

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT **GUIDE** FOR **FAITH COMMUNITIES**



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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Attacks on faith institutions and facilities are unfortunately on the rise across the continent. When sacred places of worship are attacked or confronted by harmful activities the harmony of services, worshippers and the cohesion of the communities these facilities service are threatened.

This toolkit and resources has been put together to share best practice in incident management for the situations Places of worship may have deal with or should prepare to deal with in the future. Threats and attacks can be traumatic and in some serious cases lead to harm to people involved in the institution and congregation. This guide is part of a series of incident management guides developed by Enhancing Faith Institutions as part of the SOAR Project that will help guide and support managers in places of worship to reduce the potential risks and areas of concern in responding to a potential incident.

S. Warich.

Shaukat Warraich
DIRECTOR - SOAR PROJECT



Follow the steps in this guide to help ensure your faith institution is fit to respond to an incident

Step 1 - Preparing makes sense

Step 2 - Response Team

Step 3 - Immediate response

Step 4 - Respond

Step 5 - After the incident



At the back of the store Kit are:

- A place to record your organisation contacts and those for your local area such as Police and Local Council.
- Forms to record descriptions of suspicious looking people or vehicles that may have been in the area at the time an incident takes place.



This toolkit and resources can be downloaded and printed at:

www.soarproject.eu & www.efiorg.eu

PREPARING MAKES SENSE



Your management and executive team should meet and assess the levels of risk for your buildings, congregation, neighbours and local community. Agree to create a response team with a "Designated Safety Officer" (DSO) responsible for all safety and security matters.

PREPARE AND PLAN

Your management and executive team should meet and assess the levels of risk for your buildings, congregation, neighbours and local community. Agree to create a response team with a "Designated Safety Officer" (DSO) responsible for all safety and security matters.

KEEP OUTSIDE AREAS CLEAN & VISIBLE

Remove potential fire hazards, such as rubbish and debris and trim shrubs and vines to reduce areas of concealment. Test perimeter floodlights to cover the outside grounds and parking spaces.

CONTACT DETAILS

Establish contact with community policing, fire, and local authority safety officers. Develop a partnership approach to information sharing between staff, volunteers, and external agencies.

LOCKING UP & SECURING PREMISES

Agree on a rota of opening and closing times of the premises with designated personnel taking responsibility for inner premises security and outer boundary security. Have a spare set of keys in a secure off-site location.



TEST ALARMS AND CAMERAS

Test fire (smoke and heat) and security alarm systems that are connected to local police and fire departments where possible.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Review all emergency exits, entry points, fire hydrants; all staff need to be aware of emergency protocols.

COMMUNICATION

Keep your congregation informed on any developments and changes in procedures and protocols of your place of worship. The "Designated Safety Officer" (DSO) should be accessible at all times. Keep your website and all social media platforms updated regularly.

RESOURCE BAG

First aid kits, high visibility jackets, torch, spare keys, hazard and cordon tape, floor plans, should all be included in the resource bag. A Contact poster should be displayed in admin office and on communal notice boards.

PREPARING MAKES SENSE

1



When a crisis hits, the first response is often uncertainty and fear. No matter how much we prepare, an adverse situation can catch us off guard and may leave us momentarily wondering, "What do I do now?"

It is impossible to know precisely when an incident will occur. With the right insight, preparation and planning we can not only survive a difficult event but manage it to protect our staff, premises, congregation, service users and community.

Our first duty is to conduct our daily activity with care and thought so that incidents are rare. When potential challenges do occur, we must behave and communicate responsibly in accordance with the public and our organisation's interests until the issue is resolved.



This guide aims to help you and your organisation prepare, plan, and respond well, reduce the impact and recover from an incident. Following the steps in this guide will help you through those difficult first moments and then deal with an incident as it unfolds.

Preparing to support a major incident in your area

Think about how as a faith organisation in the local community you can help if a major incident occurs in your area

Preparing to give advice and guidance about your religious group including practical matters ie medical issues, hygiene, diet and in the case of fatalities body storage, handling and funeral arrangements.

Being ready to make offers of support ie a place for prayer, providing people who can translate and interpret for community languages in your area.



TIP: DAILY CHECKS

- Check exits are clear and accessible
- Bullet point check CCTV camera on and recording

PREPARING MAKES SENSE

1



Place of worship safety and security review



MORE INFORMATION

Further guidance on risk assessment and detailed incident planning and preparedness is available from
soarproject.eu

RESPONSE TEAM

2



Plan to put in place a response team to cover any major issue with your congregation or place of worship

Consider the following roles and responsibilities



Make a note of the contact details for your response team and key people in your organisation and locally using the response contacts template.



SAFETY OFFICER

Usually manages incident response

- Coordinate response activities.
- Request support and resources as needed.
- Record actions and progress, chase them until they are completed.
- Record issues and monitor progress in sorting them out.
- Identify and raise issues that require leadership team or trustee decisions.
- Focus on the health, safety and security of place of worship, staff, congregation members, service users.



Environment, Safety, Health & Safety Officer

- Identify current and potential Security, Health and Safety issues. Put in place actions to address them to reduce the likely impact of them.
- Get support in addressing any unresolved issues.
- Respond to inquiries from related local and other government agencies or the emergency services.
- Put in place informative post incident signage at place of worship.

RESPONSE TEAM

2



Media Officer

- Identify affected groups and understand their information needs.
- Draft messages and communication materials and get them approved by your senior leadership.
- Put in place and deliver a communication approach and plan.
- Manage media enquiries and keeps all web related platforms up to date.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on media coverage.
- Keep all internal and external stakeholders informed.



Human Resources Officer

- Ensure all staff and volunteers are accounted for and call in additional help as required to assist in responding to the incident.
- Ensure trustees, management committee members, clergy, paid staff and volunteers are kept up to date.
- Determine if further support e.g., counselling, time away from work, etc. will be needed.



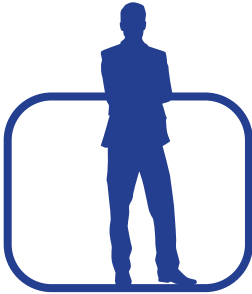
TIP:

SCENARIO PLANNING

Consider the following incidents either at or against your place of worship: fire, terrorist attack, demonstration, negative publicity, media accusation, suspicious mail, internal accident.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

3



- The first person on the scene should assess what has happened and get together the basic information needed to put in place a good response.



**SURVEY
THE SCENE**



**ASSESS THE
SITUATION**



**RECORD AND
DISSEMINATE**

- **CASUALTIES**
Approximate numbers of dead, injured and an uninjured
- **HAZARDS**
Present and potential
- **BEST ACCESS**
Routes for emergency vehicles
- **LOCATIONS**
The exact location of the incident
- **EMERGENCY SERVICES**
And other agencies present and required
- **TYPE OF INCIDENT**
And brief details of the number of vehicles, buildings, etc.
- **SAFETY**
Take appropriate action to protect people from immediate danger



TIP:

If you are not the Safety Officer contact them immediately.

CHECKLIST



To talk to the response team and the police



Warn people of hazardous materials, locations, and/or objects, and prevent them from approaching.



Evacuate the buildings if required



Send colleagues to attend to immediate needs as required



Contact your response team in place



Make the call to the police



Main witnesses to remain at the scene to brief response and police

Get good information to help decide what to do next

- **What happened?**
- **How bad is it?**
- **How bad could it be come?**
- **What is the potential for escalation?**
- **What potential impacts or consequences could result?**
- **Were there any suspicious people and vehicles around?**
- **If so use the description forms at the back if anyone thinks they saw something.**



In the event of an incident whilst congregational prayer or religious event is taking place

Choose a member of the response team to speak

Give clear direction on whether to stay where they are or leave the building, whether to go home or to an assembly area or to return to the building.

RESPOND

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Depending on the nature of the challenge the response team must assess the incident and work out the actions needed .

Manage the Incident

Agree response actions and deliver them with your team.

Ask for help (MAKE THE CALL) and resources as needed.

Look at the potential impacts of the incident for your organisation and what can be done to reduce the impact of negative ones.

Regularly keep in touch with all relevant people (refer to the contact poster).

Tell people what they need to know

If there is a danger to people or property, contact the Police and other emergency services such as fire, ambulance and medical, or other necessary first responders.

Tell key contacts within your organisation.

If experts are on the scene explain your situation and then follow their advice and step back until called upon for your support e.g. experts: bomb disposal officers, environmental experts and mental health professionals.

Talk with any affected family members and ensure appropriate support is given.

Manage Communications

As events unfold and as more information is available, you may want to communicate further. Communication efforts will need to evolve from a simple statement.

A list of local contacts should be kept; use the template in this toolkit to do this. Every incident will be different. Your organisation's senior leadership with the response team will need to agree on the communication approach and any statements or key messages before they are shared widely. Critical in all communications is sticking to the facts, honesty and ensuring clear communication with local government and emergency services staff as well as your congregation and stakeholders.

Consider

Internal Communication and the type of message to the:

- **Trustees**
- **Senior leadership staff**
- **Worshipers**
- **Stakeholders**

External communication and the style and scope of the messages to

Media - TV, Radio, Newspapers, Online

From your website, Social Media platforms - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube

To and with statutory bodies - Police, Prevent team, Council, Schools

Wider faith and non faith local communities

Where you need to respond quickly make a simple statement that is non-committal regarding the facts, but expresses the organisation's concern.



Manage Communication

"We are working to address the situation, as well as to get an understanding of the facts. We will be back to speak with you as soon as possible."

As events unfold and as more information is available, you may want to communicate further. Communication efforts will need to evolve from the simple statement to messages and materials that better define:

- **What happened**
- **How your organisation is responding**
- **What your organisation is doing to mitigate the crisis, including the protection of staff and the community**
- **How the organisation will continue to meet congregation and service user demands**
- **What the organisation is doing to prevent a similar situation in the future**
- **Acknowledge the support that has been provided thus far from either the statutory agencies, worshipper and or wider society/community**

AFTER THE INCIDENT

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Learning from an incident and sharing experiences internally and externally is vital in making future responses more effective and helping others in the faith community

When the incident has been addressed

Management and leadership colleagues should be highly visible following incident to reassure staff, volunteers, congregations, service users and the local community.

A senior colleague

A senior colleague should clearly acknowledge what has happened.

Staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers should be asked to talk about their experience and any concerns they have about the incident.

Get any affected services back to normal and staff and volunteers back to work as soon as possible.

Follow up actions

How to respond

- Talk about how the response to the incident went, what went well and what could be improved and share these for comment and discussion to management and staff.
- Update or write preparedness plans with all local partners.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT CONTACTS

		 Mobile	 Email
	Chairperson	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Secretary	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Designated Safety Officer (DSO)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Faith leader 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Faith leader 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Faith leader 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Caretaker	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Treasurer	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Community Police	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Police Station	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Fire Service	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Council contact	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Safe Guarding Officer	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Further guidance on risk assessment and detailed incident planning and preparedness is available on:
soarproject.eu



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SUSPICIOUS PERSON DESCRIPTION FORM

Glasses

Ears

Nose

Height

Colour/Race

**Body markings tattoos/
scars/moles**

Distinguishing Features

**Additional information/
location**

Hair colour / style

Face Shape

Eye colour

Facial hair

Build

Dress/Jewellery

Age

Gender

Mannerisms

SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE DESCRIPTION FORM

The diagram shows a side profile of a car with several yellow lines pointing to specific areas, each corresponding to a label and a form box:

- Registration**: Points to the front of the car, with a form box above it.
- Damage/Condition**: Points to the roof of the car, with a form box above it.
- No. of Doors**: Points to the side of the car, with a form box above it.
- Vehicle**: Points to the front of the car, with a form box to the left.
- Make/Model**: Points to the front of the car, with a form box to the right.
- No. of Persons Male/Female**: Points to the side of the car, with a form box to the left.
- Speed/Direction**: Points to the front of the car, with a form box below it.
- External features eg. roof rack, stickers, flags**: Points to the front of the car, with a form box below it.
- Colour**: Points to the front of the car, with a form box to the right.

Location of vehicle

Reason for suspicion

Additional information



SOAR

STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY AND RESILIENCE
OF AT-RISK RELIGIOUS SITES AND COMMUNITIES

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