



Low-Cost Security Measures for Jewish Facilities

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GENERAL

Increasing awareness and training of the people who work, visit or are present in your facility on a regular basis – whether staff, faculty, clergy, parents, students or members – is one of the single-most effective ways to enhance the safety and security of your institution.

Preparing facility emergency information for stakeholders and first responders is one component of this. This should include: (1) a site plan showing surrounding streets, primary and secondary access points, fire hydrants, and power, water, gas, and communications line locations; and (2) reduced-size building floor plans showing room names and numbers, evacuation routes, building entries and exits, designated areas of refuge, roof access points, and the locations of the public address system panel, intrusion alarm panel, fire alarm panel, sprinkler shutoff, main power control panel, main gas or oil shutoff, oil storage tanks, main water shutoff, main HVAC shutoff, emergency generator, and fire hose boxes.

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

Use signs, vegetation, fencing, or other methods to clearly define property.

Well-defined boundaries demonstrate respect for and ownership of property, qualities that tend to be reciprocated by stakeholders and the community. In urban settings, sidewalks are often sufficient to define one or more sides, with objects, fences, or buildings defining the others. In rural settings, landscaping may be sufficient if properly designed.

Trim shrubbery and trees and relocate other obstacles such as trash containers, to eliminate hiding places and provide clear lines of sight throughout facility grounds.

Where vegetation obstructs vision, tree branches should be removed below 7 feet and bushes trimmed to 3 feet (18 inches for vegetation bordering walkways). This allows ready surveillance by staff, neighbors, and passing pedestrians as well as patrol cars.

Keep trees well-trimmed if they are located near building exits, access roads, and utility wires so they do not block site access and building entry and egress in an emergency.

Prevent access to windows and roofs by trimming trees, relocating objects near the building that can be used as climbing devices, and ensuring that down spouts, covered walkway supports, light posts, and other building or site features are not scalable.

Easy access to windows and roofs in some facilities exposes them to vandalism and robbery.

Secure roof hatches, operable skylights, and rooftop equipment doors and access panels.

Where possible, this is best done from within the building so locks and latches are not exposed.

Ensure that fire hydrants on and near facility grounds are visible and unobstructed.

Keep facility grounds and buildings policed, and make immediate repairs to damage inside or outside the building.

Well maintained facilities promote orderly behavior by demonstrating respect for and ownership of property. This helps prevent the spread of vandalism and ultimately lowers maintenance and repair costs.

Routinely inspect exterior lighting for damage and bulb wear, and make immediate repairs.

Individuals may be more likely to target a facility with poor lighting, and seek areas darkened by inoperable lighting.

Fence off or otherwise enclose niches and blind spots in exterior walls that provide hiding places.

Do not, however, impede or obstruct any means of egress. When exterior doors are involved, work with your local fire or building department.

Clearly mark and separate visitor parking.

Visitor parking should be easy to locate, within sight of the main entry, if possible, and separated from staff, member and/or student parking. Number non-visitor parking spaces and use signs to direct visitors to their parking area.

Keep bus and car access separated from facility buildings and play areas by curbs, removable bollards, or gates that allow emergency vehicle access but keep other vehicles at a distance.

Place traffic calming devices — stop signs, pavement markings, bumps — in parking lots and driveways.

Seek traffic calming advice from your state or local transportation department, a nearby university, or a private traffic consultant. For online information, see www.trafficcalming.org.

Ensure external entrances and exits on your building have a distinctive and easy-to-recognize numbering system to help emergency responders, staff, and visitors quickly locate particular points and/or find their way.

Clearly mark the main entry to the facility and post signs on other entries redirecting visitors to the main entry.

Signs should include arrows, maps, or directions, not just the statement “Visitors must report to the office.”

Ensure that the fresh air intakes for the building’s mechanical systems are screened and located at least 12 feet off the ground or are otherwise inaccessible.

This reduces the risk of accidental or intentional exposure to irritating, unhealthful, or dangerous substances.



INSIDE THE BUILDING

Limit the use of building entrances to one or as few as possible.

Adjust locking hardware on all other entrances so they cannot be opened from the outside without a key, proximity card, or other device.

Routinely inspect exterior doors for damage and faulty hardware, and make immediate repairs.

Frames, view lights, hinges, locks, and latches should be examined at least monthly, and lubricated, adjusted, and repaired as needed.

Install face plates at exterior door latches to prevent jimmying.

Face plate kits are available from door hardware suppliers and are easy to install.

Install fish-eye viewers in exterior doors lacking windows or sidelights to help identify those seeking entry.

Institute strict procedures for key control.

Where keys are used, their careful control enhances building security and reduces spending on re-keying locks and issuing new keys when they are lost or stolen.

Ensure that internal access points between organizations and sections of joint-use facilities are limited and secure.

Building egress routes cannot be compromised, however, so seek approval of new locking or blocking devices with the local fire or building department, always in consultation with the police department and/or SCN. Remember: different first responders have different priorities.

Where appropriate, number or renumber doors and rooms in a logical, sequential, floor-by-floor pattern so emergency responders can locate them quickly.

