



# ACTIVE THREAT & FACILITY SECURITY MEASURES

## BACKGROUND

Safety and security remain a shared responsibility and a key priority for community institutions across the United States. From schools to houses of worship, our nation has seen increased levels of targeted violence occurring at these facilities.

The Jewish community, in particular, faces a complex and dynamic set of threats. Increased numbers of anti-Semitic incidents and hate crimes directed at the community after the tragic loss of life and injury inflicted at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh require a consistent, comprehensive and standardized approach to the security of our whole community. The below guidelines constitute a component of a layered security plan and may assist in providing an increased level of safety while also raising community situational awareness.

## GUIDANCE

- **Develop a security committee:** Communities should convene a committee that allows for the collective creation of a community-wide strategic security plan. A community security committee provides stakeholders the ability to share training resources, create an interoperable system of plans, policies, and procedures, and creates a network of both professional and lay leadership who have the ability to speak with a collective voice when communicating both for and to the community on issues of security.
- **Facility lockdown during times of large gatherings:** During key times and/or when hosting a large number of individuals (bar/bat mitzvahs, weddings, youth functions etc.), facilities should consider a layered approach to security that may involve engagement with local law enforcement, competent as well as capable security personnel and an access control process to keep entrance/exit door(s) locked or secured, subject to emergency exit and fire code requirements
- **Sustainable visitor policy:** Agencies should consider a visitor policy that allows for both escorted and unescorted visitors. A careful accounting for all persons on site allows agency staff to both gain a better understanding of persons wishing to visit the facility as well as providing potentially actionable information to law enforcement should the need arise.
- **Seek reputable, validated training:** SCN can recommend "best practice" courses and facilitate training in critical security disciplines. Training courses such as general situational awareness, Active Threat/ Shooter preparedness and response, incident management and "Stop the Bleed," as well as Table Top Exercises, are all modules that SCN can provide directly to communities.
- **Strengthen relationships with law enforcement:** A community's relationship with its law enforcement agencies, particularly first responding law enforcement agencies, is one of the most critical components to a layered security plan. Ensure first responders are familiar with the physical layout of your buildings. Request regular briefings on threats to community facilities as well as faith-based institutions from local, state and federal partners. Consider having professional leadership and lay leaders attend a Citizen Police Academy. Relationship-building events such as inviting first responders to a community Sabbath meal, holding a "Law Enforcement Appreciation Day" at a school or community center, and inviting police and fire agencies to conduct "walk-throughs" of your facility can strengthen bonds between Jewish communities and law enforcement professionals.
- **Critical incident communications:** Does your community have the ability to communicate both internally (agency to agency) and externally (community to public safety) in the event of a crisis? Has the system been tested under simulated emergency conditions? Is there a mass notification system in place that will allow your community to message and receive important information during a crisis? SCN ALERT is a low-cost mass notification and emergency communication platform available to communities nationwide. SCN Alert allows participating federations, agencies, and organizations to immediately notify community members about emergency situations, threats or incidents. Through a web-based dashboard or mobile application, users can be reached through email, phone calls, SMS/text, and push notifications.
- **Have a cadre of community volunteers trained in basic security competencies:** SCN can provide community training in areas such as suspicious activity reporting, behavior assessment, how to initiate a crisis response, coordination with law enforcement, and basic first aid ("Stop the Bleed"). Once trained, volunteer community members may act as ushers/greeters for large gatherings. Placing these ushers/greeters both outside a building and in public (lobby) areas allows agencies to create a buffer zone of security between potential threats and persons inside. Having a trained group of community members further serves to enhance the community's ability to detect and deter threats before they become dangerous.

To learn more or to sign-up, please contact:

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The Secure Community Network (SCN), a non-profit 501(c)(3), is the official homeland security and safety organization of the Jewish community in North America. Established under the auspices of The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, SCN is dedicated to ensuring the safety and security of the Jewish community through increased awareness, improved protection, enhanced preparedness, and effective response.