

**Who Shall Protect the Shepherds? Security Programs for Places of Worship**

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Sean P. Healy, Attorney at Law

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Appendix - Generic Sample Safety and Security Policies

1. **Overview:** “Church security” is not an area of law. Like many other legal subjects, it is an application of various legal principles to a specific context. It involves criminal law, torts, corporate law, and other areas. Here is some general information:

- a. Me: My relevant experience in this area is as follows:
  - i. Attorney with 28 years of experience.
  - ii. NRA-Certified Instructor, and instructor trainer who has trained approximately 100 NRA-Certified instructors, many for Texas 4-H Shooting Sports.
  - iii. A person who has competed in over 150 action pistol matches.
  - iv. A volunteer who is seeking training and knowledge in church security, including becoming state licensed as an unarmed security officer, armed security officer, and personal protection officer.
- b. Mission: The mission statement of a safety and security program for a place of worship should be something like this: “To provide reasonable protection from foreseeable occurrences, to parishioners and other persons on Church property or involved in Church activities, while supporting the Church’s mission to carry out and continue God’s work.” Foreseeable occurrences include but are not limited to criminal activity, violence, suspicious persons, fire, weather emergencies, and medical emergencies. The safety team’s mission must fit within the mission of the place of worship.
- c. “Church”: As used herein, refers to all places of worship, including synagogues and mosques. I chose to use the term “church” instead of “place of worship” because it is the term commonly used, and it is shorter.
- d. Protect the valuables: The best way to protect your clergy and parishioners is to keep all possible threats outside the building.
- e. Policies and Procedures: Your program needs written policies and procedures, and you need to follow them. The policies should be short, and available to the public. The procedures should be detailed, but not too detailed, and available only to safety team members.
- f. Legal protection: Your church needs to indemnify its volunteers, and insure them if possible.
- g. Background checks: You must run background checks on your team members, and document their findings.
- h. Training: Your team members need as much training as you can provide. At a minimum, armed team members must have handgun licenses, pass the required background check, and meet the minimum proficiency standards. Hopefully you can raise these standards over time.
- i. Team composition: Each team will need at least two (armed) security members (so they can contact and cover), one medical team member, and one building/firefighting member.

2. **Why have a safety and security policy?**

- a. With power comes accountability.

- b. The church is generally responsible for the acts of its agents. In Legalese, that means the church is LEGALLY LIABLE for the acts of its safety and security team members.
- c. You'd better give them some guidance.
- d. If your church doesn't have policies and procedures, it doesn't need to have a safety/security team.
- e. If your church DOES have a safety and security program and an emergency occurs, you will be judged on your policies, the training and organization of your team, the degree to which they followed the law and your policies, and the effectiveness of your response.
- f. If your church DOES NOT have a safety and security program and an emergency occurs, you will be judged on and have to defend your decision to do NOTHING to prepare for emergencies or protect the parishioners.
- g. You will be "judged" by the parishioners, the civil court system, the criminal court system, your insurer, your parishioners, and the Lord.

**3. Benefits of a quality safety and security policy:**

- a. Exercise control over your team members.
- b. Protect your volunteers.
- c. Protect your parishioners.
- d. Reduce liability.
- e. Establish compliance with the law (avoid violating legal duties, civil and criminal)
- f. Qualify for insurance coverage/reduce premiums.
- g. Let your pastor concentrate on doing his job.
- h. Create a record of threats, and a body of experience (institutional knowledge).
- i. Lead your team members to do the right thing.
- j. DOCUMENT that your people did the right thing.

**4. Recent Occurrences: Years ago, it was unthinkable to commit violence in a place of worship. Now, it is a regular occurrence. That forces church leaders to consider the fact that ***it could happen at your church.*** Recent and notable events include:**

- a. 2022 Colleyville Synagogue hostage event, stopped when the hostages escaped then law enforcement entered.
- b. 2022 Threatening calls to Tyler churches.
- c. 2021 Winona church shooting.
- d. 2019 White Settlement shooting, stopped by hero Jack Wilson.
- e. 2017 Sutherland Springs shooting, stopped by hero Stephen Willeford.
- f. 2015 New Life Church (Colorado) Shooting, stopped by safety team member Jeanne Assam.
- g. 2012 Family Research Council shooting, stopped by unarmed security guard Leonardo Johnson.
- w. 2010 East Texas church burnings.

5. **Types of Programs.** Your church has many options for addressing security.
- a. **DO NOTHING.** This option may incur premises liability and/or result in negative consequences to parishioners. Initial cost is zero.
  - b. **Hire off-duty police.** LEO's are highly trained, compared to most volunteers. They are armed, and are sworn to uphold the law. They have instant access to other law enforcement, for backup. They have qualified immunity, so they can use force and deadly force without as much fear of liability. This can also protect the church, which is probably not civilly liable for acts of an LEO. They will act according to their agency's policies, rather than those of the church. They will not generally treat their work as a ministry. It also costs money to hire them, so usually you will only have one, or maybe a few, present.
  - c. **Hire private security.** This may be a good or bad option. A lot depends on the professionalism of the security company. It will probably be more expensive than a volunteer program. Generally they will not treat it as a ministry, although programs experienced at guarding churches will be more helpful.
  - d. **Volunteer safety and security program.** This paper assumes you are helping organize this type of program.
    - i. Volunteers are *not* required to be licensed security officers. See S.B. 2065 (2017); Occupations Code § 1702.333(b). There is some talk of giving them some sort of immunity, but as of February 2022 this has not been done.
    - ii. Personnel may not be compensated or remunerated.
    - iii. Unless they are LEO's or licensed security personnel, volunteers may not wear uniforms or badges that use the word "security" or give the appearance of being a cop, PPO, or security officer.
    - iv. Someone must schedule coverage for each service and event, and provide coverage for absences.
    - v. The services of the volunteers are free.
    - vi. The church is legally responsible for their actions.
    - vii. This requires time and effort to establish and maintain the program.
    - viii. Volunteers may not be as well trained as some of the other options.
    - ix. *An effective, well-trained volunteer program will follow the law and church policy, treat it as a ministry, be able to spot outsiders or suspicious persons, have more eyes and ears available, and be able to function as a team.*

6. **Funding:**

- a. **Members.** They pay for their own equipment, training, and insurance. This really limits what they will be able to do. May be appropriate for small teams.
- b. **Budgeted** (paid by church). This should probably be a line item in the budget. At a minimum, the church should provide insurance and pay for radios. Churches may fund training, supplies, and some equipment.

- c. Grants. There are grants available through Homeland Security for church security. Contact me for details, or Google it.

**7. Liability issues.**

- a. Confirm insurance coverage. Cooperate with your insurer.
- b. Consider self-defense insurance for each team member.
- c. Indemnify team members.
- d. Discrimination - have a policy against it, and don't allow it.

**8. Law:** An attorney representing a church safety and security program (or a church which is establishing such a program) needs to know many things, or involve people who know them:

a. Attorneys know (or can learn):

i. Criminal law:

- (1) Force. And the justifications for using it. Texas Penal Code §§ 9.31, 9.33, 9.41, 9.42, and 9.43.
- (2) Deadly force. And the justifications for using it. Texas Penal Code §§ 9.32, 9.33, and 9.34.
- (3) Force and deadly force to protect property. Sometimes lawful but almost NEVER recommended. Texas Penal Code §§ 9.41, 9.42, and 9.43.
- (4) Trespassing. The elements of the offense, and the methods of delivering a trespass warning.
  - (a) Trespass means entering or remaining on or in property of another (including land, buildings, and vehicles) without effective consent, and the person either had notice that the entry was forbidden, or received notice to depart but failed to do so. Texas Penal Code § 30.05.
  - (b) Notice can be provided by signs, written notice (for instance, on a card), oral communications, fencing or other enclosures, or purple marks placed according to the statute.
  - (c) Proof can be by having the peace officer present when a warning is given and ignored, an entry in a prior police report, or proof that a certified letter was sent and received.
- (5) Gun laws:
  - (a) Generally speaking (see Texas Penal Code §§ 46.02 and 46.03):
    - (i) Your volunteers can carry handguns on church

premises, openly or concealed, with written authorization from the pastor.

- (ii) Members of the public can carry handguns on church premises, openly or concealed, unless the church provides notice that it is forbidden. This can be done using signs or verbal warnings.
- (iii) Most places of worship agree the best policy is:
  - 1) NOT to post signs prohibiting handguns.
  - 2) To allow members of the public to carry concealed handguns.
  - 3) To prohibit members of the public to carry handguns openly, and to have members of the safety team give verbal notice.
- (b) License to Carry law. Government Code Chapter 411 and various sections of the Penal Code.
- (c) Constitutional carry. See Penal Code §§ 46.02 and 46.15.
- (d) How they must be carried (openly in a holster, or concealed).
- (e) Prohibitions on carrying in certain locations (schools). See Penal Code §§ 46.03 and 46.15.
- (6) Assault, Disorderly conduct, deadly conduct, and aggravated assault. These involve threatening a person, pointing a firearm, and similar acts. Penal Code Chapter 42 and 22.
- (7) Battery, false imprisonment, and kidnapping. If a team member TOUCHES a person, it could constitute assault. See Penal Code Chapter 20.
- (8) Kidnapping and false imprisonment: If you detain a person and/or force them to move.
- (9) Arrests: The requirements for a lawful (citizen's) arrest.

ii. Civil law:

- (1) Torts: Elements of relevant torts, including assault, battery, false imprisonment, negligence, and wrongful death. Don't touch people, confine them, or force them to go to another place.
- (2) Corporate law. The authority of a board of directors, officers, committees, employees, and volunteers.
- (3) Church organizations. The authority of the pastor, other clergy, church employees, the church council or equivalent, and other volunteers and leaders in the organization.
- (4) Agency (respondeat superior): Liability for acts of agents.
- (5) The role of policies and procedures. You need to have them, but if you have them, you need to follow them.

- (6) Authority. To give trespass warnings.
- (7) Indemnification. Business Organizations Code Chapter 8.
- (8) Insurance. Review your policies, the coverage, and exclusions.
- (9) Professional standards. These include those governing doctors and nurses. You don't need to know all the nuances, but you must be careful not to adopt policies that conflict with them.

iii. Private Security Officers: SB 2065 amended Texas Occupations Code § 1702.333 to exempt "a person who is providing volunteer security services on the premises of a church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship" from the requirements applicable to private security officers. (Eff. 9/1/17). Such a volunteer may not wear a uniform or badge using the word "security" or give the impression of being a peace officer, PPO, or security officer.

b. Attorneys DO NOT normally know:

i. Firearms Safety: Some firearms instructors and law enforcement officers know this subject. You can find the NRA Rules of Gun Safety on the Internet. There are some specialized skills that can be used in tactical situations, such as the Sul technique (or the low or high ready position) to keep from sweeping team members.

ii. Marksmanship and Gun Handling: Some firearms instructors, law enforcement officers, and competitive shooters know this subject. There are modern techniques that are accepted across different communities, including instructors, law enforcement, military, and competitive shooters. For handguns, those include:

- (1) Choosing a proper handgun, suitable for the mission, which fits the user, and suitable ammunition and equipment.
- (2) Properly drawing the handgun. This requires training from a knowledgeable instructor.
- (3) Isosceles stance (NOT the Weaver stance from TV), balanced, knees bent slightly, weight slightly forward, elbows bent slightly, gun raised to the line of sight.
- (4) Two-handed, thumbs-forward grip, high on the pistol.
- (5) Focusing on the front sight, with both eyes open, primarily with your dominant eye.
- (6) Keeping your finger off the trigger until you're ready to shoot.
- (7) Staging the trigger while maintaining sight picture, then having a "compressed surprise break."
- (8) Calling your shot.
- (9) Resetting the trigger properly (allowing it to move forward only to the reset, then staging it again).
- (10) Using a proper reloading technique.

iii. Tactics: These can mean life or death to your team members and

parishioners. Some law enforcement and security professionals know tactics. Your security volunteers must learn some tactics, at a minimum. DO NOT dictate tactics unless you know what you are talking about.

- c. DON'T DICTATE any of these matters (as an attorney) unless you know what you're doing.
- d. DON'T OVERRIDE OR MICROMANAGE the relevant law, or professional standards. These standards override your policies and procedures.
- e. If you try to dictate these things without knowing the subject, you can and should be sued.

**9. Conduct a risk assessment.** This is an evaluation of the specific threats that face your place of worship, and its specific vulnerabilities.

a. Threats:

- i. Terrorism. Christian churches are targets because of their Christianity, their traditional views on marriage and sexuality, their opposition to other sexual orientations, and their opposition to abortion.
- ii. Shootings.
- iii. Bombings and threats.
- iv. Domestic violence, fights, and other forms of violence.
- v. Theft, burglary, robbery, theft of offering.
- vi. Medical emergencies.
- vii. Vehicle accidents.
- viii. Weather.
- ix. Fire.
- x. Hazardous materials release.
- xi. Missing children.
- xii. Alleged abuse.
- xiii. Computer issues.

b. Vulnerabilities: These are specific aspects of your church that make it more vulnerable to certain types of threats.

- i. Issues: Positions, doctrine, public statements, and specific actions regarding controversial issues such as abortion, gay marriage, traditional morals, marriage, etc.
- ii. Parishioners: Some churches serve communities with members who may pose a bigger threat.
- iii. Architecture: Some churches were constructed with little thought given to security.
- iv. Location: Some churches are in rough parts of town, or are in places that make them more vulnerable to certain threats.



10. **Policies and Procedures:** KEEP THEM SIMPLE. Volunteers will only remember a few things. Training for specific situations will help.

a. Comments on Generic Form (provided with this CLE paper):

- i. This form is written to comply with Texas law as of January, 2022.
- ii. I am providing the form as a public service. You may distribute it to other attorneys if a) You include a copy of this paper and all Appendices, b) You do not alter any of the documents, c) You give me credit, and d) You make it clear that I am providing it “as-is” as a public service and educational tool, *not* as legal services, legal advice, or to create an attorney-client relationship.
- iii. It is based on the policies adopted by a large church, which is very experienced in running a church security program.
- iv. The “Weapons” policy is to allow concealed carry of handguns on church property by parishioners and members of the public, but to prohibit open (unconcealed) carry of handguns, or carrying of rifles or shotguns. Rather than posting signs, members of the safety teams will verbally notify anyone openly carrying a handgun that he or she must conceal it, put it in the car, or leave the premises. When Constitutional Carry became the law in Texas in September, 2021, there was unanimous agreement among the members of the East Texas Church Security Coalition that this was the appropriate policy.
- v. You should distill the public elements into a one-page public document entitled “Policies.” The rest should be kept confidential.
- vi. This document assumes you accept volunteers with low levels of skills and training, but it works for more highly-trained teams.
- vii. This document deploys the following team to each church service:
  - (1) At least *two* armed members whose job is “Security.” This allows them to “Contact and cover” each suspicious person.
  - (2) At least *one* member whose job is “Medical.” This requires at least minimal training in first aid.
  - (3) At least *one* member whose job is “Building/Fire.” This requires at least training in running a fire extinguisher, and basic knowledge of the building.
  - (4) One of the team members will be designated as the Leader.
- viii. If you have more people present, you can either add them to the team, or (with enough people) run more than one team.
- ix. The Indemnification provision on Page 27 is based on Texas Business Organizations Code Chapter 8.
- x. The “State and Federal Law” section on Page 28 is extremely important to armed citizens and medical professionals. It makes it clear that *nothing* in the Policies and Procedures is intended to conflict with or supersede the law, or any legal or professional standards, or other formal training. Some medical professionals may

refuse to serve on the teams, unless this provision is shown and explained to them.

b. Policies v. Procedures

- i. Policies are short and sweet, inform the congregation what the ministry does, and may be shared publicly.
- ii. Procedures include specific responses and tactics, and are generally for the team's eyes only.

c. Essential elements of church security policies and procedures

- i. Chain of command.
- ii. Mission statement: Support the mission of the church.
  - (1) Director (administrative leader)
  - (2) Team leaders
  - (3) Training leaders for various disciplines
- iii. Screening volunteers:
  - (1) Background checks.
    - (a) Convictions.
    - (b) Sex offenders.
    - (c) Credit checks (optional).
  - (2) References.
  - (3) Interviews.
  - (4) Updating this info.
  - (5) General approach: The general procedure for emergencies is:
    - (a) Observe the situation and detect it as early as possible.
    - (b) Report to the team (usually via radio) what you observe and what you intend to do. This may mean getting help.
    - (c) Obtain voluntary compliance. This may involve deescalation.
    - (d) Easy Button. If the person won't voluntarily comply, issue a trespass warning, preferably with a witness. Dial 911. When an officer arrives, repeat the trespass warning so he personally witnesses the violation.
- iv. Responses to specific situations:
  - (1) "Greeting" suspicious persons.
    - (a) Observe.
    - (b) Communicate.
    - (c) "Greet" the person with at least two Security members. One person does "contact" (talking) and the other does "cover" (watches for threats).
    - (d) This may mean convincing a person to conceal an openly carried handgun (or put it in his vehicle, or leave the premises). It may mean convincing a person to

- show the contents of a back pack or bag.
      - (e) Deescalate if needed.
      - (f) Issue trespass warning if needed.
      - (g) Dial 911 if needed.
      - (h) Use force or deadly force if necessary.
    - (2) Medical emergencies. This is THE most common emergency.
      - (a) Observe.
      - (b) Communicate.
      - (c) Dial 911 if needed.
      - (d) Medical team member administers first aid.
      - (e) Other team members make space.
    - (3) Fire: Evacuation..
    - (4) Active shooter: Shelter in place or evacuate, as appropriate.
  - v. Communications.
    - (1) Radios and earpieces
    - (2) Text or GroupMe list
    - (3) Email
  - vi. Roles of team members.
    - (1) Armed security
      - (a) Require LTC at a minimum.
      - (b) They should work in pairs.
    - (2) Medical. Requires some training, even first aid, Stop the Bleed, or defibrillator.
    - (3) Fire fighting. Requires training to operate fire extinguisher.
    - (4) Building. Requires knowledge of facility, such as utility shutoffs, fire alarms, exits, etc.
  - vii. Children.
    - (1) Confirming authorization to pick them up
    - (2) Protection from abuse. Mandatory reporting to CPS.
    - (3) Protecting staff from accusations
  - viii. Executive protection.
  - ix. Standards.

**11. Possible responses to incidents:**

- a. Greeting (confronting) suspicious persons. In most cases:
  - i. Observe.
  - ii. Report.
  - iii. Obtain voluntary compliance.
  - iv. Trespass warning.
  - v. Dial 911 (use the “Easy Button”).
- b. First aid.
- c. Shelter in place.
- d. Lockdown.
- e. Evacuation.

- f. Trespass warning.
- g. Call 911 (push the Easy Button).
- h. Use of force.
- i. Use of deadly force.

**12. Recordkeeping:** Your program must keep records, including the following:

- a. Official, signed policies and procedures and all amendments.
- b. A letter of appointment from the pastor or leader of the ministry, officially appointing the person as a member of the safety and security teams, giving him or her authority to issue trespass warnings, briefly outlining his or her powers and duties, and stating that he or she must act in accordance with the law and church policies, as they now exist and are revised in the future.
- c. A file for each team member, including:
  - i. Results of background check.
  - ii. Copy of his or her license to carry a handgun, if applicable.
  - iii. Documentation of any training received by the member.
  - iv. Documentation of periodic firearms qualification.
  - v. Copy of letter of appointment.
  - vi. Signed statement representing that he or she has read and understands the policies and procedures, (for armed members) is familiar with the law of force and deadly force, and agrees to act in accordance with the law and the policies, as they exist and are revised in the future.
  - vii. Copy of certificate for any individual self-defense insurance.
- d. Minutes of meetings of the committee overseeing the ministry.
- e. Memoranda from the director of the ministry.
- f. Incident reports, including records of any threats.
- g. Copies of any written trespass warnings given to individuals.
- h. Financial records. If your church received a grant, these records will be more voluminous.

**13. Equipment and Fixtures:**

- a. Carried by Team Members:
  - i. Mobile phone.
  - ii. Flashlight(s).
  - iii. Radio and earpiece. Good ones generally require a license.
  - iv. Firearm, ammunition, magazines, holster, concealment garment (NOTE - not all team members must be armed).
  - v. Keys or cards giving access to rooms or buildings used as shelters for tornadoes, fallout, or other occurrences;
  - vi. Badges, nametags, or identification as team members (if appropriate).

- b. Placed in church:
  - i. First aid kits.
  - ii. Stop the bleed kits.
  - iii. Tourniquets.
  - iv. Defibrillators (if available).
  - v. Fire extinguishers.
  - vi. Specialized tools or equipment needed to operate systems in the building and grounds (ex. water shutoff).
  - vii. Any other tools or equipment required to perform team duties.
  
- c. Architectural and Landscaping (fixtures): The concepts are: Deterrence, Defense, Delay, Denial. Think like the enemy.
  - i. Hardening the target:
    - (1) Definition: Enhancing the security of a building or facility by deterring and delaying threats from penetrating your defenses.
    - (2) Examples:
      - (a) Doors
      - (b) Locks
      - (c) Keycard/electronic lock systems
      - (d) Fences and walls
      - (e) Barriers
      - (f) Signs
      - (g) Alarms
      - (h) Motion detectors
      - (i) Glass breakage sensors
      - (j) Bulletproof glass/resistant film
      - (k) Security cameras
  
  - ii. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED):
    - (1) Definition: A problem-solving approach that considers environmental conditions and the opportunities they offer for crime or other unintended or undesirable behaviors.
    - (2) It attempts to reduce or eliminate those opportunities by using elements of the environment to 1) Control access, 2) Provide opportunities to see and be seen, and 3) Define ownership and encourage maintenance of territory.
    - (3) Examples:
      - (a) Lighting
      - (b) Windows
      - (c) Vegetation
      - (d) Visibility
      - (e) Pavement, sidewalks, paths
      - (f) Signs

d. Training equipment:

i. Firearms:

(1) Gun safety: This needs to be drilled incessantly. Jeff Cooper's gun safety rules (<http://donath.org/Rants/TheFourRules/>) include:

- (a) RULE 1 - ALL GUNS ARE ALWAYS LOADED. The only exception to this occurs when one has a weapon in his hands and he has personally unloaded it for checking. As soon as he puts it down, Rule 1 applies again.
- (b) RULE 2 - NEVER LET THE MUZZLE COVER ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO DESTROY (for teams, anything you are legally justified in pointing a gun at). You may not wish to destroy it, but you must be clear in your mind that you are quite ready to if you let that muzzle cover the target. To allow a firearm to point at another human being is a deadly threat, and should always be treated as such.
- (c) RULE 3 - KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER TIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON THE TARGET. This we call the Golden Rule because its violation is responsible for about 80 percent of the firearms disasters we read about.
- (d) RULE 4 - BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET. You never shoot at anything until you have positively identified it. You never fire at a shadow, or a sound, or a suspected presence. You shoot only when you know absolutely what you are shooting at and what is beyond it.
- (e) RULE 5 - ALWAYS KNOW WHERE YOUR GUN IS. A part of this is, store your gun so it is inaccessible to unauthorized persons. This is not one of Cooper's rules, but it is equally important. Many LEO's, licensees, and other persons have gotten in major trouble, and endangered people, by leaving their guns somewhere.

