

Parish Safety Checklist

OK FIX

- Make sure exterior of building is well lit; security lights with automatic mercury switch timers along with motion detection lights are optimal.
- Signs and exterior crosses should be unbreakable, with individual lighting.
- Hedges or shrubbery should be kept low and well trimmed. Do not provide a place for criminals to hide.
- Fencing should be of the wire-mesh type. This prevents access while providing good visibility.
- Prune large trees near buildings. Branches can provide second-story access.
- Protect air conditioning units from copper theft with chain-linked fencing or caging around the equipment and wiring. Consider adding tamper sensors and irreversible screws.
- Do not leave ladders, tools, paint or equipment outside your building. You could be providing criminals and vandals with the means to commit a crime.
- During construction projects, secure materials nightly; do not leave wire spools or piping out in the open.
- Use interlocking hinge plates on doors. This makes it difficult to take a locked door off the hinges.
- Install a surveillance system consisting of video cameras and a recording device. A visible system can act as a deterrent.
- Establish a procedure for the use, distribution and collection of keys. Keep a list of who is given a key, when and for what activity.
- Keep all doors locked when unattended.

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- Keys should not be tagged. If a thief should get your keys, he or she has no way of knowing what locks they fit. Keys should be stamped with an identification number and the words "Do Not Duplicate".
- Assign responsibility for locking and unlocking the church/other building(s) each day.
- Install deadbolt locks with 1-inch throw on all outside doors (if local or state building codes permit). Make sure all outside doors are solid-core type with jimmy-proof frames. Hollow-core doors can be readily kicked in.
- Install locks on all windows.
- Protect stained glass and art windows with Lexan®, Plexiglas®, or laminated safety glass coverings. This protects them from thieves, burglars trying to gain entry and vandals. These are a good idea for all ground-level windows as well.
- Post a list of activities so that all members know when facilities are being used and by whom.
- Train your staff and volunteers to recognize suspicious people and activity. If a potential threat is perceived, then an appropriate response, such as contacting law enforcement, should follow.
- Establish a procedure for dealing with threats of violence that come by phone, letter or any other means. The authorities should immediately be contacted — let them assess the risk. No threat should be disregarded.
- After business hours, try to have people arrive and depart in groups or pairs. Avoid assigning space for staff/volunteer offices in empty or rarely used buildings.
- When working alone or at night, follow established safety methods to prevent unauthorized entrance.
- Ask local law enforcement to patrol your property on a regular basis.
- Special displays such as nativity scenes should be well lit and securely fastened to the ground.