This includes numbering exterior and stairway doors. Consider removing door labels such as “Telephone Room,” “Mechanical Room,” etc., so room use cannot be identified by intruders.

Consider displaying room numbers on classroom windows so they are readily visible to first responders from outside the building.

Routinely inspect all windows accessible from the street for damage and faulty hardware, and make immediate repairs.

This helps prevent accidents and injuries and reduces the opportunity for the unauthorized passage of people, weapons, and contraband.

Ensure that all windows meant to provide a secondary means of escape are in working order and are not blocked by screens, security grills, louvers, awnings, or other devices.

Escape windows should be easily accessible, marked and readily opened from the inside.

Consider installing motion detectors inside the building that trigger intrusion alarms and alert the police.

Keep unoccupied rooms and spaces locked when not in use. This practice requires full cooperation by staff.

Consider keeping door latches in the locked position in occupied work spaces, classrooms and other areas so that in the event of a lockdown, individuals can simply pull doors shut.

This practice prevents the exposure of individuals as they step outside to lock their classroom doors. An alternative is to install ANSI F88 security hardware.

Keep egress paths — corridors, stairs, stairwells, and exits — clear of obstructions and flammable materials.

Examples of common fire code violations are: (1) obstructions such as empty cardboard boxes, boxes of used fluorescent light tubes, carts, lawnmowers, steel racks, ball racks, stored equipment; and (2) tripping hazards such as electrical cords, tools, lumber, and hoses. Decorative materials, streamers or fabrics on corridor walls or ceilings should be flame resistant.

In schools, ensure that no more than 20 percent of wall space in classrooms or hallways is covered with teaching materials and artwork.

Fire codes generally prohibit coverage greater than 20 percent for reasons of fire safety.

Ensure that corridor and restroom lighting controls are protected from unauthorized use.

Installing keyed switches is the simplest solution to this problem.

Ensure that all spaces in a facility requiring two exits have, two functioning exits.

This includes classrooms. Your local fire or building department can help make this determination.

Routinely check that exit signs are visible and illuminated.

Keep a supply of bulbs and spare fixture components to ensure immediate replacement and repair.

Routinely check that fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and other fire safety components are in good working order, and that staff is trained in the use of fire extinguishers.

Your local fire department may make routine inspections and provide training; if not, agree to a reasonable inspection and training schedule.

Post clear and precise emergency evacuation maps in building spaces and at key corridor locations.

Include at least two alternative evacuation routes. Color-code them “red,” “blue,” etc., for clarity.

Ensure that all offices, work spaces, and classrooms, have two-way communication with a central location.

Many buildings and schools have a P.A. system but many do not have a two-way intercom system. Providing cell phones (or subsidizing their cost), two-way radios, or portable duress alarms to staff are one way to address this problem. Cell phones and text messaging are particularly helpful for evacuating or sheltering disabled and special needs students in an emergency.

Install a panic or duress alarm at the reception desk and within the main office area to alert key staff.

Use caller ID on all phones to help identify and deter threatening callers.

Ensure that medical supplies are locked in an observable part of an office.

Ensure that designated areas of refuge have appropriate window and door protection.

This includes strong and lockable doors and windows for protection from high winds and flying debris.

If the building’s ventilation system has a master control, provide a shut-off switch in an identified location.

If that is not feasible, make sure administrative staff know where the master control is located and how to operate it. Conduct regular shut-off drills.

Ensure RF (radio frequency) communication is possible throughout the building.

This capability is critical for local emergency responders. Invite them to test all parts of the building. Where there are problems, install repeaters as necessary.

Install a battery or portable generator backup power supply for telephones and emergency communications.

Facilities without an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) should have a sufficient backup source to maintain voice communications for at least several hours, preferably 24. Routinely test the backup power supply.

Offer free and/or reduced cost memberships to first responders.

Increasing the presence of first responders in a facility and/or on a campus – whether a community center, house of worship or day school – can not only provide first responders with familiarity of a facility, but potentially allow for the prevention, mitigation or timely response to an incident while simultaneously increasing the connection between first responders and the community, itself.

Offer facilities as training locations.

First responder agencies and departments are consistently looking for training facilities. Whether offering a facility or organization’s workspace for specialized training – such as for a SWAT, K-9 or other team – or a multi-purpose, classroom, conference or board room for a training course, such an effort increases the relationship between the organization and first responders, improves first responder familiarity with a facility and ensures first responder presence.

Should you or your organization desire professional support, guidance and assistance in implementing any of the above, designing a strategic security framework, undertaking threat assessments, providing training or if you are in need of support for an incident or issue, please contact the SCN Duty Desk.

**SCN Duty Desk 212.284.6940
or email DutyDesk@SecureCommunityNetwork.org**

The Secure Community Network (SCN), a non-profit 501(c)(3), is the official homeland security and safety organization of the Jewish community in North America. Established under the auspices of The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, SCN is dedicated to ensuring the safety and security of the Jewish community through increased awareness, improved protection, enhanced preparedness, and effective response.

This publication is based on selected assessment measures from the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities Assessment Guides.