**Safety Officer Team Guidelines**

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**Overview**

1. The purpose of the Safety Officers is for passive, not active, threat assessments leading to actions only if absolutely necessary. Passive action means observing individuals but not approaching or engaging the individual unless a specific threat is noticed.
2. Only trained law enforcement (present, former, or retired) should be included as a Safety Officer.
   1. Military personnel are trained to be more aggressive than law enforcement officers. While their service is appreciated, current or former military personnel are not included in the SOT.
3. Safety Officers may carry weapons on church grounds but that is typically not necessary.
4. Safety Officers may wear uniforms but that is not typically necessary.
5. Safety Officers must know who else is an SOT member in order to assist or recognize another officer during a crisis.

**Responsibilities**

1. Whenever a Safety Officer is present at the church, he/she must consider him/herself to be “on duty” and available to respond.
2. Safety Officers must be aware of individuals who have the potential to harm others. If a Safety Officer notices an individual believed to be a threat to others, he/she should approach the individual to determine the danger. If the danger is real, then the Safety Officer
   1. Should summon on-duty officers (call 911)
   2. Maintain personal or visual contact of the individual until on-duty officers arrive
   3. Attempt to get other Safety Officers to help with the situation
   4. As a last resort, escort the individual out of the building if the person becomes disruptive.
3. Safety Officers should be aware that many times dangerous individuals want to gain a reputation or fame for themselves and their actions. The most prominent person in the church, and thus the most likely single target, is the senior pastor. If a Safety Officer notices an individual approaching the pastor during the worship service, the officer should walk forward to see if he/she can be of assistance.
   1. During the music – pastor may be approached by staff trying to tell the pastor some emergency. Only rarely will anyone else approach him.
   2. During the sermon – this is a high visibility time for an individual wanting to gain fame. Only rarely will anyone else be on the platform
   3. During the “altar call” – this time is when the pastor is most vulnerable since people are encouraged to come to him. Someone dangerous could get within inches of the pastor and not draw any attention.
4. Safety Officers should not draw attention to themselves or their position unless a threat is imminent.
5. Safety Officers should get to know each other and the church-hired traffic officer.
6. The work of Safety Officers will go entirely unnoticed and unrecognized by the church. But please know that those people who are aware of your work greatly appreciate your service. It helps the staff and church do its work with peace of mind – thank you!