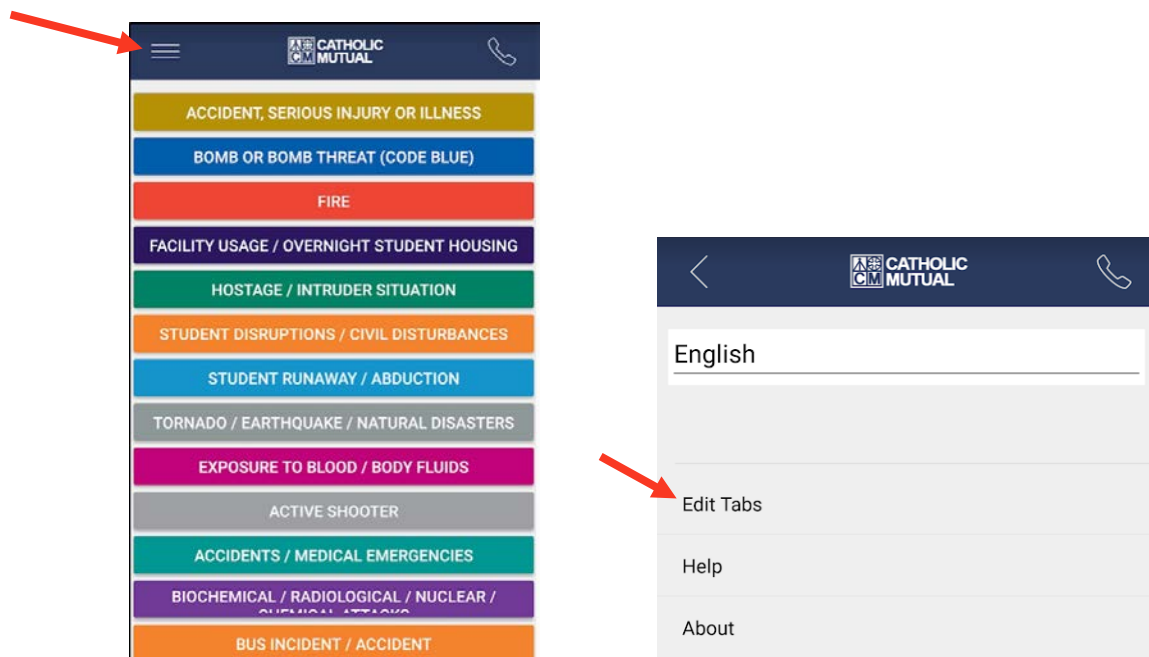
## Emergency Response App (2 of 2)

4. To access the best practices procedures, click the title to open the procedure.

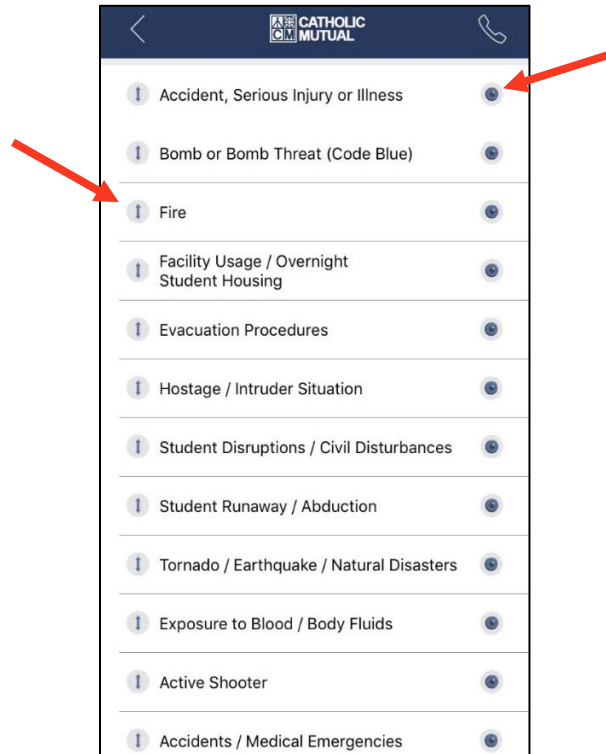
- The Best Practice page will open for the selected category/procedure



5. **Customize** which options appear on your main “dashboard” by clicking the settings icon, then the Edit Tabs option.



