

SECURITY CHECKLIST



Parish / Neighborhood

- ✓ Is the area around the parish free of crime generators, such as seedy late-night social establishments, low-income housing, or social services?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is recommended that the Pastor take special consideration to follow the rest of this checklist with key emphasis on the perimeter and external grounds sections.

- ✓ Can the parish building be observed from surrounding facilities and streets?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is recommended that you remove as many obstacles as possible, that deter from maintaining a secure area.

- ✓ Are neighborhood streets and walkways in the immediate parish area well lit?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is recommended that a parish representative meet with community organizations and local representatives to consider adding adequate lighting in the area; or add additional lighting on parish property to achieve this goal.

- ✓ Are non-parish members prohibited from using parish property for recreational purposes?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is recommended that the parish restrict activity except for those events that are sponsored by the parish and develop a control point for the recreational area.

- ✓ Is the parish located in an area that has an active neighborhood watch program?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is recommended that a parish representative work with the local police precinct to establish a neighborhood watch for the safety of the community.

The neighborhood in which the parish is located can have a significant bearing on the security and safety of your structures. Parishes with a clear line of sight from the neighbors and public access streets provide less opportunity for vandalism. Also, parish property for public recreation provides opportunities for strangers to evaluate and scope out the area without suspicion.

If your parish does not have an active neighborhood watch program, it might be good to generate local interest, establish a program, and actively participate in it.



Property perimeter

- ✓ Are property boundaries of the parish easily recognizable?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the boundaries of the parish maintain some type of distinction between the parish property and the adjacent properties by placing signs or placards. Fencing is another way to achieve this separation. Chain link or other material that maintains a line of sight is preferable.

- ✓ Is there a marquee or other sign(s) visible from the adjacent roadway that identifies the presence of a house of worship?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a sign/marquee be placed near the roadway to clearly identify the property as belonging to the Roman Catholic Church.

- ✓ Are there signs near the property perimeter directing visitors to the appropriate locations for building entry?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a sign direct any visitors from the entry points to the location of the worship space. A sign should also direct individuals to the office when the parish is locked.

- ✓ Are the parish building and grounds visibly accessible to patrolling law enforcement vehicles?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the Pastor contact local Law Enforcement professionals to survey the area and make suggestions on how to provide adequate clearance around the grounds in the event of a crime against the parish.

Controlled access to property can often be difficult to manage. However, in the long run it protects the people and the property from uninvited individuals. In the event of an emergency, it is important that emergency vehicles can locate the troubled area quickly. If law enforcement officials have a good view of the area, it helps them locate difficulties quickly.



External grounds

- ✓ Are designated parking areas well lighted?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that surface areas have at least one-foot candle-light level during periods of darkness. The best way to judge this is to inspect the area at night to see if there are any areas that might be difficult to observe.

- ✓ Are walkways and building entrances particularly well lighted?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish invest in adequate lighting for their parishioners. The pedestrian walkways and building entrances should have at least five-foot candle-light level during periods of darkness.

- ✓ Are all sides of the parish illuminated by exterior lighting?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish exterior have adequate lighting so that a person is visible when walking along every side of the building.

- ✓ Are the parish’s exterior lights controlled by a photoelectric cell that turns on at dusk and off at dawn?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that lights with photoelectric cells be installed. Photoelectric units that screw into a light fixture are available for most types of light fixtures at a nominal cost.

- ✓ Is someone responsible for checking the operations of all exterior lighting at least once a week?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone in the parish be responsible for checking the operations of lighting and other security appliances on a frequent and regular basis. A formal written process of checking operations should be established, maintained and recorded in a log.

- ✓ Is there a reliable process for the timely repair of inoperative external lighting?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that arrangements be made to have a vendor available for repairing the lighting as soon as possible.

- ✓ Are exterior lights without pockets of shadow or glare?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that additional lighting be installed to eliminate shadows and that existing lighting be relocated or adjusted to avoid glare.



- ✓ Are switches, breakers or electrical panels that control lighting inaccessible to the public?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that an electrician be hired to relocate electrical boxes to inside the building, preferably in a secure area where limited access can be established.

- ✓ Are external playgrounds enclosed by a sturdy fence?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that a secure fence be installed around the area where children are allowed to play. The fence should be sturdy and provide visual access to the grounds for safety.

