



OZARK Police Department

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Church Protective Management: Procedural Notebook Security and Safety Compliance

Subject: Congregational Training Guide: Protocols for Armed Attacks

Although unlikely, a shooting can happen at any church. It pays to be prepared and know in advance what creates the best chance for survival. Running should always be your first priority, but be ready to hide or fight for your life if there is no safe escape route.

Escaping Safely

- **Run-away whenever possible.** Your best chance to survive a shooting attack is to get out of the area as fast as possible. The only exception is if the only escape routes would put you in sight of the shooter.
- **Know escape routes.** Prepare in advance by identifying all exits from the areas or rooms where you spend the most time. This includes emergency exits, fire escapes, and windows. Ideally, plan at least two escape routes out of the church, in case the shooter is blocking one of them.
 - Don't rule out second story windows, or windows that you would have to break. You can survive cuts from broken glass, or a broken leg from a fall.
 - Ninety-eight percent of shooters act alone. If you can avoid the area where you hear gunfire, you are usually safe.
- **React immediately.** Don't freeze up or waste time debating your options. Find an escape route, and start running. If you hear gunshots in the distance, you can likely get out of the area before the shooter arrives.
 - If you have shoes that prevent you from running, take them off.



- **Forget Your Belongings.** If you've determined that it's best to run, then forget your wallet, your purse, or your cell phone. Though your first instinct may be to take your possessions with you, none are as important as your life.
- **Run Directly To An Exit.** Do not slow yourself down with evasive maneuvers, such as running in a zigzag or bending over as you run. Run as fast as you can, directly to safety. These tactics only matter if the shooter is aiming directly at you, and using a weapon with a low rate of fire. Getting away fast is usually the best option. The one exception is a situation where you are forced to run within sight of the shooter, in an area with plenty of cover between you and the exit. In this case, running from obstacle to obstacle may be your best chance.
- **Take Others With You.** As you're running, encourage others to run. If someone looks disoriented or too scared to move, grab that person and drag them with you. Tell the people that running is crucial to their survival. If you're running in a bigger group, it'll be harder to target you individually, and you'll have strength in numbers if you do run up against the shooter.
- **Grab a Weapon (only if convenient).** If you happen to see a sharp object, or a blunt object you can carry while running, grab it. Do not waste time looking for one of these when you could be running. This is only for a last case scenario when you are unable to escape the shooters.
- **If you have to fight.** Get as close as you can without being noticed. Grab the barrel with one hand and cover the ejection port with the other (try to keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction). The shooter will pull the trigger and the gun will fire, but only once because the hand covering the ejection port will cause a malfunction and the weapon will not cycle another round. That weapon is now a useless hunk of metal until the shooter can clear and cycle another round in manually (perfect opportunity for you to take the weapon away and subdue the shooter).

Hiding and Barricading Yourself

- **If running is impossible.** It should only take a few seconds to determine if running is a possibility. If a shooter is rapidly approaching, or blocking the only escape route, start hiding or barricading yourself immediately.
 - Hiding is the second option because it traps you in one area. However, most mass shooting events are over within ten or fifteen minutes. If you can avoid the shooter for that long, you have a good chance at surviving.



- **Split tasks with others.** If there are other people in the area or room where you're situated, get their attention and assign them to the following tasks:
 - One person should call 9-1-1.
 - One group of people should lock and barricade doors.
 - One group of people should grab anything that could be used as a weapon.

- **Turn Off Lights.** Immediately turn off the lights and close window shades/blinds in the room where you are. This will make the shooter less likely to enter the room, and slightly increase your chance of survival if he does.

- **Lock and barricade doors.** Lock the door immediately and do anything you can to make it more difficult for the shooter to enter. Remember that most shooters only have a few minutes before the police show up, and they're not interested in taking the path of most resistance. Lock the door, place a doorstop on it, and place all heavy furniture like desks and chairs in front of the door immediately to deter the shooter.
 - If the shooter is approaching, get away from the door as soon as you can. Stay away from all doors and windows.
 - If the door opens to the outside, a barricade will only delay the shooter for a moment. Building one may not be worth wasting time and blocking a potential escape route.

- **Call emergency services.** A mass shooting typically continues for five minutes before anyone calls the police. If you have other people in the room to barricade the door, calling 9-1-1 immediately can be a big help. Once they've been called, law enforcement typically arrives within three minutes.
 - Use a landline instead of your cell phone if possible, so the police can automatically trace the call.
 - If you can't reach an emergency service by phone, try to activate either a fire pull-station or trigger a ceiling sprinkler system by holding a lighter underneath the detector; automatically signaling the fire department.

- **Grab anything you can find that can be used as a weapon.** Again, look around the area/room where you're hiding and find anything that you can use as a weapon. It can be a stapler or sharp scissors, hot coffee, or anything else that is sharp, heavy, or which can be used as a weapon. Hold on to these weapons if the shooter enters the room where you are.



- Even small thrown objects can delay a gunman if a large group of people work together. While this is obviously a last resort, anyone who can't find a weapon should grab something to throw.
- **Find cover.** The term cover refers to barriers that will stop a bullet. Brick or concrete walls, steel building support beams, or thick trees are the most common examples. If you are trapped in a single room, your best option is a thick piece of furniture such as a heavy desk or filing cabinet.
 - Ideally, find a spot that does not restrict your movement. If the situation changes, you want to be able to run to an exit as fast as possible.
- **Find concealment if cover is not available.** Concealment hides you from the shooter's line of sight, but will not protect you from gunfire. If it's your only option, hide behind furniture, in closets, or in any other hiding spot. Crouch low to the ground to minimize the chance that a stray bullet hits you.
 - Most interior walls will not stop a bullet.
- **Turn off anything that makes noise.** If you have time, silence your cell phone and other electronics so the sound won't encourage the shooter to approach you.
- **Stay calm.** Though this may seem nearly impossible, it's crucial that you remain absolutely silent. Tell people that whimpering, or crying will only make the shooter more likely to find you. Be mentally prepared for the event that the shooter comes into the room and finds you. In that case, you'll have no choice but to fight, *as described below.*
- **Play dead as a last resort.** People have survived mass shootings by playing dead in areas where shots have been fired. However, some shooters are aware of this tactic and will target bodies. The only time you should try this is when running, hiding, and fighting are impossible.

Engaging the Shooter

- **Remember that attacking a shooter is your final option.** You shouldn't jump out of your hiding place and attack the shooter if he's approaching. You should only fight him if you're sure that you'll be shot if you do nothing.

- **Do not try to reason with a shooter or plead for your life.** Trying to engage with the shooter, ask him what he's doing, or to plead for your life by talking about your family has not been proven effective in dealing with shooters. Don't waste your time by trying to talk to him -- you're much better off fighting.
- **Work with others to create confusion.** If you are in a group of people and cannot avoid the shooter, your best chance is to create as much noise and movement as possible. Shouting, throwing objects, and running will buy you a few extra seconds to leave the room, or to attack the shooter if there is no escape route.
- **Attack the shooter with any weapon you can.** Use scissors, glass, or any other sharp or heavy objects to attack the shooter as soon as you are in close proximity. Even a sharp ballpoint pen is better than nothing. You're fighting for your life and every second counts.
 - Once again, this is an absolute last resort. Most shooters are heavily armed, and some wear body armor. Even if you have a gun of your own, you are most likely at a disadvantage.
- **Aim high.** Try to hurt the shooter in the face, eyes, shoulders, or neck, or arms, so that they are more likely to let go of their weapon. You should stab them in the neck, gouge out their eyes, or stab them in the arm -- doing anything you can to make them get rid of the weapon or to hurt them, so the weapon is within your reach. Kick him in the crotch (if a man) if you can't, go for their face or weapon. This will be an effective way to disarm him and to cause him a large amount of pain.
- **Commit to the attack.** Once you are in this situation, hesitation or panic can be fatal. Be as aggressive as possible, attacking with anything you can. Do not try to run or stop fighting, even if you are shot in the leg or arm.

Preparing for a Church Attack

- **Report any suspicious activity.** Keep alert and always report suspicious incidents to the authorities. If someone in the congregation or visiting talks about, or is overheard talking about, killing people in the church, report this immediately to a church staff member or law enforcement. You may prevent a disaster by doing so. Many shooters often announce their plans ahead of schedule as a way of showing off; do not take their behavior lightly or as a joke and report it immediately.



- **Be aware of the church's lockdown procedure.** Every church should have some kind of lockdown procedure that stipulates how doors should be locked, where people should hide, and how the authorities should be called. So, if you'd like to be prepared for a shooting, be familiar with your church's standard procedure when it comes to shootings. Unfortunately, it may be difficult to follow the protocol exactly in the event of a shooting, but knowing what it is can help you react in the most helpful way possible.
- **Do not run to law enforcement.** The first people to arrive are there to locate and deal with the shooter, not to rescue people. Do not leave a hiding spot, and do not get in their way.
 - If you are wounded, wait for a paramedic or firefighter.
- **Keep your hands up.** When you are within sight of the police, raise your hands and spread your fingers to show you are not a threat. Keep your hands visible at all times.
- **Tell the police what you know.** If you have any information on the shooter's location or type of weaponry, let the nearest officer know.
- **Move in the direction the police came from.** Don't stop to ask police for directions. If it's safe to move, run in the direction the police came from, keeping your hands raised and visible.
- **Obey police instructions immediately.** Do so as fast as possible and without argument.



Church Name: _____

CHURCH SAFETY PROCEDURES

If a Fire Alarm Occurs:

1. Stay as calm as possible.
2. Immediately proceed to your nearest safe exit point. **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS.**
3. In leaving an area, to confine the fire/smoke, close doors but do not lock them.

If You Discover Fire or Smoke:

1. Notify anyone in the immediate area of danger.
2. To confine the fire/smoke, close doors but do not lock them.
3. Activate a manual Fire Alarm Station, if close by.
4. Call the Fire Department by dialing 911. Tell them:
 - Building name and address
 - Nearest cross street
 - Floor and room number
 - Known information about the fire/smoke
 - Your call-back number
 - **DO NOT HANG UP UNTIL OPERATOR DOES SO.**
5. If time allows, notify the Church Administrator @
6. If you evacuate, use the nearest safe exit point. **DO NOT USE ELEVATORS.**

If You Receive a Bomb Threat Call:

1. Keep the caller on the line and obtain as much information as possible:
 - When is the bomb doing to explode?
 - Where is the bomb?
 - What does it look like?
 - What will cause it to explode?
 - Did the caller place the bomb?
 - What is the caller's name and address?
2. Record the time of the call, words of the caller, and any background noises.
3. Notify the Church Administrator by dialing They will notify occupants and law enforcement.
4. If any suspicious object is found, **DO NOT TOUCH IT.** Move people away and notify the Church Administrator.

5. The decision whether or not to evacuate usually is the responsibility of the Church Administrator.

If There is a Medical Emergency:

1. Call Paramedics by dialing 911. Tell them:
 - Building name and address
 - Nearest cross street
 - Location and name of victim
 - Nature of the emergency or victim's condition
 - Caller's call-back phone number.
 - **DO NOT HANG-UP UNTIL OPERATOR DOES SO.**
2. Notify Church Administrator by dialing (if a physician has been called, an escort should be arranged for him or her.)
3. Station someone at nearest building entrance to guide and escort paramedics to the victim.
4. If properly trained, assist the victim, but do not move the victim unless there is danger of additional, more serious injury.

If There is a Tornado:

1. Stay as calm as possible.
2. Move away from windows and interior glass partitions.
3. Small interior rooms, bathrooms, and windowless, interior hallways that are away from exterior doors offer the best protection.
4. Evacuate all upper-level areas. The lowest level is always the safest.

Emergency Locator Information:

Church:

Address: