AfriForum

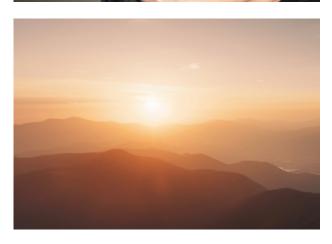# AFRIFORUM COMMUNITY SAFETY

Safety – Churches V1.1

By

AfriForum Community Safety

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First edition

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INTRODUCTION

Just like all other role-players in South Africa, AfriForum is concerned about the increasing occurrence of crime at churches which threatens the safety of congregation members. It undermines the basic right to a safe environment, and one cannot simply stand by watching idly while the government and law enforcers maintain an indifferent attitude.

The fact that there is substantial unhappiness in the broader communities across the country about the conditions at and accessibility to churches in the country is understandable. The cause of and solution to this problem have however been discussed extensively and is not the purpose of this guide.

OBJECTIVE

By publishing this guide, AfriForum wants to empower churches to act proactively by conducting an audit of the safety of both the church as well as its members, and by implementing measures to improve the safety of members in churches.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Incidents of crime in and at churches have made it clear that churches are not prepared for all the possible dangers they may be faced with. People in our communities should be able to live in a healthy and safe environment. This societal requirement cannot be fulfilled when churches are disrupted or threatened by crime.

AfriForum is of the opinion that a well-prepared church is a difficult target for criminal elements and that they would rather carry out their efforts in other ways and at other places. If they do however try to disrupt a church that is prepared, the risks and damages will be minimised, and timely action of stabilising elements will bring the situation under control more quickly.

WHY ARE CHURCHES VULNERABLE?

In the past, the state honoured its responsibility with respect to the safety of communities and there was no need for security companies or other institutions to look after the safety of churches. Church leaders are

therefore not necessarily focused on analysing risks and implementing safety measures. As a result, this limitation with regards to security must be addressed urgently, as crime is on the increase.

STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The structure of this guide is intended to assist in assessing and improving your church's safety plans. A brief summary is provided of the different risks that have been identified at churches. A general assessment questionnaire offers the opportunity to focus on the more specific evaluation aspects of the individual risks on a tactical level. The answers to these evaluation aspects will allow you to determine whether your church is sufficiently prepared to handle the various risks. Should this not be the case, the list will clearly indicate to you in which areas your church security needs to be ramped up.

Break-ins, fires and medical incidents represent reasonably common risks for every church in the country, while the other risks are more dependent on local circumstances. Vehicle theft and armed robberies affecting churches and their members are also unfortunately becoming more common, although the active crime doesn't always occur on the church grounds. This manual therefore offers guidelines so that churches, their staff, and their members can be prepared for these types of risks.

Summary of risks

This guide makes provision for the following risks:

- General break-ins

- Armed robbery

- Vehicle theft

- Medical incidents

- Arson

- Kidnapping

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR CHURCH SECURITY

Name of church:

District/town/city/ward:

Date of assessment:

Church minister(s):

Number of staff members:

Number of church members:

Other information:

	Safety aspect	Yes	No	Comments	Proposal
	Internal				
1	Is there already an updated contingency plan/ emergency plan for when an emergency occurs?				
2	Does the emergency plan make provision for all types of emergency situations that may arise, e.g. during an armed robbery or theft of a vehicle?				
3	Is there a copy of the emergency plan in every room or with every member of staff?				
4	Does everyone, including the members and all personnel, know the contents of the emergency plan?				
5	Is there adequate reaction from members and personnel when the emergency plan is activated?				
6	Are different alarms used for different threat incidents?				
7	Is there adequate training for staff to handle different emergency situations?				
8	Are doors and windows locked every time?				
9	Is there a system/procedure for safely controlling keys?				
10	Is there a register for all keys, indicating the room and key number?				
11	Are spare keys stored safely?				
12	Are security gates locked?				
13	Are evacuation plans rehearsed regularly in collaboration with the emergency services?				
14	Has provision been made for evacuation inside and outside the buildings?				
15	Have arrangements been made to keep the members calm if they have to gather in the hall or somewhere else?				
16	Is a map of the church and the church grounds available?				
	Infrastructure				
17	Are there serviceable fences that are high enough (approximately 2 metres)?				
18	Is the condition of the fences such that they constitute an effective deterrent?				
19	Are possible electric fences functional and safe for non-intruders?				
20	Is there security at night, such as guard dogs on the premises?				
21	Is there an effective alarm system?				
22	Can access to the church be effectively monitored?				
23	Are there remote-controlled gates?				

