

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Armed Intruder Procedures

INTRODUCTION

These procedures acknowledge that armed intruder incidents occur with alarming frequency in our country, and faith communities are not exempt. They articulate the best safety practices and procedures currently available to us. They should be reviewed and updated annually. These procedures have been adopted by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Congregation Council to provide a safer environment where all may experience the love of God and Christian fellowship.

PURPOSE

- Provide a safe and secure environment for ministry to and with children, youth, adults, volunteers, members and paid staff.
- Reduce the potential injuries and casualties caused by an armed intruder incident.

SAFETY PRACTICES IN PLACE

- A risk assessment has been conducted by the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office.
- The congregation has participated in the CRASE program offered by the Sheriff's Office.
- Cameras are installed at the main entry doors of the facility providing visual and audio surveillance to the church office.
- During Sunday morning activities, charged walkie-talkies are located with the Sunday School Superintendent, the Ushers, in the nursery, and in the upstairs and downstairs classroom areas.
- Entry access is limited to the main doors (all other doors are locked and for exit only).
- All building exits are marked for easy identification.
- All classroom doors have shades that can be pulled over the windows and wedges to jam the doors.

- Offices have shades and deadbolt locks.
- Safety procedures are posted on the backs of all classroom doors.
- Safety procedures are regularly reviewed with program leaders: the Sunday School Superintendent reviews them with Sunday School leaders, the Youth Ministry Coordinator reviews them with adult leaders, and the Vacation Bible School Director reviews them with the VBS staff. Additionally, the procedures will be attached to the Sunday Servant Guidelines for Ushers and Greeters.
- Local first responders have current maps of the properties and buildings.

PROCEDURES DURING WORSHIP SERVICES

1. Ushers, greeters, or other volunteers will be stationed in the narthex/entryway to maintain awareness of activities in the buildings or parking lot. If an armed intruder is spotted or attempts to enter the building, the usher or volunteer will alert the congregation by announcing, "Armed Intruder, evacuate now," and then calling 911. They will inform the 911 operator of the armed intruder situation, the name and location of the church, a physical description of the armed person(s), and the type of weapon.
2. The congregation will respond in one of the following ways: evacuation, concealment, or self-defense.
 - a) **EVACUATION.** If there is an accessible escape path, members should attempt to evacuate the premises and move as quickly as possible away from the church property. They should assist others as they are able and help others to evacuate if possible. They should keep their hands visible as they leave the buildings and follow the instructions of law enforcement responders.
 - b) **CONCEALMENT.** If evacuation is not possible, members should find a place to hide where they are less likely to be found, and/or they can limit the visibility and access of the armed intruder.

- c) SELF-DEFENSE. If it is not possible to evacuate or hide, members should take any action possible to disrupt or incapacitate the armed intruder such as throwing items, improvising weapons, yelling, or aggressively fighting.
3. When law enforcement responders arrive, members should remain calm, follow their instructions, put down any items in their hands, raise their hands and spread their fingers, keep their hands visible, and avoid making quick movements toward the responders. Members should not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating. Members should be aware that the first priority of responders is to eliminate the threat and they will step over the injured without assisting them in order to do that.

PROCEDURES DURING SUNDAY SCHOOL OR OTHER CONGREGATION EVENTS IN THE EDUCATION WING

1. If an armed intruder is spotted or attempts to enter the building, the Sunday School Superintendent, usher, or volunteer will alert the classes via walkie-talkie by announcing, "Armed Intruder, evacuate now," and then calling 911. They will inform the 911 operator of the armed intruder situation, the name and location of the church, a physical description of the armed person(s), and the type of weapon.
2. The program participants will respond in one of the following ways: evacuation, concealment, or self-defense. Adult leaders should guide children or youth participants in the appropriate course of action.
 - a) EVACUATION. If there is an accessible escape path, participants should attempt to evacuate the premises and move as quickly as possible away from the church property. They should assist others if possible and leave all personal items. They

should keep their hands visible as they leave the buildings and follow the instructions of law enforcement responders.

- b) CONCEALMENT. If evacuation is not possible participants should find a place to hide where they are less likely to be found, and/or they can limit the visibility and access of the armed intruder. Doors and windows should be locked and blocked, if possible.
 - c) SELF-DEFENSE. If it is not possible to evacuate or hide, members should take any action possible to disrupt or incapacitate the armed intruder such as throwing items, improvising weapons, yelling, or aggressively fighting.
3. When law enforcement responders arrive, participants should remain calm, follow their instructions, put down any items in their hands, raise their hands and spread their fingers, keep their hands visible, and avoid making quick movements toward the responders. Participants should not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating. Participants should be aware that the first priority of responders is to eliminate the threat and they will step over the injured without assisting them in order to do that.

PROCEDURES DURING CONGREGATION EVENTS IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

- 1. If an armed intruder is spotted or attempts to enter the building, the event leader or volunteer will alert the participants by announcing, "Armed Intruder, evacuate now," and then calling 911. They will inform the 911 operator of the armed intruder situation, the name and location of the church, a physical description of the armed person(s), and the type of weapon.
- 2. The participants will respond in one of the following ways: evacuation, concealment, or self-defense.

- a) EVACUATION. If there is an accessible escape path, participants should attempt to evacuate the premises and move as quickly as possible away from the church property. They should assist others as they are able and help others to evacuate if possible. Adults should be particularly intent on assisting children. Participants should keep their hands visible as they leave the buildings and follow the instructions of law enforcement responders.
 - b) CONCEALMENT. If evacuation is not possible, participants should find a place to hide where they are less likely to be found, and/or they can limit the visibility and access of the armed intruder.
 - c) SELF-DEFENSE. If it is not possible to evacuate or hide, participants should take any action possible to disrupt or incapacitate the armed intruder such as throwing items, improvising weapons, yelling, or aggressively fighting.
3. When law enforcement responders arrive, participants should remain calm, follow their instructions, put down any items in their hands, raise their hands and spread their fingers, keep their hands visible, and avoid making quick movements toward the responders. Participants should not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating. Participants should be aware that the first priority of responders is to eliminate the threat and they will step over the injured without assisting them in order to do that.

PROCEDURES DURING BUSINESS HOURS

1. During business hours, entrance doors will remain locked except during scheduled events. Following events, staff members should ensure doors have been re-locked.

2. Visitors are expected to ring the doorbell and identify themselves and the purpose of their visit. Members are urged to call ahead if they are coming to the church and will need entry.
3. Entrance door cameras with audio are monitored in the offices of the Office Coordinator and the Media Coordinator.
4. Staff members should exercise caution at all times. They are not required to give access to the buildings if they have any concerns. If a staff member is alone in the building, they should not answer the door or grant access to the building to anyone they cannot identify.
5. If the staff member believes that an armed intruder incident is intended or imminent, they should call 911, immediately notify the pre-school if they are in session, and evacuate or conceal.

PROCEDURES DURING EVENING EVENTS OR MEETINGS

1. The entry doors should be locked after the event or meeting begins. Attendees who will be late to the event or meeting should text the event or meeting leader of their arrival.
2. Any person answering the door should be in clear sight of at least one other attendee.
3. Event or meeting attendees should exercise caution at all times. They are not required to give access to the buildings if they have any concerns. If someone wishing entrance is unknown to the person answering the door, they should ask through the door for their name and purpose before giving access. If there is any question, they should

communicate through the door that the person needs to return during normal business hours.

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