



High Holidays Security Planning Checklist

The High Holidays provide congregations with a valuable opportunity to review safety and security plans and procedures, and to re-emphasize the central role that safety precautions need to have in their organizational culture. This High Holiday Security Planning Checklist recommends various tasks and action items to consider as part of your High Holiday preparations, and ways to ensure your clergy, staff and members are familiar with your security measures.

Security Committee

- Appoint an individual to oversee and coordinate security planning. This may be a formal Security Director, an individual tasked with security-related responsibilities as a component of their broader portfolio (e.g., a director of the institution, facilities manager or similar role), or an individual with some knowledge or experience with security-related matters.
- Recruit community leaders, professional staff, and law enforcement liaisons to serve on a Security Committee for strategic planning.
- Ensure that clergy, staff, other leadership and congregants know their role in security and what to do in the event of an emergency or incident.
- Test existing safety devices and equipment (locks, cameras, lights, alarms, walkie talkies, AEDs, Epi Pens and other safety as well as first aid material) to ensure that they are in working order/not expired.
- Focusing on behavior rather than appearance, ensure that suspicious activity indicators are understood, such as nervous behavior, long coats in warm weather, and a lack of familiarity with the community and its customs.
- Establish a method for communicating suspicious activity or critical incident information across the community during the High Holidays.
- Create a plan for what people should do in case suspicious activity is witnessed or an incident occurs.

Security Plan

Review, assess and update your High Holidays security plan. Refer to additional materials in the SCN High Holiday Toolkit, including the [Low-Cost Security Measures Guide](#) and the [Community Guide for Working with Law Enforcement](#), for further guidance.

- Establish a layered perimeter security, with guards strategically placed at points surrounding your property.
- Devise parking strategies to set up physical barriers from roadways.
- Appoint an onsite security manager with full decision-making authority to oversee operations.
- Ensure greeters/ushers are trained on suspicious activity indicators, encountering unknown persons, and reporting suspicious activity as well as incidents.
- Review access control protocols.
- Identify all facility ingress and egress including driveways, curbside areas, parking, doors, etc.; access points should be kept to a minimum.
- Plan and practice scenario-based responses, to include suspicious behavior, threatening situation and evacuation/lockdown.
- Encourage clergy to make a safety and situational awareness announcement at the start of services.

Law Enforcement

- Initiate contact with local law enforcement.
- Engage law enforcement in your security planning process, to include a presence on the Security Committee.
- Notify law enforcement of High Holiday schedule, and revisit with them regularly as the holidays approach.
- Request increased law enforcement presence and visibility, taking walking routes into account.
- Consider hiring off-duty police officers as part of your layered security program.

Security Action Items Checklist

- Convene Security Committee; appoint High Holiday Security Manager; discuss current plans, procedures and proposed security plan.
- Conduct a security survey of your facility and neighboring area, paying specific attention to ensuring emergency exits are clearly marked and clear of obstruction, landscaping is carefully maintained, walkways are clearly marked, and camera and alarm systems are working properly.
- Request a meeting between the Security Committee and with law enforcement; review and discuss High Holiday schedule as well as security survey and assessment, and request support from law enforcement, to include increased patrols, presence as well as training (if offered) on suspicious behavior, reporting, etc.
- Determine your security plan for the High Holidays, reflecting current organizational policy, facility enhancements and maintenance requirements.
- Ensure that greeters and ushers attend High Holiday security training, including situational awareness, scenario based responses, identifying suspicious behavior, encountering unknown persons, countering an active threat, and evacuation/lockdown drills.
- Establish layered perimeter security procedures, with guards and protective measures placed at strategic access points throughout your property and building.
- Secure parking areas with controls in place for automobile and pedestrian access and traffic flow.
- Implement access control measures (e.g. limit points of entry)
- Review and train on emergency response procedures, to include lockdowns and evacuations
- Convene Security Committee, volunteers and security personnel for a final briefing in the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah.