

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

THE CREATION OF AN EMERGENCY OPERATING PLAN (EOP)

Preparedness: Five Mission Areas

- Prevention
The capabilities necessary to avoid, deter or stop an imminent, threatened or actual incident from occurring
- Protection
The capabilities to secure houses of worship against acts of terrorism and manmade or natural disasters.
- Mitigation
The capabilities necessary to illuminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an incident.
- Response
The capabilities necessary to stabilize the incident once it has already happened.
- Recovery
The capabilities necessary to assist houses of worship affected by an incident in restoring their environment

Planning Principles

- Planning should be supported by leadership
- Planning considers all threats and hazards
- Planning considers all settings and all times
- Planning provides for access and functional needs of the whole house of worship community including regular attendees, guests, staff and those with limited abilities
- A model EOP is created by following a collaborative process

The Planning Process

STEP 1:

Form a Collaborative Planning Team

- Work with others, like houses of worship, first responders, and emergency managers.
- Identify core planning team, including those with disabilities and the elderly
- Form a common framework by considering other's vocabulary, command structure and culture
- Define and assign roles and responsibilities by knowing with whom to speak regarding particular issues and questions that may arise during the planning process
- Determine a regular schedule of meetings

STEP 2:

Understand the Situation

- Identify threats and hazards faced by house of worship and surrounding community, utilizing planning team members perception of past and future threats to house of worship
- Assess the risk posed by the identified threats and hazards by identifying the probability that the specific threat or hazard will occur; the effects the threats and hazards will likely have; the time you will have to warn occupants; and how long the threat may last. Consider vulnerabilities of the building and the occupants. Include assessment of visibility around the exterior of the building; compliance with standards of access for individuals with disabilities; emergency vehicle access.
- Prioritize threats and hazards

STEP 3:

Determine Goals and Objectives

- Develop goals and objectives

Goals: Broad, general statements that indicate the desired outcome in response to a threat or hazard. Planning team should develop at least three goals for before, during and after each threat or hazard

Objectives: Specific, measurable actions that are necessary to achieve the goals. There may be multiple objectives in support of each goal.

Critical Functions: These may cut across the threats and hazards. Examples of crosscutting functions are evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown.

EXAMPLE:

Goal #1 (before) Prevent fire from occurring ~ **Goal #2** (during) protect all persons and property from injury by fire ~ **Goal #3** (after) Provide necessary medical attention

Objective #1 (before) Provide fire prevention training ~ **Objective #2** (during) Evacuate all persons and then account for those known to have been on site ~ **Objective #3** (after) Notify 911, EMS, and Fire Department

STEP 4:

Plan Development (Identifying Courses of Action)

- Depict the scenario
- Determine amount of time available to respond
- Identify decision points for each scenario such as whether to evacuate, shelter-in-place or lockdown
- Develop courses of action to achieve goals and objectives by answering:
What is the action? Who is responsible for it? When and where does it take place and what is the duration? What needs to happen before and after the action? What resources and skills are necessary?
- Select courses of action (plans include multiple courses of action to reflect different ways it could unfold. If you are located in Suffolk County, NY, you may consider video cameras and the Camera Registry Program through Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD); receive phone texts of Nixle Public Safety Alerts and Advisories from police department; contact SHIELD at 934-852-7273 or SCPDSHIELD@suffolkcountyny.gov).

STEP 5:

Plan Preparation, Review and Approval

- Format the Plan The basic plan provides an overview of the house of worship's approach to emergency operations, including why it is necessary and what it is meant to do (Prevent, protect, mitigate). It details the goals and objectives of courses of action (e.g. evacuation, lockdown, recovery)
- Write the Plan including introductory material, cover page, signatures, approval and implementation page including delegation of authority for specific modifications and table of contents. Also include chain of command and who has control of equipment, resources and supplies.
- Review the Plan It should be adequate, feasible and acceptable. It should incorporate all courses of action; integrate the needs of the whole house of worship; provide a complete picture of what should happen and at whose direction; and identify success criteria. The finalized plan should be presented to appropriate leadership and shared with local emergency management officials.

STEP 6:

Plan Implementation and Maintenance

- Train Stakeholders on the Plan and Their Role by holding a meeting, visiting evacuation sites; give literature on the plan, policies and procedures; post information throughout the building;
- Exercise the Plan with tabletop exercises (small group discussions and walk through of scenarios and courses of action, perhaps including realistic simulated events).

FUNCTIONAL ANNEXES

- EVACUATION ANNEX (How to safely move persons to designated assembly areas; how to evacuate when primary route is unusable; how to evacuate children who are not with a parent or guardian; how to evacuate seniors and/or those with disabilities).
- LOCKDOWN ANNEX (How to lock all exterior doors and when it may not be safe to do so; how particular building characteristics affect possible lockdown; what to do when a threat materializes inside the house of worship).
- SHELTER-IN-PLACE ANNEX (when persons are required to remain indoors because it is safer there than outside. Questions to be asked include what supplies will be needed to seal the room; how shelter-in-place may affect people with disabilities; and other questions also in other Annexes)
- RECOVERY ANNEX (When and who has authority to close and reopen house of worship? How will alternative services be provided if services cannot be reconvened in the usual place? How are assets currently documented and what plans are in place for when/if they are damaged? Who will lead psychological and emotional recovery? How will members create a calm and supportive environment for the congregation?)
- SECURITY ANNEX (Courses of action that the house of worship will implement on a routine, ongoing basis to secure the house of worship from criminal threats).

Active Shooter Situations

- How to evacuate and lockdown personnel, members and visitors
- How to select effective shelter-in-place locations (thick walls, solid doors with locks, minimal interior windows, first aid emergency kits).

- How to know when an active shooter incident underway or resolved (communication devices, duress alarms, panic buttons, sign up for police texts about criminal activity)
- Sharing information with first responders (prepare and provide up-to-date and well-documented site assessment, including building schematics and photos, inside of building and out, with window and door locations. Build strong partnerships with fire, EMT, law enforcement; as well as access to medical supplies and fire extinguishers).
- Respond immediately (RUN: leave personal items behind, visualize escape routes, call 911 when safe to do so ~ HIDE: lock and barricade doors; close and lock windows; turn off lights; silence electronic devices; remain silent ~ FIGHT: In a study of 41 active shooter events, the potential victims stopped attacker themselves in 16 instances, in 13 of them through physically subduing attacker. Determine your policies on the control and presence of weapons, as permitted by law).

After Active Shooter Situations

- Identify trained personnel who will provide assistance
- Provide family members with timely, accurate and relevant information
- Have child release to authorized person(s) processes in place