	Safety aspect	Yes	No	Comments	Proposal
24	Have burglar bars been fitted to keep out intruders?				
25	Are there effective safety gates inside and outside?				
26	Is the alarm system linked to armed response that can respond quickly?				
27	Are all locks effective?				
28	Have security lights been fitted to the outside of the buildings?				
29	Are CCTV cameras being used?				
30	Is there an intercom with a camera on the outside of the access gate?				
31	Are there beams outside?				
32	Is the outside alarm connected to floodlights?				
33	Can the fences be monitored (CCTV)?				
34	Is there a safe?				
35	Is the safe hidden and are the keys to the safe (if any) kept in a secure place?				
36	Is the church hall (or any other hall) large enough to accommodate all the members and personnel?				
37	Is there sufficient first aid equipment on the premises?				
	Communication				
38	Is there effective communication with local neighbourhood watches, private security and the SAPS?				
39	Is there good cell phone reception?				
40	Are there landlines?				
41	Is there reliable alternative means of communication, such as two-way radios?				
42	Is there a spokesperson who will communicate with the media on behalf of the church?				
43	Is there a list with the main emergency numbers?				
	Ambulance				
	Fire department				
	SAPS				
	Metro police				
	Private security				
	Nearest hospital				
	Local neighbourhood watch				
44	Is there an alternative to the guards?				
45	Are persons who are allowed to handle remote controls vetted?				

	Safety aspect	Yes	No	Comments	Proposal
46	Are employees reliable?				
47	Are only local and documented employees appointed?				
48	Are there ID photos and personal records for the employees?				
49	Are background checks done on prospective employees before they are appointed?				
50	Are employees treated with respect?				
51	Are security guards – if security guards are used – aware of the emergency procedures?				
52	Are emergency plans practised?				
53	Are employees aware of the emergency procedures and the roles they play?				
54	Are (some of) the personnel trained in first aid?				
55	Are the employees trained to fight fires?				
	Environment				
56	Can a criminal climb over the fence?				
57	Are trees and shrubs cleared of undergrowth?				
58	Are there large trees against the fence/wall, making it easy to climb over?				
59	Are there shrubs/tall grass on the outside of the wall or fence that can serve as a hiding place?				
60	Are fences/wires inspected regularly to determine if it had been damaged/cut?				
	Fire				
61	Are there adequate 4,5 kg DCP fire extinguishers and reels?				
62	Are there sufficient sand buckets?				
63	Are the fire extinguishers and reels clearly marked?				
64	Are the fire extinguishers and reels serviced regularly?				
65	Are the personnel trained to deal with different types of fires?				

	Safety aspect	Yes	No	Comments	Proposal
66	Are there fire blankets, 9 kg CO2 fire extinguishers and 4,5 kg DCP fire extinguishers in the kitchens?				
67	Are fire hydrants for the fire department on the church's premises regularly tested by the fire department?				
68	Are there sufficient smoke detectors in the building(s)?				
69	Are the emergency assembly points clearly marked?				
70	Is there a fire evacuation plan?				
71	Is there a fire escape plan or map in every room?				
72	Do gas installations comply with the SANS 10087 standard and are they certified?				
73	Is there an alternative (such as an air horn) for the fire alarm if there is a power outage?				
	Kidnapping (applicable to churches that are also used as schools)				
74	Are learners taught not to talk to strangers?				
75	Are learners taught not to accept lifts from strangers?				
76	Do learners walk in groups rather than alone?				
77	Is there a file with recent photos of learners and staff to provide the SAPS with accurate descriptions?				
78	Are learners aware of the importance of cell phones in tracking?				
79	Are learners taught not to send inappropriate messages to strangers?				
80	Is guidance provided on what course of action needs to be taken should a child or employee be kidnapped?				
81	Are employees informed about the procedure for reporting a kidnapped or missing child and what information the SAPS requires in such an event?				

How many Yes answers [   ]   How many No answers [   ]

Is your church safe?   [Yes]   [No]

If you are uncertain, what are you planning to do, based on the assessment list?

What is your plan, broadly speaking?

Focus area 1:

Focus area 2:

Focus area 3:

Focus area 4:

Focus area 5: