

USCJ
Synagogue
Security and
Safety Audit

Dear Synagogue Leader,

For several years there has been an increasing call for synagogues and religious institutions to pay more attention and direct more resources towards security and emergency planning. That call has been amplified multi fold since October 2018 and the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. Additionally we have had synagogues that have had to deal with hurricanes, super storms fires and more. With the focus on the need for increased security and emergency readiness, synagogue leaders have found themselves in the situation of try to figure out what additional security and preparation looks like in their congregation. Some synagogues have been involved in applying for and receiving Homeland security grants, upgrading their doorways, windows, creating or upgrading policies such as evacuation and lockdown, and employing armed or unarmed security guards or police. Other synagogues have not dealt with these issues in a meaningful way outside of hiring guards for the High Holidays. Some congregations have professional staff that can be utilized to spearhead the process and others are totally volunteer led. A number of our congregations have Preschools, Religious Schools, or tenants and therefore have to create a security plan that covers 6 to 7 days a week while others are primarily focused on Shabbat and holiday services.

With this understanding we have created a security and safety audit which is designed to help synagogue boards, security committees and staff identify areas of need for upgrade and attention. Over the years we have heard from synagogue leaders who share their concerns about security and emergency preparation but they don't know what questions to ask or how to approach this daunting task. This tool was designed to help guide synagogue leaders

regardless of where the synagogue finds itself along the spectrum of security and /emergency planning. It is unlike other security assessments in that it was created for the synagogue world and is not a comprehensive building assessment and therefore should be treated as a companion to other materials out there. Whether you are a leader at a small synagogue or a very large one, whether there is a significant security budget or almost no funds available, whether you are staff or volunteer there will be suggestions and areas identified that can help your synagogue become more secure and prepared.

The audit is broken out into the following areas:

- ▶ First Steps and Communication
- ▶ Emergency Planning: Training & Drills
- ▶ Security Funding
- ▶ Relationship with Law Enforcement
- ▶ Weather related emergency procedures
- ▶ Office, cyber and financial related security
- ▶ Children and youth security

We have created a chart for you to list your security team with contact information and responsibilities. In addition, we have included space at the back for you to take notes.

This security and safety audit can be printed out, shared, and added to in order to expand on or create a new action plan for your community planning and procedures.

If you have additional questions, comments or additions please feel free to contact Barry Mael at mael@uscj.org or Linda Sussman at Sussman@uscj.org.

We look forward to hearing from you,
Barry S. Mael and Linda Sussman



First Steps and Communications

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
Does your synagogue have an organized, active security and safety committee?					
Does your synagogue have an approved and tested communications plan? ▶ If yes, when was it last updated?					
Do you have an emergency procedure card in your pews?					
* Do you receive SCN, JCRC & Federation security alerts? ▶ Who is your primary contact to these organizations?					
* Do you receive security alerts from other organizations? ▶ If yes, which ones?					
* Do you have staff/ lay leaders designated to have access to emergency contact info (cell phone) for all members and staff? ▶ If yes, when was this list last updated?					
* Is someone designated to disseminate pertinent emergency information via email, website and/ or robo calls?					
* Is someone designated to disseminate pertinent emergency information via social media?					
Do you have a plan in place to notify people in the building/ on the grounds in case of an emergency? Make sure your plan pays attention to disability-related concerns.					
Do you encourage staff/ lay leaders/ members to raise their concerns about security and safety?					
If you rent space to outside organizations, do you have an emergency contact plan in place with them? ▶ Do you have a contact in place to work with them?					

Questions marked with an * are meant to call attention to specific persons who should appear on your Security and Safety Team Contact List. See page 10 to see a sample.

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
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* Do you have a staff/ lay spokesperson trained to deal with the media in the case of emergencies?

Do you have a place to list emergency numbers and contacts on your membership profile?					
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Emergency Planning: Training and Drills

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
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Does your synagogue have an approved and tested emergency plan/manual?

▶ If yes, when was it last updated?

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Does your synagogue do lockdown and active shooter drills and training on a regular basis?

▶ If yes, when was the last time?

Do you hold fire drills on an annual basis?					
▶ If yes, when was the last time?					

Do you use maintenance staff in security roles?

Do you have security training and situational awareness training for maintenance staff or other staff who work in the building?

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Do you plan to hold emergency and active shooter drills during Saturday morning services or have you already?

Do you have ushers and greeters at the door during Shabbat and holiday services?

▶ If yes, have ushers and greeters had some formal situational awareness training on an annual basis?

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If you do not have ushers and greeters are you considering adding them?

▶ If no, do you have specific reasons for not having ushers and greeters as part of a security plan?

After a training drill, does your team debrief to discuss what went well, what could be done better?					
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	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
Do you have evacuation routes and meeting points for occupants when they leave the building? ▶ If yes, do you confirm the availability of the location on a yearly basis?					
Shelter-in-place? ▶ If yes, do you pay attention to disability-related accessibility concerns when determining shelter sites, evacuation routes, and meeting points?					

Security Funding

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
Have you added a security assessment/ fee to cover additional security costs? ▶ If yes, is it a onetime assessment or an annual fee?					
Do you asses an additional security fee to outside rentals?					
Has your synagogue applied for and/ or received homeland security funding in the past? ▶ If yes, when was the last time?					
Has your synagogue applied for and/ or received security funding from private foundations in the past? ▶ If yes, when was the last time?					
Has your synagogue applied for and/ or received security funding from your state government or federations? ▶ If yes, when was the last time?					
Is your leadership capable of writing security grants?					
Have you hired a consultant to help you obtain a grant?					

Relationship with Law Enforcement

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
Do you have a staff/lay person who is the designated contact with police and fire authorities?					
Do you do a security walk through with local police on an annual basis? ▶ If yes, when was the last time?					
Do you have up to date building plans on file at the police and fire departments?					
Do you hire security personnel on the High Holidays?					
Do you hire security personnel for large gatherings?					
Do you notify the police for large gatherings?					
Do you hire security personnel other than retired police or off duty police?					
Have you discussed with local police hiring armed vs unarmed security and what policies and procedures they suggest in either case?					
Do you communicate regularly with police regarding their ongoing vigilance around your building?					
Do you have the police patrolling your premises or parking in your driveway/ parking lot on a regular basis?					
Do you have the police patrolling your premises or parking in your driveway/ parking lot on Shabbat?					
Do you have a fire inspection and walk through on a regular basis? ▶ If yes, when was the last time?					

Weather and Natural Disaster Related Emergency Procedures

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
Do you have a plan in place to protect Torahs/ ritual items in case of possible threat?					
Do you have a plan in place to communicate with your membership and the community in the event of loss of power?					
Does your school(s) have early dismissal plans in place in the event of weather or other emergencies?					
Do you have a working system to reach members in the event of cancellation of <i>minyan</i> and/or programs?					
Do you have backup generator(s) in place and in working order?					
Have you investigated becoming a place of refuge in order to receive grants for backup generators?					

Office, Cyber, and Financial Related Security

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
Do your staff, visitors, and vendors wear identification credentials while on premises?					
Do your staff meetings regularly have security and safety related issues on the agenda?					
Have you contacted your insurance representative to do a review and make suggestions around safety, prevention and coverage?					

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
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Do you have an internal controls manual for accounting practices?

▶ If yes, when was it last updated?

Do you maintain a key or key code inventory, and are keys numbered?

▶ If yes, when was it last updated?

Are bank statements reviewed by someone other than those who can write or sign checks?

Does an outside CPA firm do a review (or audit) on a regular basis?

▶ If yes, when was it last done?

Do you have secure area(s) on premises for the storage of cash funds/valuables?

Do you lock and clear away all business documents at the end of the business day?

Do you shred documents with sensitive information or account numbers?

Do you have a plan in place to protect your computers and data in the event of a cyber emergency or weather related disaster?

Do you have off site/ cloud based storage and backup of data and membership emergency contact info?

Are all computers password protected?
▶ If yes, when were they last changed?

Are your staff and volunteer office staff trained to identify phishing and other types of phone and internet scams?

Do you have mail and package handling procedures?

Do you have a security alarm system in place?

Do you have a closed circuit television system in place?

* If yes to either one of the above systems (security alarm system or closed circuit television system), whose authority in the synagogue do they fall under?

Questions marked with an * are meant to call attention to specific persons who should appear on your Security and Safety Team Contact List. See page 10 to see a sample.

Children and Youth Security and Safety

	Yes	No	In Process	Do Not Know	NA
<p>Does your synagogue have a written, up-to-date child and student safety and protection policy?</p> <p>▶ If yes, when was it last updated?</p>					
<p>Do you have child and youth security training program for employees and volunteers?</p> <p>▶ If yes, when was the last time?</p>					
<p>Do you have a policy that requires background checks of staff and volunteers?</p>					
<p>If you rent space to outside organizations, do you have the organization supply background checks of their employees?</p> <p>▶ If yes, when were these last updated?</p>					
<p>Do you have procedures in place to report and respond to instances of known or suspected child sexual abuse?</p> <p>▶ Are they consistent with best practices and federal/state laws?</p> <p>▶ If yes, when was this last updated?</p>					
<p>Have you contacted the local school district(s) for their policies pertaining to safety, prevention and response?</p>					

Sample Security and Safety Team Contact List

Position	Name	Cell Phone	Email
Security Committee Chair			
President			
Executive Director/ Office Manager			
Head Custodian			
House Chair			
Police/ Fire Contact			
Security Company Contact			
Security Officer(s)			
Person in Charge of Social Media/ Website			

Notes