Are you prepared?

5 steps to make your facility safer and more secure

Organizational leaders should work to strike a balance: to offer a warm and welcoming facility, while at the same time ensuring that their members, students, staffs, clients and building are safe and secure. Leaders concerned with everybody's safety and security should prepare to deal with emergencies, because "on the fly" reflexes might not be as effective as a pre-determined and rehearsed plan. While your "to-do" list at the beginning of the academic and program year is long, consider these tips to help you prepare for emergencies and ensure you can protect your constituencies.

1. Control access to your facility

No unauthorized person should be allowed to enter your facility. Every person entering your facility should be screened by security (or other) staff.

✓ **Limit entrances and exits.** Limit access to your facility to monitored entrances.

✓ **Don't slow down regular users.** Create a system to identify regulars (e.g., staff, members).

✓ **Screen irregular visitors.** e.g., people with appointments, contractors, etc. See more at Sample Building Access Policies & Procedures.

✓ **Divide your building into sectors**. Should people authorized to use one part of the building be able to wander into another? If you have an access control system, take advantage of its capabilities to allow specific access. Alternatively, use color-coded badges, wristbands or ID cards as a low-tech solution.

2. Plan your emergency response

Stuff happens. Emergencies are not events that you can handle on the fly. Consider having plans, procedures and designated teams empowered to make decisions during emergencies, and trained and prepared to respond to events.

✓ **Develop and train an emergency response team.** Designate someone to be in charge during an emergency and someone else as backup. Build a support team. Have the team work together on your response plans.

✓ **Build a relationship with your local police.** Work with your local police throughout the year and give them the opportunity to get to know your programs, your rhythms, your people and your building. Ask them

for suggestions as to how to make your people safer.

- ✓ **Know what to do if you receive a threat.** Get some ideas about preparing for phone, email or social media threats and evacuations and sheltering at: http://www.jcrcny.org/2017/02/to-evacuate-or-not-to-evacuate-that-is-the-question/.

- ✓ **Have an "active shooter" plan.** Do the people in your facility know what to do if a person with a gun or sharp-edged weapon shows up? Find more information at: www.jcrcny.org/activeshooter.

- ✓ **Be ready to tell people what's happening.** Don't let your stakeholders learn about an emergency at your facility from the media. Be prepared to communicate. Have some pre-written messages: be first; be right; be credible. Consider options including hardware and web-based emergency notification systems that will simultaneously email, text and phone pre-prepared lists, dedicated social media groups or free apps such as WhatsApp or GroupMe that will send texts (including a link to your website with more info and updates). Now is the time to collect the cell numbers of your stakeholders.

- ✓ **Involve your board in the security and preparedness process.**

3. Develop a routine

Security, done well, must be done daily and involve everybody.

- ✓ **Create a culture of security.** Everyone should feel responsible to report suspicious activity. "If you see something, say something" should be part of your culture of security.

- ✓ **Be aware of hostile surveillance.** *If you see something, say something.* If it is not an emergency, call the NYPD at (888) NYC-SAFE, outside NYC (866) SAFE-NYS. For more information download Indicators of Terrorist Activity from the NYPD, Guide to Detecting Surveillance of Jewish Institutions from the ADL at www.adl.org/security and Security Awareness by Paul DeMatties at Global Security Risk Management, LLC.

- ✓ **Schedule regular walkarounds**. Designate an employee to complete a "walkaround" of your building and your perimeter on a daily basis, if not more often. They should be looking for suspicious objects, items blocking evacuation routes and anything else that "Just Doesn't Look Right."

4. **Make sure you're getting the right information.** Sign up for alerts to learn when the local and/or global security threats conditions change. Sources: JCRC-NY Security Alerts at www.jcrcny.org/security, https://www.nypdshield.org/public/signup.aspx, emergency alerts from Notify NYC or your local emergency management office and have a weather app on your smartphone to warn you about severe weather.

5. **Work with your security provider and your staff to write, "post orders."** Your guards should not merely decorate your entrance. They should know what you expect them to do daily and in emergencies.

4. Don't forget to train

Major leaguers take batting practice before every game. True, they started batting in the Little Leagues, but drills help people to know, instinctively, what to do. Emergencies that turn to chaos become crises. People know what to do during a fire drill, because they have participated in fire drills since grade school.

Use tabletop exercises involving a wide swath of stakeholders to help you to determine policies and procedures. Once you have determined your plans and procedures, schedule evacuation and lockdown drills. And remember … once is not enough.

5. Explore your security hardware options

Your security hardware should support your security procedures. There are federal and New York State grants available for many organizations (see: www.jcrcny.org/securitygrants for more details). Consider obtaining the funding for:

✓ **Doors.** Your main and secondary doors should lock securely and be able to withstand an attack by a determined intruder.

✓ **Windows.** Do your windows lock securely? Reduce the risk of break-ins, vandalism and even mitigate the extent of injuries from bomb blasts by properly installing security/blast-mitigation film on your current windows or replacing them with windows with those properties built-in.

✓ **Access control systems.** The electronic possibilities are endless: access cards, biometrics, alarms and more. Get professional advice (see JCRC-NY's guidance on Security vendors), figure out a hardware plan that is expandable and adaptable.

✓ **Video monitoring.** Deploy CCTV systems in various ways. First, as part of a video intercom system to identify people seeking to enter your facility. Second, to monitor secondary entrances (you can add alarms that warn you that a door was opened, alerting someone to check the monitor), and finally, to help to detect hostile surveillance.

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RESOURCES

- www.jcrcny.org/security
- www.jcrcny.org/securityresources
- www.jcrcny.org/securitygrants
- www.adl.org/security
- Address your questions to: security@jcrcny.org