



Security Team Policy

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Louisville, Alabama

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to introduce philosophy and guidelines in providing Mt. Zion Baptist Church (MZBC) with a church safety and security plan. The objective is to provide safety and security without interfering with the core mission and activities of the church. Recent statistics show that church intruders are no longer limited to property damages and theft with an increasing number of threats and attacks on people. This is the main reason our church needs to place more emphases on securing property and making the church environment safer for everyone.

MZBC church will have a volunteer Safety and Security Team with the understanding that additional church members will be asked to serve on the church security team to implement the safety and security plan for the church. A review of church security plans throughout the nation reveal that different approaches are being taken by churches to provide security. Our concept, used by a majority of small churches, is to use selected volunteer members from the congregation. This approach is less intrusive (no uniformed police presence) and less expensive, but requires greater participation by church members and mandatory training.

The safety and security plan is intended to be complex enough to provide security, but simple enough to understand and follow. The entire congregation is asked to do three things:

- Maintain awareness,
- Report suspicious persons or actions, and
- Follow evacuation and security actions announced during an emergency.

Only church members can serve in specific security plan roles. The plan involves the following sections:

- I. General Security
- II. Emergency Evacuation
- III. Medical Emergency
- IV. Extreme Weather Conditions
- V. Action in case of an intruder
- VI. Incident Reporting
- VII. Background Checks
- VIII. Identification
- IX. Miscellaneous

I. General Security

This section sets forth the general procedures and responsibilities for providing security for MZBC membership and guests. The entire membership is asked to be observant at all times at all church functions and if any unusual or suspicious person or behavior occurs, tell a security team member, deacon, pastor, or other party they deem it necessary to inform. In other words, "if you see something, say something."

On Sundays at 9:40 AM, a minimum of two security team members will be present, and position in the parking lot of the church. They will also conduct a walk-through of the church to ensure there is no threat inside the building prior to people arriving. It is imperative that at least one team member is present in the fellowship hall during small groups, as well as one in the sanctuary during small groups.

At 10:45 AM on Sundays, the security team will be present in the parking lot and entry of the church building. During both worship services and Sunday school, security team members, ushers and greeters will assume a major role for maintaining watch for potential threats to security.

Wednesday evening services will require coordination between the church staff and the security volunteers.

A Security Incident Report should be filled out describing any time there is an injury, medical emergency, evacuation, or other incident that should be documented. Additionally, any perceived threats, threats received by telephone or in person should be reported immediately to the pastor and/or member of the church leadership. In emergencies, always call 911 first for response from the Barbour County Sheriff's Office or Ambulance services.

A security team member designated for the week will patrol the buildings during Sunday worship services being aware for any potential security threat or medical need. The security team member will also check or view parking areas for signs of unusual activity. These roving patrols are required for the designated security member of the week.

The security team members are to maintain awareness for signs of unusual activity while persons are entering the church. At least two security team members shall remain in the sanctuary at all times during worship services.

II. Emergency Evacuation

In case of the need to evacuate (i.e. fire alarm, gas leak, etc.), all persons will rally across the street to the intersection of County Road 9 and Caraway Lane.

- A church leader or security team leader will give instructions to evacuate and church leaders will lead members to the site. People in the sanctuary will be instructed and led by a staff member, security team member, or deacon to the evacuation assembly site.
- A security team member, along with their teachers, will escort the children out of the fellowship hall if the incident occurs while children are gathered for Children's Church.
- A security team member will check ALL rooms to ensure everyone has exited from the buildings and have evacuated to the rally point.
- In case of fire, the person in charge at evacuation assembly site will receive clearance from the fire department before giving instructions for people to return to the building(s).
- At no time, will members of the security team allow any person(s) to leave the vicinity of the church grounds after an emergency, unless, it is deemed a life-threatening need.

III. Medical Emergency

This section sets forth structure and actions to take in cases of medical emergencies. Security team members are encouraged to obtain CPR certifications to help a person in the event of a medical emergency. Annual certification classes will be offered for anyone desiring to obtain CPR training.

The following actions will be taken in case of illness or injury:

- 911 will be notified immediately upon any medical emergency.
- The security team member on the scene will direct someone, to locate a medical services professional within the congregation, if available, to come to the scene and to take appropriate action.

- Security team members will ensure first-responders will have access to the church by requesting people to move vehicles, if needed.

IV. Extreme Weather Conditions

This section sets forth the procedures for dealing with dangerous weather conditions. Our major weather safety concerns are tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, or straight-line winds associated with severe thunderstorms. We normally have advance warnings alerting us to the severity of these weather conditions. Based on the best information available, the following actions will be taken: The senior pastor, in the chairman of the deacons, will decide if it is necessary to cancel church activities. In the absence of the senior pastor, the chairman of the deacons will make the decision.

The church website and all social media sources will be utilized to inform church members of schedule deviations.

If an emergency weather condition arises during services:

- A church staff member, security team member, or church leader, will announce a severe weather warning to those in attendance.
- Security team members will direct all those in attendance to the fellowship hall and have them take shelter in safe areas.

V. Actions in the Event of an Intruder or Active Threat

This section sets forth emergency procedures in case of an intruder. If an intruder threatens injury or the life of a guest or church member(s), the following actions will be taken.

- Person noticing the potential threat will notify security team member, usher or church leader immediately.
- During assessment of the situation, if person in question is armed or irrational (yelling, making threats etc.), call 911 immediately. Ensure that a member of the security team is outside the church to inform responding law enforcement units of the situation.
- In the event of an armed intruder, the suspect will be stopped by any means possible to ensure no harm, or further harm, occurs.
- Security personnel will attempt to seal off area around the threat, i.e. blocking hallways, locking doors or buildings, while keeping people away.
- Delegate a person(s) to go to every classroom instructing them to lock door(s), and to shelter in place.

- Security personnel will instruct teachers (those teaching children at the time of the event) to secure the door, remain in place, and be prepared to fight as a last resort, until word comes that the threat no longer exists.

VI. Incident Reporting

An incident report will be completed whenever something of an unusual nature happens or is observed. This includes suspicious or disorderly persons, injuries, medical emergencies, theft, or complaint about a security team member. If a complaint is received, the complainant must provide a written accusation against the team member and must be presented to the senior pastor. Any verbal complaint will not be considered for action.

An incident report, shows concern for those individuals who may be injured, either visitors or members, and demonstrates that the church is doing everything possible for them. This also documents the immediate attention the church or staff member provided.

An incident report provides valuable information on who, what, when, and where. It also provides the type of injury, witness information, and the injured party's response. Without accurate information, it is very difficult to recall specific incidents of the past and can be scrutinized by attorneys if brought into court.

VII. Background Checks

All of the security team members shall have background checks conducted by police agency within this state to ensure that they are legally able to possess a firearm, and/or be in the vicinity of young children. If the background check reveals anything that is contrary to biblical teachings, the prospective team member will be required to meet with the pastor and deacon board. If one not eligible to possess a firearm, does not disqualify them from serving on the security team, but does disqualify them from having access to a firearm.

VIII. Identification

Security team members will identify themselves when requested by law enforcement authorities or asked by members/guests of the church. In the event of a possible threat or emergency the security team member will identify themselves to those who request information. If a security team member(s) has to use deadly force to protect their life or the life of another, they are required to:

- Be transported to a local hospital by ambulance or POV.
- Remain quiet until they have access to lawyer.
- Have the pastor or leadership staff member be with them at the hospital.

IX. Miscellaneous

The following are some additional safety and security items:

- Personal information (phone numbers, physical addresses, email addresses, etc.) shall not be published on the church web site.
- Security team volunteers shall sign and adhere to a confidentiality agreement.
- Members will be made aware annually of those who serve on the security team, and notify them if they see something suspicious.
- The church campus shall be swept for safety and security on a regular basis but especially immediately preceding high profile events (Easter Sunday services, Christmas services, Vacation Bible School, Fall Festival, etc.)

