

October is Church Safety and Security Month

When is the last time you thought about risk management in your ministry? While some church leaders fully embrace safety and security measures in their facilities, others rarely think about it. Because churches are not the safe havens they once were and are now facing incidents, such as sexual misconduct allegations and violence during Sunday worship services, it is essential to have adequate risk management plans in place to keep your congregation safe.

To help churches do just that, the GuideOne Center for Risk Management celebrates "Church Safety and Security Month" each October. This month serves as a special time each year for church leaders to focus on weaving risk management practices into their ministries.

One of the biggest concerns that many churches have is that they do not have the time or the budget to properly address security needs. Churches can rest assured that making even a few small changes can have a big impact on the safety of their facility and congregation members. And, with the many [free safety resources from SafeChurch](#), beginning to implement risk management practices is only a click away.

Developing a Safety and Security Team

The first step your church should take to protect your ministry is to form a Safety and Security Team. This team should include three to eight church members with knowledge in areas related to risk management—such as security, insurance, law enforcement, facility management, and medical practice. A team member should be appointed as the safety director for your congregation who will oversee the team's efforts. The Safety and Security Team should meet on a quarterly basis in order to appropriately address areas of concern in your congregation.

With every church facing safety and security concerns unique to their congregation, GuideOne recommends your Safety and Security Team use the [EFFECT®](#) framework to identify and assess which risks your ministry faces and need to tackle first. The EFFECT framework is based on the following:

- **E**mergency preparedness
- **F**acility safety
- **F**inancial safeguards
- **E**mployee and volunteer safety
- **C**hildren and youth safety
- **T**ransportation safeguards

SafeChurch Resources

The SafeChurch website is structured around this EFFECT framework to provide numerous resources for each category of risk. Many of these can be accessed for free or a very small fee. Some of these resources include the following:

- **Background Checks** - By using [SafeChurch's trusted background check provider](#), you can easily and inexpensively conduct background checks on your employees and volunteers who work with children on a regular basis.
- **Downloads** - Several [free safety downloads](#) exist—including fact sheets, checklists, sample policies and procedures, and risk safety assessments. Other resources that can be downloaded for free or a small fee are [training videos](#) on starting a safety ministry, preventing slips and falls, training for 15-passenger van drivers, and sexual abuse prevention.
- **"Keeping America's Churches Safe" 2010 Calendar** - Children 18 and under participated in a contest earlier this year where they created posters depicting risk management in churches. Thirteen winning entries are featured in a custom 2010 calendar that is provided free of charge, upon request. Up to three copies of the calendar may be requested per person by sending an e-mail to: supply@guideone.com



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