(2) Live Fire: There is no substitute. Your armed team members will need to practice these skills, to be adequately trained:

- (a) Target shooting.
- (b) Shooting under pressure.
- (c) Drawing from a holster.
- (d) Reloading (various types of reloads).
- (e) Clearing malfunctions.
- (f) Shooting from odd positions.
- (g) Using cover and concealment.

- (h) Moving while shooting.
- (3) Dry firing: Shooters can train by firing a gun without any ammo.
  - (a) REMOVE ALL AMMO from the room.
  - (b) Unload the gun, and confirm it at least three times.
  - (c) DO NOT aim the gun at anything you aren't willing to destroy. It helps to aim at armor, a solid wall, or something similar.
  - (d) Any time you stop dry firing, before you resume, TRIPLE CHECK that all ammo has been removed and the gun is unloaded!
- ii. Force-on-force: Treat these guns as firearms, because they fire projectiles that can injure people.
  - (1) Types include:
    - (a) Simunitions - modified firearms that shoot a harmless marking projectile that HURTS!
    - (b) Airsoft guns - like pellet guns, propelled by spring or gas. Some of the gas guns cycle the slide. They fire a plastic ball at 250-300 fps.
  - (2) These are useful because they allow people to engage in training, make decisions in real time, and shoot each other. The projectile delivers a "sting" that gets adrenaline flowing and motivates participants NOT to get hit.
  - (3) Using these requires goggles, face protection, chest pads, and other protection.
  - (4) DO NOT attempt to provide this training unless you have been thoroughly trained. There are specific safety issues involved!
  - (5) DO NOT use actual firearms for anything other than live fire and dry firing.
- iii. Inert firearms: These are shaped like guns, but cannot ever fire a projectile.
  - (1) "Blue guns" - These are solid plastic guns, the size and shape of real firearms, but incapable of firing a projectile. Useful for demonstrating gun handling in class.
  - (2) Sirt pistols - They fire a laser beam, which can activate electronic targets. They also reset the trigger every time, which removes the need to cycle the slide.

#### 14. Communications:

- a. Radios and earpieces: Used among team members during services or events.
- b. Messages (text messages, instant message, GroupMe, etc.):
  - i. Used to communicate with team members outside of services.
  - ii. Used by some groups of churches or regional groups to communicate threats.

- c. Email:
  - i. Used to communicate with team members outside of services.
  - ii. Better for attachments.
  - iii. Easier to archive than texts.
- d. Cell phone: Use when needed to supplement other methods.
- e. Incident reports: Should be filed after debriefing, following any notable incident. Allows your program to accumulate knowledge and experience. Useful in defending lawsuits.
- f. Other files: Your ministry should maintain files on training, each volunteer, policies and amendments, minutes of meetings, letters of authorization, and other matters.

**15. Training:** You need to train your teams as much as possible (so they'll be effective and work together) and document what you do (so you can defend the church and the program if something happens).

- a. Team members: The BEST training is done as a team, at the church where they will work, using radios and real equipment (not real weapons!).
  - i. Shooting. Armed members MUST qualify and meet an objective standard, and maintain proficiency.
  - ii. First aid, etc. Medical team members should have documented training and certifications.
  - iii. Ethics/sexual abuse/child protection. This training protects children, elders, and parishioners, AND protects the volunteers and the church from false allegations.
  - iv. Policies. If your policies are well-written, it proves the church TOLD its volunteers to do the right thing. If you can document training and following your policies, it proves you actually FOLLOWED them.
  - v. Deescalation. This is CRITICAL training. It is also consistent with the fact that this is a ministry. It's better to talk someone down than to have to use force.
  - vi. Tactics/Role-playing/Force-on-force. This should include scenarios where the correct solution is NOT the use of force, such as shoot/no-shoot situations and scenarios where weapons are not involved.
  - vii. Firefighting.
  - viii. Hazmat.
  - ix. Building operations.
- b. Staff and clergy.
  - i. Situational awareness.
  - ii. Executive protection.
  - iii. Building operations.
  - iv. Fire protection.