- ✓ Do external playgrounds have a restricted entry point?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that access points be controlled and strict access to the playground be maintained. Young children should always be supervised by a parent or a trusted and certified person.

- ✓ Are sight lines from the parish to the playground unobstructed by landscaping or other means?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that any landscaping or other obstructions that impairs the view from the parish be trimmed or eliminated. If not possible, a trusted individual should be supervising the playground when children are present.

- ✓ Does playground equipment have tamper proof fasteners?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that equipment be secured to the ground with tamper proof fasteners to avoid injury or damage.

- ✓ Are plants and vegetation trimmed in an appropriate manner so as not to serve as a hiding place ?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that plants and other obstacles within 6 feet of a parking lot, pedestrian walk or building entrance be trimmed to a height of no more than 2 feet. Tree branches should be no lower than 7 feet.

- ✓ Are there informal pathways that may serve as a security risk?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all informal pathways that may serve as a security risk be roped off or landscaped so that the pathway is not used.



- ✓ Are exterior or detached buildings or facilities well-constructed and secured?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that areas for potential intruders to hide are removed. Recesses and alcoves along building walls and narrow spaces between buildings should be evaluated for corrective action.

- ✓ Are dumpster covers locked and is the trash or dumpster in a secure well lighted area?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that dumpsters be maintained in a secured area and locked. Dumpster areas should be away from building and any other structures that could be set on fire.

- ✓ Are the exteriors of buildings free from recesses that can serve as a hiding place for an intruder?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone from the parish responsible for security contact the local Law Enforcement Agency to determine how best to reduce or eliminate areas where intruders can hide.

Exterior grounds around the campus of the parish can serve as areas where intruders can hide to avoid detection. Often, these obstacles can make the difference between someone actually entering a location, or just passing by. It is important that the parking lot and areas commonly used by parishioners are adequately lit and visible, especially at night. Areas where children tend to congregate and play are also locations that should be heavily scrutinized. It is recommended that the lighting be strong enough to adequately see all areas of the parking lot and grounds, especially areas where there are trees and plants that may be along the parish boundaries.

Protecting children from criminal intent is a priority. Pastors of parishes should develop a process that ensures the safety and security of all children while allowing them to enjoy their surroundings, including outside areas like playgrounds.

Also, of important consideration to the exterior part of a campus, are any loose items that are not adequately fastened down, including trash, as these objects can be used as potential projectiles to maim someone or destroy property. Dumpsters, in particular, are often set on fire as a means to deter a Law Enforcement Officer from tracking down someone who has committed a crime.



Building perimeter

- ✓ Are visitor entry points clearly identified?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that entry into the building is clearly marked and controlled. This includes signs indicating where the parish or school office is located, especially during hours outside of Mass times.

- ✓ Is the parish designed in a manner that visitors MUST check in at an administrative office before they access other parts of the building?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended to take additional precautions to guide visitors to the proper location and to maintain security in other locations by keeping the doors locked when not being used.

- ✓ Is the designated visitor entry point under the constant visual supervision of an employee or volunteer?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a designated entry point be assigned where a visitor can be welcomed by someone from the staff and provide entry when necessary. Surveillance cameras are of great assistance here.

- ✓ Is there a strategy or program to detect and eliminate “propped-open” exterior doors at the parish?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that all exterior doors be locked without the possibility of being propped open and left unattended; especially in areas where there is no activity. The best way to correct this is to negate items used to prop open doors, such as door stops, and to train those who use the building.

- ✓ Are locations where gas and electric utilities enter the parish secured?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish invest in a secure area where simple access to utilities can be controlled to avoid tampering.

- ✓ Have the exterior handles and door trim been removed from emergency exits?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all emergency only exit doors be replaced with doors that have no exterior handles, and that the trim be removed to help prevent possible entry from the outside.



- ✓ Are perimeter entryways equipped with full flush metal or solid core doors and a deadbolt lock?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the entryway doors be replaced with at least 1¾” thick doors and secured with a deadbolt lock. Door hinges should not have pins that can be removed from the exterior, and should have extra-long screws seated firmly into a solid foundation. Local fire codes should be referenced for best results.

- ✓ Are exterior doors that are not regularly used as designated entry points locked to prevent entry from the exterior?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all these doors be locked so that entry from the outside cannot be accomplished, and people are directed to the controlled entrances.

- ✓ Are the locks on all building entry points functional and in good working order?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all entry points be repaired and checked regularly.

- ✓ Is there no more than 1/8” clearance between exterior doors and door frames?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the doors be repaired or replaced to help avoid the possibility of prying the door open.

- ✓ Do exterior door frames have reinforced strike plates secured by at least four 3” or longer screws?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all exterior doors have these strike plates and screws installed.

- ✓ Are exit doors equipped with push-pads rather than push-bars that may be more easily opened with a coat hanger?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish invest in adequate cylinders and deadbolts; and that all these doors be replaced to help avoid unauthorized entry.

- ✓ Are double-hung windows and horizontal sliding windows equipped with an auxiliary locking device or interlocking sashes to prevent sliding a small flat blade between the sashes to unlock the window?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that these windows have a device to obstruct access with a thin blade/tool.



- ✓ Are windows below or partially below grade provided with grills, security screens or burglary resistant glazing material?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that window wells be covered with an obstruction that is consistent with Life Safety Codes. Otherwise, these are great hiding places for someone who might want to do harm or vandalize.

- ✓ Are windows in concealed areas equipped with grills, security screens or burglary resistant glazing material?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that all windows be properly secured to avoid unauthorized entry while maintaining safety for those who are in the building.

- ✓ Is there a clear responsibility for unlocking and locking the parish each day and night? Alternatively, are these functions electronically controlled?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish assign a person(s) who would be responsible for locking and unlocking, to include checking the interior areas to make sure no one is in the building before they leave. Electronic magnetic locking systems work great to establish this type of control.

Building security in and around the build perimeter is important to maintaining a good security system. Assigning a person or a team of people to look for areas of potential violations on a regular basis is a good idea; especially, if you have a large complex of buildings.

A good routine of having someone conduct a daily walk through to check for any damage or potential forced entry is always a good idea. Areas where someone can hide such as window wells and concealed areas will sometime invite intruders since they know they have areas where they can go undetected. Doors left propped open are easy access points, especially if not attended by someone from the parish. Make sure you take care to secure these areas quickly.



Electronic intrusion

- ✓ Does the parish have an electronic intrusion detection system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that some type of burglar alarm be installed. Even in small parishes, a burglar alarm can help deter unauthorized entry.

- ✓ Does the alarm system cover all exterior entry points?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that additional equipment be purchased to account for all exterior entry points, including windows.

- ✓ Are there clear signs and/or decals posted on the exterior of the building indicating the facility is equipped with an alarm system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that, as a minimum, decals be acquired or purchased from the company where the alarm system was procured. A simple sticker on a window may prevent illegal entry.

- ✓ Is the alarm system centrally monitored?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the system is able to notify a central monitoring location through the ‘cloud’ in the event of an emergency. Systems with a loud local annunciator are also a good deterrent.

- ✓ Are appropriate parish members and staff formally trained in arming and disarming the system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that everyone who requires entry when the system is armed, receive the appropriate training. Many false alarms are generated because of poor procedures and practices.

- ✓ Is there a preventative maintenance program for the alarm system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that intrusion detection systems be inspected and serviced at least annually by a trained and certified technician.

- ✓ Is there a process, procedure or protocol for the periodic replacement or upgrading of an alarm system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a periodic evaluation be accomplished that can assess the technology and upgrade, as needed.



- ✓ Are the arm/disarm codes for the alarm system changed and reissued at regular intervals, at least annually?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a plan be put in place to control and change the alarm system code at least annually. It is also prudent to change the code as employees leave their position and no longer need access.

- ✓ Are the names and numbers of persons on the central station call list reviewed and updated at least annually?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a review be conducted immediately, and a plan put in place to update the list of names on a periodic basis.

Some type of an alarm system is always good. Even for smaller parishes who may not need a sophisticated system, there are inexpensive items that can be purchased that can deter a potential intruder, such as stickers and signs. A camera system can be purchased for a small investment. However, the alarm system can only help if it is maintained and properly serviced. With the evolution in cloud technology, monitoring that triggers events through cell phones is a convenient way to ensure safety and security at every parish of any size.



