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## BRIEFING PAPER

# Security against Intruders

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## **Security against Intruders:**

Recently I walked into some premises occupied by a small business. The premises were purpose built, not 20 years old, but I was immediately struck by the poor levels of security in place. The door opened at a push and a buzzer sounded, but that's not much help if someone was coming in to do harm. Even a security camera isn't going to be much help when the intruder is inside the building.

Churches and small charities are notorious for minimal security. Here are some thoughts for you to consider and get you started:

### **1. Assess the level of risk:**

- a. Are there times of the day when there are fewer staff? Are you ever down to one?
- b. How easy is it for someone to gain entrance?
- c. Are all staff briefed on what to do if someone is trying to get in? Do they know what to do, who to call, where to go?
- d. Is there a procedure to follow if they are concerned about a visitor or intruder?

### **2. Have threats been made?**

A local pastor was recently awoken at 3.00am by a telephone caller who made a death threat. He immediately contacted the police; it seems they knew the person involved and took steps to neutralise the threat. It is vital that all threats are logged appropriately.

### **3. Are threats identified at an early stage?**

- a. Someone who is armed is an obvious threat, but attitude or body language can also suggest a threat.
- b. If a public meeting is taking place, make sure there is a welcome team greeting guests and strangers, including anyone who looks odd or suspicious.
- c. Limit access: Close the doors after the meeting begins and have a system to take care of latecomers, guiding them to designated seats.

- d. Reduce provocation: Your welcome team should be trained how to deny access firmly but respectfully, to people who are unstable, agitated, angry or drunk.
- e. Are walky talkys used for communicating, particularly where team members are out of eyesight?

**4. Can you shut down the premises?**

- a. Does your team know how to do a 'Lockdown'? During a lockdown, certain areas of the building are shut, locked and barricaded until police arrive. Those inside should stay away from windows, and leave lights on to help searchers.
- b. Who has the authority to order this?
- c. What is the policy regarding parents whose children could be in an affected area?
- d. Does each area have a telephone or intercom?

**5. What will your staff do if someone is running wild, perhaps with a gun?**

- a. If shooting starts, direct confrontation is essential. This is dangerous but chances are improved if the shooter is distracted by yelling from different directions and tackling him from behind.
- b. Call 999 immediately, have as much information to hand as possible. Stay on the line if you can.
- c. When police arrive, try to keep calm. Running to escape can complicate things, avoid holding anything which could be construed as a threat, and avoid sudden movements.

**6. Is information on the building held on and off site?**

- a. Is there a plan of the building that police could use if they needed to? Photos?
- b. Is there emergency contact information for key people, including the property manager, the caretaker?
- c. Are there spare keys to gain access to other entry points?
- d. Can water, gas, electricity be shut off internally, or externally?

## 7. Shared premises:

- a. If you share premises with other organisations you will be dependent to some extent on the precautions they have put in place.
- b. We recommend that you carry out your own review as far as you can, then arrange a friendly meeting with the landlord or other appropriate person and request their cooperation to make the environment as safe as possible.
- c. The chances are that they will want to work with you on this, and may be glad you drew it to their attention. They will need their own Health and Safety policy, which could be at risk if you have concerns they haven't addressed.

## 8. Other points:

- a. Have you considered installing security cameras?
- b. It is a fine line between sensationalising the dangers and trivialising them. Don't be complacent, but don't be over responsible. Have key, mature people think about it, and prepare a plan, and make sure key people are adequately prepared.

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This guide is intended only to give very general advice in relation to the topics covered. These guidelines should not be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific and more detailed advice in relation to a particular matter. This material may be drawn from a variety of sources and we give credit where we can. If we have failed to do this on any occasion please let us know so we can put it right.

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