

# Do We Prevent Crime at our Church?

A checklist to help you evaluate your building's security.

by Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company

Use the following checklist to gauge how your church is doing at preventing crime.

HOW ARE WE DOING	YES	NO	WORKING ON THIS
Do you keep a record of everyone who has a key or security code to the building and use a system for tracking keys or changing security codes as volunteers/employees leave your organization?			
Do you have adequate outdoor lighting near doors, in parking lots, and at rear entrances?			
Is your outdoor lighting on a timer, a light-sensitive switch, or a motion-sensitive switch?			
Does your building have adequate indoor lighting that is on a timer so that it comes on even when the facility is not in use?			
Is your outdoor landscaping trimmed and maintained just below window level, so it doesn't provide hiding places for vandals or burglars?			
Is the neighborhood surrounding your property also clean and well maintained?			
Does your ministry enlist the help of the community surrounding your property and/or participate in a neighborhood watch program to help keep the area safe from crime?			
Do you lock the doors of interior offices, classrooms, and supply rooms when they are not in use, and restrict access to unused parts of the building?			
Do you ask a church representative to open the church building for guests, monitor the events, and secure the building when they leave, rather than give the guests full access to your building?			

Do you secure all windows, basement entries, and external stairways on your building?		
Do you lock petty cash, small valuables, keys, and important documents in a safe? Do you secure larger valuables, such as laptop computers, DVD players, and musical equipment?		
Do you maintain an inventory of your building's property?		

**What Makes a Church Vulnerable?**

The days of unlocking a church in the morning and leaving it open all day have gone the way of the one-room, wooden chapel. Churches today house thousands of dollars' worth of sound equipment, musical instruments, and computers, not to mention sizable contributions. If criminals sense easy access to potential cash, it's only a matter of time before your church becomes a target. By understanding your vulnerabilities, you can strengthen your resistance to property crimes.

**Step 1: Do a Risk Assessment**

The first step in knowing how to prevent burglaries, theft, and vandalism is to assess your risks. If you're unsure how to do this, ask a security consultant or a local law enforcement agency to help you. The assessment section of this download can help you get started, but you're also encouraged to examine the type and frequency of crimes in your area and determine if any of your policies and procedures are leaving you susceptible, such as leaving a door open all of the time or having one person be responsible for all financial records within the church office.

**Step 2: Create a Security Plan**

Once you know your vulnerabilities, you can create a plan for solving them. Your security plan should include:

- An objective: What are you trying to achieve? In what time frame?
- An analysis: How can the problems be solved? What problems take first priority?
- A training component: Is staff trained in security awareness? What role should staff members and volunteers play in an emergency situation?
- Implementation: What steps will we take to improve security in the next one to five years?

**Step 3: Take Action**

Knowing what makes your church vulnerable and what you can do about it gives you a road map to follow. Even if your church has improved security in the past, it makes sense to review your systems and procedures regularly, to make sure you haven't missed anything or that new susceptibilities haven't crept in.