- c. Congregation.
  - i. Announcements in bulletin and at services.
  - ii. Policies (publicly available).
    - (1) Weapons. No open carry, or carry of long arms.
    - (2) Purses and containers.
    - (3) Alcohol.
    - (4) Trespass warnings.
  - iii. Training. It would be GREAT if you could practice evacuation at the end of each service for a week or so (following team instructions, exiting by the designated routes, and assembling in the designated areas), then practice sheltering in place the next week. This may take only a few minutes.
    - (1) Obey safety team members and LEO's.
    - (2) Evacuation. Show zones, building exits, and assembly areas.
    - (3) Shelter in place.
    - (4) Lockdowns.

**16. General advice:**

- a. Do the right thing for the right reason. Remember, this is a ministry.
- b. Adopt a good set of policies, customized to your church.
- c. Get insurance and confirm in writing that the acts of your team are covered. Armed team members should strongly consider self-defense coverage.
- d. DON'T SHOW THE BAD GUYS YOUR PLAYBOOK! Keep your specific procedures and tactics confidential. You can publicize your policies (one page or so).
- e. The security goal is to keep all violence OUTSIDE. That means someone should be monitoring or patrolling the grounds at all times, and the team should be in radio contact.
- f. Something is better than nothing. You can start with a small, lightly trained team and build it into an effective private security force.
- g. Don't reinvent the wheel.
- h. Don't do the cops' job. Hit the Easy Button (dial 911).
- i. Remember what you learned (preserve what your program learns, both training and from specific incidents).
- j. After an incident, have someone in authority conduct a debriefing and write a report.
- k. The lawyer should be a dealmaker, not a dealbreaker. Every church needs a safety and security program. More training, more members, and more experience will create a better program, but you should start with what you have.
- l. Allow lawful concealed carry, but not open carry (except for paid security or LEO's) or carry of long arms (rifles or shotguns).

- m. Be ready to dial 911.
- n. Team members should have authority from the pastor to give trespass warnings.
- o. Someone (other than the Pastor) should be looking back from the altar and able to communicate with team members using a radio.

**17. Resources:**

- a. East Texas Church Security Coalition:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2131737016912652>
- b. Carl Chinn, Faith-Based Security Network:  
<https://fbsnamerica.com/>
- c. Tom Krieg, Krieg & Associates:  
<http://kriegandassociates.com/>
- d. Karl Rehn, KR Training:  
<https://www.krtraining.com/>
- e. Review of Karl Rehn FoF class:  
<https://www.usacarry.com/force-on-force-kr-training/Church>
- f. Emergency Preparedness Resources:  
<https://alertfind.com/church-emergency-preparedness-resources/>
- g. Small Business Administration Emergency Preparation:  
<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/manage-your-business/prepare-emergencies>
- h. Texas Mutual Workers' Compensation Insurance, Podcast and Resources:  
<https://www.texasmutual.com/employers/safety-be-ready>
- i. Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Booklet:  
[https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf)
- j. Worship Security Association, free training videos:  
<https://worshipsecurity.vhx.tv/free-training-videos>
- k. Brotherhood Mut. Insurance Articles:  
<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/disasters-emergencies-and-health/>
- l. Church Security Answer Man (Youtube channel):  
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN\\_qecJ4AQAH1VzOt2XhmAA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN_qecJ4AQAH1VzOt2XhmAA)
- m. Church Security Youtube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/churchsecurity>
- n. US Concealed Carry Association Youtube channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/USCCAtesting/featured>
- o. Michael Mann free videos: <https://michaelmannsecurityservices.com/videos/>
- p. 2022 Colleyville Synagogue hostage event:  
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/hostage-incident-texas-synagogue-terrorist-act-hate-crime/story?id=82404960>
- q. 2022 Threatening calls to Tyler churches:  
<https://www.cbs19.tv/article/news/local/school-alerting-parents-of-threatening-call-made-to-cathedral-office-says-other-area-churches-received-same>

- r. [-call/501-f4d543d1-a44d-4d10-b7e3-275088ad077f](https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/sheriffs-deputy-dead-hurt-shooting-texas-church-75024096)  
2021 Winona church shooting:  
<https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/sheriffs-deputy-dead-hurt-shooting-texas-church-75024096>
- s. 2019 White Settlement shooting:  
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/29/us/church-shooting-texas/index.html>
- t. 2017 Sutherland Springs shooting:  
<https://time.com/5010772/texas-sutherland-springs-church-shooting/>
- u. 2015 New Life Church (Colorado) Shooting:  
<https://www.foxnews.com/story/colorado-church-gunman-had-grudge-against-christian-group-cops-say>
- v. 2012 Family Research Council shooting:  
<https://www.cnn.com/2013/02/06/justice/dc-family-research-council-shooting/index.html>
- w. 2010 East Texas church burnings:  
<https://www.cbs19.tv/article/features/through-the-fire-37-days-9-fires/501-a497c3e3-7b0a-411d-b735-ad871450bf75>
- x. Active Response Training (Greg Ellifritz) Resources:  
<https://www.activeresponsetraining.net/church-security-resource-compilation>
- y. Forming a Safety Team:  
<https://www.activeresponsetraining.net/forming-a-church-safety-team>
- z. Active Response Training (weekly email with links), Subscribing by Email:  
[http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=ActiveResponseTraining&loc=en\\_US](http://feedburner.google.com/fb/a/mailverify?uri=ActiveResponseTraining&loc=en_US)
- aa. Use of Force Scenarios for Discussion:  
<https://www.churchsecurityanswerman.com/use-of-force-scenarios-for-discussion>

**18. Other questions?**

Sean P. Healy  
Attorney at Law  
113 E. Houston St.  
Tyler, Texas 75702  
(903) 592-7566  
<genghis@healylaw.com>

## **About the Author - Sean P. Healy**

Mr. Healy is an attorney in private practice in Tyler, Texas. He is the lead author of the book *The Legal Guide to NFA Firearms and Gun Trusts*, written with Alan Gassman, Jonathan Blattmachr and several other attorneys and published in 2016. This book was reviewed in the June, 2019 *American Rifleman*, a magazine which reaches over 2 million readers. It reached #1 on the list of Amazon Bestsellers in the category of Legal Self-Help. Mr. Healy authored a chapter on NFA trusts in the book *Texas Perspectives on Firearms Law* published by the Texas Bar Books in 2015. He authored two chapters in the book *Essentials of Texas Firearms Law* published by Texas Bar Books in 2020. He is the NFA Editor for Interactive Legal, working with nationally-renowned estate planning attorneys to provide NFA trust forms and supporting knowledge to lawyers throughout the country through their Interactive Legal Suite.

Mr. Healy is Texas State Rifle Association's General Counsel. He has also served as general counsel for two congressional campaigns, and as National Corporate Counsel for American Mensa. He was Course Director for the 2012 and 2013 State Bar Firearms Law Seminars, and has spoken at every annual seminar since then. He is a mediator for civil, family law, and child protective cases, a member of the American Arbitration Association's Panel of Mediators, and an arbitrator for the Better Business Bureau and AAA. During law school he served as an appellate advocacy instructor, and he previously served as a college instructor in business law.

Firearms instruction: Mr. Healy is also a concealed handgun instructor, an NRA-Certified Instructor and Training Counselor, with certifications in Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun; Muzzleloading Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun; Metallic Cartridge Reloading and Shotgun Reloading; Home Firearms Safety; and Personal Protection in the Home. He is a Chief Range Safety Officer. He is a nationally-trained instructor trainer for Texas 4-H Shooting Sports, and is qualified as a force-on-force instructor.

Speeches and Publications: Mr. Healy testified before a Senate committee as the expert witness for NRA and TSRA regarding House Bill 823, the predecessor to the Motorist Protection Act. He also testified before a committee of the Texas Senate against several harmful gun bills in 2019. He now serves as Frontline Activist Leader (formerly Election Volunteer Coordinator) for the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action, covering Texas Congressional District 1. He has given numerous speeches, continuing legal education presentations to judges and lawyers, and televised interviews on firearms matters and other subjects, including an extensive interview that aired on CNN and another that aired on CCTV (China Central Television).

Political Activities: Mr. Healy is a life member of the National Rifle Association and Second Amendment Foundation. He served for eighteen years on the East Texas Friends of NRA Committee. He also served on the Friends of NRA State Fund Committee for North Texas for thirteen years. Mr. Healy represented eight states on the Young Republican National Federation National Committee, and held numerous other state and local offices, including President of the Tyler Young Republicans. He has volunteered on a number of campaigns, served as a delegate to the Republican Party of Texas state conventions including in 2020, and served on the RPT Ballot Security Task Force during two elections. He has completed a number of campaign schools including the RNC Western Regional Campaign School and ballot security training. He has also served and as Local Secretary (local President) and certified Proctor for East Texas Mensa. He served as a state officer for years for the Texas Junior Chamber of Commerce, and as President of the Tyler Jaycees. He served for seven years on the Board of Directors of Azleway, Inc. and its charter school Board of Trustees, including one year as Chairman of the Board. He is currently serving as Vice Chairman and General Counsel of the Smith County Republican Party.

Firearms Competitions and Outside Activities: Mr. Healy has participated in over 150 firearms competitions, including matches organized by the United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA), International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA), and Steel Challenge Association. He is also a private pilot and a Panel Attorney for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

Mr. Healy's law practice focuses on business law, civil litigation, family law, representation of property owners' associations, and firearms and aviation matters.