6. Select which best practice procedures you want to see on your main dashboard app. Click .  
If selected, the procedure will show.
7. **Reorder** your best practice procedures by dragging and dropping the selection. Click and drag to move.

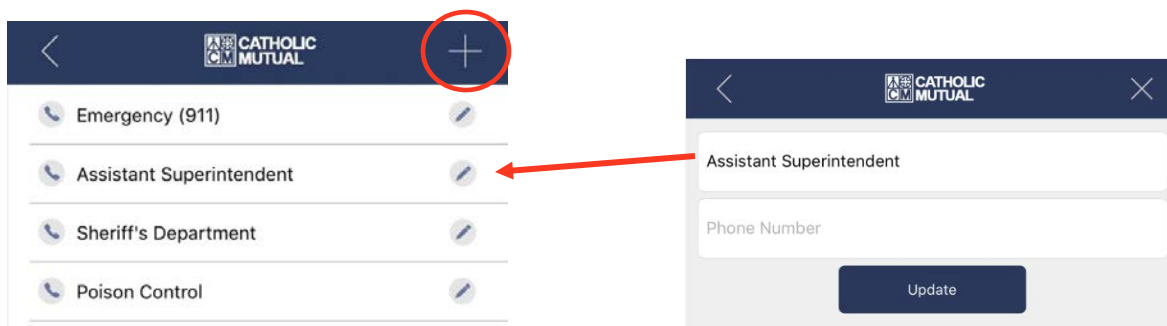


8. Click the phone icon to customize the contacts within your app.



9. Basic emergency contact names have been pre-populated, but can also be customized.

- You can *Add* contacts (Click the plus icon)
- *Edit* contacts (Click the pencil icon)





# **Catholic Mutual...CARES**

## **FIRE PREVENTION**

### **FIRE PROTECTION SAFETY SURVEY**

<b><u>Emergency Plan</u></b>	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
Do you have an emergency plan?	—	—
Is this emergency plan written and posted?	—	—
Are all individuals familiar with this emergency plan?	—	—
Does every individual know his or her responsibility in the event of a fire emergency?	—	—
Does every individual know how to sound the fire alarm?	—	—
Does the emergency plan include escape routes?	—	—
Has this emergency plan been practiced through the use of a fire drill?	—	—
Are these fire drills conducted on a random and periodic basis?	—	—
Are emergency phone numbers posted and are all individuals familiar with these phone numbers?	—	—
Does everyone know to give their complete name, street, town, and other pertinent information when turning in the fire alarm?	—	—
Does everyone know to shut doors as they leave the building to stop the spread of smoke and fire?	—	—
Does everyone know not to go back to the burning structure after they have left the building?	—	—
Has a method been devised to determine if all individuals have been safely evacuated from the building?	—	—

## Alarm Systems

Yes      No

Is the building equipped with an alarm system?

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this alarm sound directly to the Fire Department?

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the local Fire Department well acquainted with your facility, its location, and any specific hazard?

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the fire alarm system tested on at least a monthly basis to make sure that it is fully operational?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there smoke detectors installed in the building?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are these smoke detectors placed properly; being installed on habitable floors; and are they maintained regularly following the recommendations from the manufacturer?

---

When the alarm is sounded, can it be heard in all parts of the facility?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are all fire alarm stations clearly marked and easily accessible?

---

## Fire Extinguishers

Yes      No

Are fire extinguishers clearly marked and easily accessible?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are portable fire extinguishers provided in adequate number and the proper type?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are fire extinguishers recharged regularly and inspected on a monthly basis?

\_\_\_\_\_

Are employees periodically instructed in the use of extinguishers and other fire protection procedures?

---

Are fire extinguishers properly mounted? (Should be placed approximately 3' to 5' off the ground.)

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Sprinkler Systems**

Yes   No

Are the automatic sprinkler system water control valves, as well as air and water pressures, checked on a weekly basis?

—   —

Is the maintenance of the automatic sprinkler system assigned to a responsible person or to a sprinkler contractor?

—   —

Are sprinkler heads protected by metal guards?

—   —

Is proper clearance maintained below the sprinkler heads?

—   —

Is the sprinkler automatic alarm system tested on a monthly basis?

—   —

Are all the sprinkler valves easily accessible and are they locked in an open position?

—   —

### **Fire Doors and Shutters**

Yes   No

Are fire doors and shutters in good operating condition?

—   —

Are fire doors and shutters unobstructed and protected against obstructions including their counterweights?

—   —

Are the fire doors and shutter fusible links in place?

—   —

Are the fire doors kept closed when possible and does each fire door operate in a satisfactory manner?

—   —

Are fire doors checked on a monthly basis to ensure that they are in good operational order?

—   —

Facility Surveyed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Survey: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Catholic Mutual...CARES**

## **FIRE PREVENTION CHECKLIST**

### **ELECTRICAL**

1. Is there an adequate number of outlets? Is there an overuse/misuse of extension cords and multi-outlet power strips? \_\_\_\_

2. Is building electrical system over 20 years old? \_\_\_\_

If yes, Electrical System Inspection recommended unless location has an inspection/maintenance program that includes in-depth servicing by a qualified electrician.

3. Has the location had any problems with tripped circuits, dimming lights? \_\_\_\_

4. Does the building have a fuse box system rather than circuit breakers? \_\_\_\_  
If yes, recommend replacement to breakers.

5. Is service entrance wiring at least 10' off of ground? \_\_\_\_  
Is wiring clear from trees and branches? \_\_\_\_

Service entrance wiring needs to be at least 10' above ground, 12' over driveways/parking areas and higher if exposed to truck traffic.

\* Recommend Arc fault for kitchen, offices and bedrooms.

### **CANDLES**

1. Recommend having candles in double-insulated containers or secured by sturdy non-combustible base/holder. Care must be taken in the placement of candles in relation to seating, foot traffic areas, exits and away from combustibles.
2. Do not allow candles to be brought into church from parishioners or visitors. Only allow parish candles to be displayed and lit.
3. Prohibit candles in schools and all offices. Exception would be for religious/prayer purposes in a classroom, but they should be extinguished immediately when concluded.



4. No lit candles on live or artificial holiday greenery. Exception: Any artificial wreath i.e. advent wreath must be fire retardant treated and candles set in protective container. Would candles pose a fire hazard if left burning? \_\_\_\_
5. Are safe procedures in place to light candles? \_\_\_\_  
Is there a safe extinguishing container for matches or lighting sticks? \_\_\_\_

### **LIGHTNING/SURGE PROTECTION**

1. Does building have structural lightning system? Has it been inspected recently? If not, it is recommended to assure connections are good and grounding is adequate.  
\_\_\_\_
2. NFPA Lightning Hazard Assessment warranted? \_\_\_\_
3. Has facility had any surge related claims and or does facility have a high value exposure? \_\_\_\_  
  
If yes, recommend appropriate surge protection evaluation.
4. Recommend new electrical panels with built-in surge protection for any new commercial construction/renovation and/or claim related replacement.

### **ARSON**

1. Are security system procedures appropriate for the area? \_\_\_\_
2. Is interior and exterior lighting good? \_\_\_\_  
Are timers or photocells utilized? \_\_\_\_
  - The most effective deterrent against break-ins is a security detection system. Recommend good signage or window/door decals indicating system in place.

### **KITCHEN/MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Are exhaust hoods and filters kept clean? \_\_\_\_  
Are grease traps and grease drip trays checked? \_\_\_\_
2. Only allow trained staff to light pilots for stoves, ovens, furnaces and hot water heaters.

(Revised 9/2018)