Electronic access control

- ✓ Are primary exterior doors controlled by a functioning electronic access control system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a magnetic swipe or proximity device be installed, depending on the needs of the parish.

- ✓ Are building exit doors equipped with an electronic alarm?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all exit doors have some type of device to allow personnel to know that someone has entered. This could be as simple as a bell attached to a door handle.

- ✓ Is the database of card holders for the electronic system periodically audited to deactivate users who no longer need access?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone review the database periodically and that a policy be put into place that includes modifying the database as a part of orientation and exit procedures in human resources.

Controlled access allows people to know that they are not able to enter without authorization. Even simple controls go a long way to avoid someone going through protected information. Knowing that someone has entered the office or the parish building during off hours goes a long way to secure your facility and maintain a safe environment for others.



Video surveillance system

- ✓ Does the parish currently have a Closed-Circuit Television video surveillance system (CCTV cameras)?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that one be installed. At a minimum, points of entry/exit, high-liability areas, and valuable asset storage locations should be covered (e.g. collection drop location, A.V. storage, etc.).

- ✓ If the parish currently has a video surveillance system, is it used to view vehicle parking areas or playground areas?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that coverage be expanded to include these areas as they are generally vulnerable to crimes to both persons and property.

- ✓ If the parish currently has a video surveillance system, is it used to monitor perimeter access control?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that coverage be extended to include areas such as office entrances, delivery locations, after-hours access (Rectory, Adoration Chapel, etc.).

- ✓ Is there a preventive maintenance program for the video surveillance system?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone be designated to regularly ensure the computer operating systems and hardware are up to date and functioning properly. At least annually, a certified technician should inspect the entire system and perform cleaning and maintenance.

A quality video surveillance system is an essential component to maintaining the safety and security of parishes of all sizes. Modern systems are a cost-effective way to deter criminal behavior and can be utilized to assist with the identification and prosecution of suspects, should a criminal event occur.



Interior building areas

- ✓ Are all interior hallways and rooms well lit?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all lights should be made operable and set to a reasonable brightness level. Lighting controls should be secure and tamper resistant. If motion activated, times should be set long enough to allow for effective movement through the area.

- ✓ Are there doors or other means to secure sections of the parish when that section is not in use?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that these measures are put in place (doors, gates, etc.). For areas that need access after-hours (meeting spaces, Adoration Chapel, etc.), controlled access for those users should be limited only to the specific area of the parish that is being utilized.

- ✓ Are areas under stairwells enclosed or otherwise inaccessible?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that these areas be secured so as to limit hiding places and/or areas vulnerable to the placement of destructive devices.

- ✓ Are building restrooms located to maximize visual surveillance, such as near classrooms or staffed areas?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that a trusted individual accompany children to the restroom, especially if other, non-educational services are also occurring in the area.

- ✓ Are interior lights in restrooms controlled by key switches or motion-activated?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that wall switches for restroom lighting be replaced with motion detectors or turned on continuously via key switches when the parish is occupied.

- ✓ Are public restroom entry doors configured so that they cannot be locked from inside the restroom?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that restroom entrances not be capable of locking from the inside, when possible. For single occupancy facilities, a key should be readily available to staff in the event that entry needs to be made due to medical or another emergency situation.



- ✓ Are interior doors routinely tested to ensure that they close and lock properly and that the hardware is in a good state of repair?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone be designated to check this regularly and that malfunctioning hardware be repaired/replaced promptly.

- ✓ Are there locks on mechanical room doors?

Yes No NAA

If “NO”, it is recommended that they be installed and that only designated staff should have access to building mechanical rooms.

- ✓ Are removable ceiling tiles (dropped ceilings) sealed in some way to indicate when they have been disturbed?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended to eliminate the entry points in the ceiling. A dropped ceiling can provide unauthorized access to rooms when walls do not extend from the floor to the ceiling. It is recommended that these areas be secured to prevent unauthorized entry, or at minimum, a system put into place to determine if access was made.

- ✓ Is there a reinforced and alarmed storage room or closet for the locked storage of portable parish equipment of significant value?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that one be established and that only designated parish staff have access to it.

Premise security does not end with the building exterior. Interior spaces should also be evaluated for proper safety and security measures.

Lighting should be sufficient to minimize physical hazards for those utilizing the space and to limit areas that might be used for an intruder to avoid detection.

Motion activated lighting is not only a good way to minimize electricity costs; it helps alert others, both inside and outside of the building, to movement occurring inside.

Spaces in the parish should be segmented and properly secured so that individuals are not allowed unauthorized access to areas where they are not permitted.

Locking hardware, door returns, gate latches, etc. should be regularly inspected for proper function.

It is essential that access to youth activities/classrooms be controlled so that only authorized individuals are permitted to enter.



Key management and control

- ✓ Is there a single person responsible for key issuance and record keeping?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone be designated. Periodic key audits should also be completed to ensure the accuracy of records and to verify that those individuals who have keys are still required to have them.

- ✓ Are key holders required to sign for keys?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that all individuals who are issued keys be required to sign a key holder agreement and are provided the rules/regulations for key use; including what action is required should they be lost or stolen.

- ✓ Is key duplication, prohibited except for authorized personnel?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all keys be labeled with “DO NOT DUPLICATE” or something similar, and that assignees are instructed not to make their own copies of keys.

- ✓ Are keys stored in a locked container with limited access?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that all spare keys are stored in a locked container and that only designated personnel be given access to it.

- ✓ Whenever a key is lost or stolen, are affected locks replaced or re-keyed?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that this practice be implemented. If replacement/ re-keying cannot occur in a timely fashion, additional security measures should be implemented (e.g. additional walkthroughs, perimeter checks, request for law enforcement patrols, etc.).

- ✓ Are the codes for electronic door locks or lock boxes, which are utilized to gain access to the building or specific rooms, limited to certain individuals and regularly re-coded?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that these access codes only be provided to individuals who have a bona fide need for them. They should also be changed at least annually, or whenever an individual’s access to the building / room is no longer necessary or has been revoked (e.g. meeting room, Adoration Chapel, employee separation, etc.).

When considering the physical security of a facility, the mechanical keys themselves play a major role. Fail-safe key control policies and procedures, when put in place, protect lives, valuables and the overall security of the facility.



It is critical that spare keys are securely stored and when issued, individuals are required to sign a key holder agreement. This agreement should include a requirement to immediately report lost or stolen key(s) and to return the key(s) upon separation (for employees) or when the assignment no longer requires them (volunteers), at a minimum.

If used, electronic door codes or lock box combinations should be disseminated only to those who need them and updated regularly to ensure access to certain areas is limited to those who are authorized.



Parish property inventory

- ✓ Is a specific staff member assigned the responsibility of maintaining the inventory of valuable parish property?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that someone be so designated and that an audit of parish assets and valuable equipment is completed annually. This audit should include at least one additional staff member, not generally responsible for maintaining the inventory.

- ✓ Is valuable parish property engraved/labeled with an owner applied number (OAN) that permits easy identification?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all valuable property is so labeled for easy identification. The set of identification numbers unique to the parish are also placed on vehicles, equipment or other valuables as an alternate means of identification to the manufacturer’s serial numbers.

- ✓ Is there a written (computerized) inventory of all valuable parish property, including serial numbers/OAN’s and approximate value?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that one is compiled and kept updated. This will assist with the recovery of stolen property, as well as assisting with insurance claims related to loss due to calamity.

- ✓ Are there written policies for personal use of parish equipment or property?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that one be developed. The policy should include, at a minimum, descriptions of what equipment (if any) is acceptable for personal use, the process for requesting its use, and the potential for personal liability if it is lost, stolen or misused.

Properly maintaining an inventory of all valuable parish property and assets, including a record of serial numbers, Owner Applied Numbers and approximate value will enhance internal accountability for equipment usage, assist with recovery/prosecution related to criminal events, and provide an accurate record for insurance claims.



Children and youth security

- ✓ Is there a written, up-to-date Child and Student Safety and Protection Policy?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is essential that the Pastor oversee the drafting of a Child and Student Protection Policy to be included in both the parish security plan and parish standard operating procedures.

- ✓ Is there a child and youth security training program for parish employees and volunteers?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that a parish-level child and youth security program be drafted and implemented in accordance with the policy adopted above. This security training would be in addition to the Archdiocese of Denver required Safe Environment Training (SET).

- ✓ Is there a parish policy that requires a background check of staff and volunteers?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that the parish comply with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. All clergy, religious, employees, and all volunteers working with children must have completed the SET, AND a background check and read and signed the Code of Conduct.

- ✓ Are fingerprints taken on all parish employees?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that parishes consider including the fingerprinting of all parish employees as part of the Child and Student Protection Policy and parish-level pre-employment or pre-volunteer procedures. Anyone who refuses to cooperate is highly suspect.

- ✓ Is there a policy requiring volunteers to be a member of the parish for at least six months before being directly involved in children and youth activities?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a parish volunteer has a history of parish registration and participation within the Archdiocese of Denver. Consider adding this as an item within the Child and Student Protection Policy.

- ✓ Are there uncovered windows in classrooms and youth activity areas?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that as finances permit, the parish consider installing tinted windows, window shades, or window blinds, as appropriate, in order to minimize the opportunity for nefarious surveillance by those who may intend harm.



- ✓ Is there a policy that requires two or more adults present during parish sponsored programs involving children and youth?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended the parish should review the VIRTUS Empowering God’s Children™ downloadable curriculum required to be completed by all clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers, and consider adding this precautionary procedure to parish policy.

- ✓ Is there a policy that requires an adult to announce to another adult when assisting a child in the bathroom or changing a diaper?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended the parish should review the VIRTUS Empowering God’s Children™ downloadable curriculum required to be completed by all Archdiocese of Denver clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers, and consider adding these procedures to parish policy.

- ✓ Is there a child tag system or other child check-in and drop-off procedure for Parish Masses?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that a parish draft a child check-in and drop-off procedure involving positive identification of the child and their respective parent/guardian.

Making sure that children and youth are protected from danger is of utmost importance both to the parish and to the parents of children. Every parish should have the necessary precautions in place whenever children are present. This area is essential to the operations of a parish.

Protecting our most vulnerable members of the Archdiocese of Denver, the children and youth, is essential. Additional resources are available online at the Archdiocese of Denver website Office of Child & Youth Protection page.



Parish security team basics

- ✓ Is there a designated person/team responsible for safety, security, risk management training and oversight?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that such a team be created from parishioner volunteers, including a team lead and alternate. The team lead should report directly to the Pastor or his designee on all security and risk management matters.

- ✓ Do you have a training program for staff and volunteers to address safety and security risks and mitigations?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is essential that a parish Security Team be trained in their duties and responsibilities when responding to a security threat or a safety-related incident. For team training resources, see the Parish Safety and Security Resources list and links provided separately.

- ✓ Do you have a written policy addressing personal protection of staff, members, and visitors?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish’s commitment to and efforts directed towards safety, security, and risk management be memorialized through a written parish-level policy. The Archdiocese of Denver advocates the parish’s appropriate employment of measures to deter potential aggressors while allowing the staff, visitors, and lay faithful to feel safe and secure during their time on the parish premises.

- ✓ Do you engage in regular and documented facility inspections and maintenance programs, including written policies for groups using the parish facilities?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that routine and periodic security and safety inspections be conducted in the parish buildings and surrounding premises.

- ✓ Do you have a written and followed emergency preparation and response plan and the personnel needed to oversee such a ministry?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the parish Security Team take the lead in drafting an emergency response plan for security threats, medical emergencies, and severe weather situations which may occur during the celebration of a Mass or other scheduled parish event. The emergency response plan would be subject to the approval of the Pastor or his designee.



A parish Security Team is a select group of volunteers and staff who serve the Lord by maintaining a safe and secure environment for worship, prayer, study and entertainment and socializing. The parish Security Team supports the parish's primary mission by adding layers of safety to the parish's activities and events. The emergency response plan may involve volunteers outside of the parish Security Team, such as medically trained personnel who are parishioners or part of the staff.

The parish Security Assessment checklist can be used for updating the Security Team membership, training and certification. In addition, it helps with preventative maintenance checks, such as those related to burglar/fire alarm systems, electrical panels, IT servers, plumbing, and HVAC.

Further, it is recommended that a written safety and security policy be drafted that requires a signature from each ministry or outside group which utilizes parish facility space. Consider an annual policy sign-off for groups that routinely meet at the parish (i.e. Knights of Columbus, Couples for Christ, etc.).



General Considerations

- ✓ Do you have a safety team that can take charge during an emergency?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that an individual or group of parishioners, be identified and trained to assist with this responsibility.

- ✓ Have team members undergone a thorough screening, including a criminal background check, mental health check, and Safe Environment Training?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that anyone who is a member of this team be vetted to ensure they do not pose a conflict of interest for the parish regarding the safety and security of the parishioners.

- ✓ Are team members trained to handle communication, evacuation, first aid, emergency response, and violent intruders, specific to parish needs?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a parish plan developed, and for the plan to be discussed with all Security Team members. Training in these areas is important to the overall safety and well-being of the parishioners and visitors.

- ✓ Has your Security Team discussed worst-case scenarios and developed responses to them?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that situations be discussed along with possible responses, including on-site training for worst-case scenarios, so that the Security Team will not be caught off guard.

- ✓ Has your team consulted area experts, such as police, paramedics, and firefighters?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that partnerships be developed with these organizations as part of your planning process. Communication and response will likely be more efficient with this work done ahead of time.

- ✓ Is your Security Team trained to help evacuate the parish and other buildings on your parish grounds?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that all members of the Security Team are aware of all main exits, for each building, and even ways of leaving the building(s) that are not necessarily known to the general congregation.



- ✓ Does your Security Team practice evacuation on a regular basis with staff, volunteers, and members?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that this safe practice be incorporated. Practices can range from announcements to table-top scenarios, or physical training opportunities. Having these conversations will mitigate panic among staff and parishioners in the event a critical incident, or violent altercation occurs.

- ✓ Is your Security Team trained to verbally de-escalate disruptive persons?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** the team be trained for a situation that may arise that is not violent, but has the likelihood of escalating to violence; verbal persuasion is often a strong deterrent.

- ✓ Is your Security Team trained in Use of Force and Control Techniques (Unarmed Self-Defense)?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that members of the Security Team are equipped with physical control techniques. This is the next level of force when verbal de-escalation fails. These techniques can help prevent a violent situation from occurring. It may also help to remove a disruptive person, prior to law enforcement’s arrival.

The ability to respond immediately to situations and to minimize the potential for harm requires training and expertise. Establishing good relationships with the local first responders and conducting simulated training is well worth the expense that may be required in the event of an emergency.

Training in de-escalation and unarmed self-defense will go a long way to minimize risk to others in the parish. The ability to delay or hold potential violent individuals until law enforcement arrives is key to avoiding catastrophic behavior; but requires training.



Medical response

- ✓ Does your Security Team include medical professionals who are responsible for providing first aid and calling for medical assistance in the event of an emergency?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that members of the Security Team are trained in basic first aid, CPR, use of AEDs, and other life-saving measures that can be accomplished until a trained medical professional arrives on the scene. It is also good idea to know if you have any parishioners that are medical experts.

- ✓ Do you train Security Team members to look for an emergency medical identification card on the injured or ill person to alert them to any known medical problems or allergies?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that a person who has medical experience provide the proper training for identifying individuals with medical issues. This will likely be accomplished by the first responder.

- ✓ Does your team maintain a fully stocked first-aid kit/kits?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** the parish should invest in a first aid kit for emergencies and maintain the kit up to date. Many items in a first aid kit have a shelf life that expires over time.

- ✓ Does the team have gloves readily available to protect them from blood and other potentially harmful bodily fluids?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that gloves be provided to those that may be in contact with someone who is bleeding. A fresh stock of gloves should also be a part of the first aid kit.

- ✓ Are members of your team trained in basic first aid, CPR and AED use?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** to have someone well versed in these first aid measures. These are especially essential for parishes with those prone to heart or lung diseases and not just in security events.

Medical response training is a good idea regardless of any other parish security measures. Many situations take place each year in parishes that require some knowledge in emergency medical treatment.

First aid training, CPR and use of an AED are vitally important to your parish, especially if you have older parishioners at your location. Knowing the number to the nearest emergency medical team is also vastly important when seconds can determine the life or death of a person.



Violence response

- ✓ Does your emergency response plan address the possibility of violent attacks?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is essential that the Security Team have a plan to confront a violent attacker(s) and enact evacuations and communications as soon as possible. It is expected that law enforcement personnel will take several minutes to arrive. The Security Team must have a plan to determine how best to respond until Law Enforcement Personnel arrive. It is always recommended that law enforcement personnel deal with such attacks.

