



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER HARTFORD

2018 SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

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- **Connect** with local law enforcement to discuss security and advise them of High Holiday schedules and special events. In particular, communicate with the police commander of the jurisdiction in which your institution is located. If you have not established personal relationships with key police personnel, set up a meeting to do so. *The Emanuel Synagogue will again hire off duty policeman, and have a police cruiser placed visibly in parking lot.*
- **Train** and ensure that synagogue ushers understand that they play a critical role in security matters (even where there is security staff), as they are often used to control access to the sanctuary and are in a position to spot trouble early.
 - Ensure that ushers are familiar with suspicious activity indicators, and encourage them to promptly report anything suspicious to the police or security personnel. For more information refer to ADL's [Guide to Detecting Surveillance of Jewish Institutions](#).
 - Ensure that staff, leadership, and constituents know their role in security and what to do in the event of an emergency i.e. how to reach management during services, a hired police officer or security guard or call 9-1-1.
 - Encourage staff, leadership, and constituents to trust their instincts if they come across someone or something suspicious.
 - If your institution has hired a police officer or security guard, provide them with specific instructions and identify someone to be their primary contact if they have questions. For example, you may want them to walk the perimeter of your institution at the start of a shift, or stand in a specific place etc.
- **Emergency Communication:** Security plans should include procedures for communicating in case of emergency. Does the staff have walkie-talkies or cell phones? Are there "panic buttons" at key locations that signal an alarm company that there is an emergency?

- **Map out Logistics**

- A facility should have as few entry points as possible (ideally one), so that no one is able to enter your facility without being greeted and observed. Be sure to obey all fire codes and ensure adequate routes for exiting the building.
- Most institutions already require tickets for High Holiday services. Tickets can be a particularly useful component of your security plan. Institutions should assume that those in possession of legitimate tickets should be admitted to services. How secure is your High Holiday ticket? Do you give blocks of tickets to third parties (e.g., Hillels) for distribution? Could your tickets be easily counterfeited on cardstock or a color copier?
- Obviously long-term members and those regularly attending High Holiday services are known to congregational staff. If someone calls to purchase tickets their identity should be confirmed. Are they in the phone book? Did they pay by check or credit card? Is their name and address printed on the check? ***Be suspicious of anyone who insists on paying in cash.***
- Develop a policy for handling people without tickets and for notifying police immediately if you need assistance. If your institution does not require tickets, develop an alternative method for identifying attendees
- Pre-event publicity for upcoming events should be reviewed in light of security. Potential gains in attendance numbers must be weighed against the security concerns created through different types of publicity.
- Ensure that existing safety devices (video cameras, lights, walkie talkies, etc.) are in good working condition.

- **Evacuation Planning**

- In the event of a threat or an actual emergency it may be necessary to evacuate the building. If a threat is received, it should immediately be reported to the police.
- Each congregation should have an evacuation plan that should include:
- Who makes the determination to evacuate the building? One person should be in charge. How will the decision be communicated? Who will call law enforcement? Who will deal with the media? Who will give the all-clear to re-enter the building?

- **Trust your instincts. If something strikes you as being out of place or problematic, call the police immediately. It is better to be safe than sorry.**

As always, please contact me at 860-727-6167 or by email at lzimmerman@jewishhartford.org with any questions or concerns.

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