- ✓ Has your Security Team determined which areas of your ministry are most vulnerable to attack?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that, as a part of your planning, the Security Team review ministry activities and determine the level of security risk involved in each area.

- ✓ Does your Security Team know how to prepare for and respond to a violent attack?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that members of the Security Team pre-plan their method(s) of response, to such an event. Ensure that discussions include deadly force responses and how members of the Security Team should respond when law enforcement personnel begin to arrive.

- ✓ Does your Security Team regularly participate in drills to review and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that team training occur on a regular, continuing and scheduled basis. It is also essential that documentation of such training be kept on file at the parish.

- ✓ Can your Security Team implement lockdown procedures in the event of a violent event within the parish?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that you add implementation into the training program of how Security Team members can secure the doors to direct evacuations and limit intrusion to specific areas on the parish grounds.

- ✓ Do you regularly communicate with your congregation about what to do in the event of an emergency; especially concerning their children that are in other areas of the building during Mass?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that lines of communication be developed to address these concerns. This communication can take the form of announcements before/after Mass,



bulletin articles, mailers, beginning of the year meetings with ministries and various parish groups.

- ✓ Does your Security Team have equipment that enables them to limit access to specific areas, such as children's classrooms and nurseries?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is **essential** that these areas be identified and properly secured.

- ✓ Does your parish have security cameras, panic buttons, silent alarms, or other types of security equipment to help ensure parish safety?

Yes No NA

If "NO", it is recommended that these security options be evaluated to increase the level of security for each parish.

It is essential to have a good plan available to try to defuse a situation. Procedures are also important to follow in the event of violence. Practicing with the Security Team for the possibility of a violent episode keeps procedures fresh in their minds and helps them correct mistakes in the event of an actual violent situation.

Some manner of response by the Security Team will have to take place until law enforcement arrives. Otherwise, members of the congregation will likewise respond as they deem necessary. This could cause confusion with regard to who is the aggressor.

If at all possible, a thorough review of the plan, and the logistics of a violent response with the local law enforcement representative, is imperative. The plan for a violent response must take into consideration the safety and protection of those in other areas of the building, especially children.



Firearms response

- ✓ Are armed Security Team members current or former law enforcement agents?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended that the Security Team consults your local law enforcement agency to ensure the armed members are acting within their legal bounds and are aware of the importance of being armed.

- ✓ Are they licensed to carry a (concealed) weapon in your state?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** to ensure the any armed member of the Security Team has legal authority to possess a firearm.

- ✓ Do you require team members who carry firearms to receive regular, formal weapons practice/training?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that all armed members of the Security Team provide proof they have undergone training that is relatable to the parish setting, it is also essential the parish keep this proof on file.

- ✓ Do your Security Team members follow a set of written guidelines as to how much force may be used against a person in a given situation?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is recommended they be formally directed by the pastor to utilize lesser forms of force (i.e. verbal de-escalation techniques, physical control techniques), if they deem them practicable.

- ✓ Have team members been trained how to resolve conflict without weapons?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** they be formally directed by the pastor to utilize lesser forms of force (e.g., verbal de-escalation techniques, or physical control techniques), if they deem them practicable.

- ✓ Are your Security Team members trained to avoid “friendly fire” and striking unintended targets who may be in the line of fire?

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that training topics in this area are conducted during regularly scheduled training sessions of the Security Team.



- ✓ Obtain from the Parish copies of their most recent Fire Alarm / Fire Sprinkler Inspection Reports and any deficiencies that have been repaired based on those reports.

Yes No NA

If “NO”, it is **essential** that the Parish receive a current inspection, and that any noted deficiencies are repaired/remedied; and copies thereof sent to the Security Team.

The Archdiocese of Denver is not recommending or even suggesting that firearms be present on the premises of any parish in the Archdiocese. This section is added in the event that a parish determines that armed Security Team members will be present in the congregation or on the Security Team.

If a parish determines that weapons need to be on the premises, it is vitally important that the individuals have the proper training and licenses in accordance with state law. Any use of force must be met with the least amount of disruption, and training in conflict resolution is an important element of your Security Team. It is also recommended the armed members of the Security Team consult their local law enforcement agency for assistance with any aspect of carrying a weapon on the premises.

