

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

Safety and Security Plan

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to introduce philosophy and guidelines in providing Pleasant Grove Baptist Church (PGBC) 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.

PGBC church has a volunteer Safety and Security Coordinator 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:

- (1) Maintain awareness,*
- (2) Report suspicious persons or actions, and*
- (3) Follow evacuation and security actions announced during an emergency.*

Other church members will be asked to serve in specific security plan roles. Church members who are asked to provide leadership include, but are not limited to, security team members, volunteer medical services, children's ministry leaders, ushers, greeters, deacons and staff. 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 Badges
- IX. Miscellaneous

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I. General Security

This section sets forth the general procedures and responsibilities for providing security for PGBC membership. 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, usher, staff member, deacon or other church leader. In other words, *“if you see something, say something.”*

On Sundays at 9:45 am (at the start of Sunday school) the Family Life Center (FLC) will be locked to deny entry from the outside. Entry may be allowed by ringing the doorbell at the main entrance. At 10:45 am on Sundays the rear and side doors to the main church building will be locked to deny entry to the rear and basement areas from the outside. 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. At 11:55 am or after the worship service ends, the FLC doors will be opened to allow parents to retrieve children from their respective classes. Sunday evening services will mandate that all doors to the FLC be locked at all times with entry by request only. 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 Safety and Security Coordinator, Assistant Safety and Security Coordinator, or a member of the church leadership. In emergencies, always call 911 first for local law enforcement intervention.

The security team member designated for the week will patrol the FLC during Sunday school and Sunday worship services (morning) being aware for any potential security threat or medical need. The security team members will also check or view parking areas for signs of unusual activity. Roving patrols are encouraged.

The Ushers are to maintain awareness for signs of unusual activity while persons are entering the church and will follow existing procedures for handling monies. The Ushers are the first line of defense to a potential threat that may enter the main worship area of the church. At least one usher shall remain in the vestibule at all times during worship services.

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II. Emergency Evacuation

In case of the need to evacuate (i.e. fire alarm, gas leak, etc.), all persons will proceed to the far end of the parking lot south of the church, next to Lake Wheeler Road.

- 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 usher to the evacuation assembly site.
- People in the FLC will be instructed and led out of the building by a security team member or church leader to the evacuation site.
- Children in the FLC will be instructed and led by their teachers (adults in charge) to the evacuation assembly site.
- Staff and teachers leading children to the evacuation site will remain with the evacuees until such time that it is safe to either return to the buildings or for parents to pick them up to go home.
- A security team member, usher or church leader will check restrooms and classrooms to ensure everyone has exited from the buildings and will report to responding officials.
- 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).

III. Medical Emergency

This section sets forth structure and actions to take in cases of medical emergencies. The security team has a volunteer medical services leader that will serve as medical emergency coordinator in support of the medical emergency portion of the church security plan. AED's are located in the FLC and in the rear hall of the Sanctuary for use as needed. At least one training session should be conducted annually to familiarize members in how to administer CPR, how to use the AED devices, and review medical emergency procedures.

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

If there is any doubt as to the seriousness of the illness or injury, the first person on the scene will immediately call 911. The first person on the scene will contact, or direct someone, to locate a medical services professional, if available to come to the scene and to take appropriate action. If 911 is called a person will be designated to proceed outside to meet and guide medical personnel to the patient's location.

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IV. Extreme Weather Conditions

This section sets forth the procedures for dealing with dangerous weather conditions.

Our major weather safety concerns are snow, ice, hurricanes, straight line winds associated with severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. 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 consultation with staff and the deacon chairman, will decide if it is necessary to cancel church activities. In the absence of the senior pastor, the pastor on call or deacon chairman will make the decision.

In case of snow and ice, or in the immediate aftermath of a hurricane or other storm, the Resource Management Chairman and Custodian will also be consulted as to the suitability of campus conditions. The church web email and all public media sources will be utilized to inform church members of schedule deviations.

Severe Weather

Tornadoes and straight line winds are associated with severe weather or thunderstorms. However, all thunderstorms do not result in tornadoes or damaging winds. The National Weather Service has the ability to identify and track severe weather; therefore, we can be warned. In case of impending severe weather, the following actions should be taken:

- A church staff member, security team member, or church leader, will announce a severe weather warning using whistles or other methods and direct people to follow ushers or other church leaders to designated safe areas.
- Security team members, ushers and/or other church leaders will be sent to all buildings and classrooms to notify occupants and direct them to one of the designated safe areas.
- Occupants in the sanctuary will be led to basement area or internal hallways away from windows. Occupants in the FLC will be led to designated shelter areas located on the ground floor. All persons should remain in place until notified the severe weather is no longer a threat.

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V. Action In Case of an Intruder or Active Threat (Code Red)

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 for police help. If 911 is called, send a person outside to meet police to explain situation and give directions to where the person is located.
- 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.
- Instruct teacher (adult in charge) to stay put until word comes that the threat no longer exists. The person in charge of classroom should keep occupants away from door and windows, and barricade the door if necessary.

The Safety and Security Coordinator, along with the senior pastor, will be responsible for maintaining, implementing, and operating the PGBC safety and security plan. Responsibilities will include providing training and information to church leaders and those having key roles in church safety and security. It will also ensure that all church members understand the plan and what is expected of them.

VI. Incident Reporting

1. 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 of a third party. If a third party complaint is received, the complainant should provide a statement with detailed information.
2. 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.
3. 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.

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VII. Background Checks

This section replaced the church's 2012 "Church Background Check Program Policies and Procedures"

Background checks shall be conducted, via a third party arrangement, to provide a secure and confidential review of potential criminal histories of staff and adult volunteers who work with one or more children (individuals under the age of 18), handle church monies, transact church business (contracts, loans, etc.), and provide security. Names and email addresses should be submitted to the Safety and Security Coordinator thirty (30) days prior to participation as a volunteer or being hired as an employee. Background checks shall be conducted at hire or first volunteer assignment and every three years thereafter.

All of the following shall have background checks performed:

- Paid staff including ministers, office workers, MMO teachers, etc.
- Security team volunteers
- Active deacons
- Ushers (with safe access)
- Preschool and Children's volunteers (VBS, nursery, GAs, RAs, Sunday School, etc.)
- Youth volunteers
- Upward coaches and assistants
- Any individual with the authority to conduct official church business as determined in the Constitution and By-Laws (i.e. President of the Corporation)

It is the church's intention to perform due diligence to monitor any past criminal history by the above individuals to potentially limit their service in certain positions, or their exposure with certain programs of the church, for any convictions related to the following crimes:

- Murder
- Felony assault
- Sexual offenses/sexual assault
- Felony possession and furnishing (without certificate of rehabilitation)
- Felony drug and alcohol offenses (without certificate of rehabilitation)
- Other felonies involving weapons and/or violent crimes
- Class B and Class A misdemeanor theft
- Felony theft
- Fraud and identity theft
- Motor vehicle report (excluding minor traffic misdemeanors)

In addition to the above, MMO staff (including any uncompensated volunteers) shall also be reviewed for any additional offenses listed in G.S. §110-90.2 (3).

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All names and email addresses are to be sent to the Safety and Security Coordinator. The background check company will process the individuals and the results of the investigation will be published on a restrictive website that requires an agreed upon password to gain entry. The Safety and Security Coordinators are the only persons within PGBC with permission and access to view the results.

Favorable Findings

No action shall be taken.

Unfavorable Findings

The actual criminal activity/finding will not be conveyed via the restricted website by the background check company. Should the Safety and Security Coordinators be advised of an unfavorable finding, they will:

- Advise the individual the background check company has found an unfavorable finding.
- Provide to the affected individual the name, address, and phone number of the background check company.
- A thirty (30) day window will be allowed for the affected individual to appeal or challenge the finding with the background check company.
- Immediately advise the Senior Pastor.
- Immediately advise the overall leader of the organizational area within the church (the Chairperson of the Volunteer Recruitment Committee or the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee) that the affected individual will not be involved in their capacity for the next thirty (30) days.

If, at the end of the thirty (30) days, no positive changes have resulted from the appeal or challenge to the findings of the background check company, the Safety and Security Coordinators will advise the Senior Pastor and the organizational area leader (the Chairperson of the Volunteer Recruitment Committee or the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee) of the affected individual's inability to lead or assist with the activities they were selected/volunteered for.

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VIII. Identification Badges

The purpose of identification badges for church staff and other workers is to provide immediate identification of the wearer as someone who is staffed to the church in an official capacity. This enables parents to understand who they are leaving their children with, and allows visitors and new members to identify a point of contact for questions and concerns. Further, it allows law enforcement and other emergency management officials to quickly identify one or more individuals they can liaison with in the case of incidents and emergencies.

- Badges shall only be made by the Security Team.
- Badges shall be two-sided so they are always visible.
- Badges shall be numbered for tracking and replacement purposes.
- Identification badges with pictures and names shall only be available for the following...
 - Ministerial Staff (blue stripe)
 - MMO Teachers (green stripe)
 - Other non-ministers/non-teachers who are employed by the church (purple stripe)
 - Other staff at the discretion of the Security Team (purple stripe)
 - Security Team Members (red stripe)
- Generic (non-picture) badges marked as ministry worker volunteers with a yellow stripe shall be available for children's workers (Sunday School, extended session, contemporary service, Wednesday night) and special events workers (Fall Festival, Vacation Bible School, etc.).
- Badges shall be worn at all times while working at the church or while acting in an official capacity at the church.
- Badges shall be clearly visible on the front of the individual, between the navel and the chest.

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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.
- Congregants should notify a security team member if they see something suspicious (“If you see something, say something”).
- Congregants should notify the Safety and Security Coordinator of any restraining orders or other items of a safety or security nature.
- Security volunteers, ushers, Youth leaders, and Preschool and Children’s leaders should have communication devices set on pre-established channels.
- 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.)
- Official sounds: fire alarm (fire evacuations), whistles (severe weather, code yellow lockdown, and other external threats – initiate relocation to refuge areas), and air horns (code red immediate threats such as an active shooter – initiate “Run, Hide, Fight”).
- The Safety and Security Coordinator shall serve as the Incident Commander (if the need ever arises) and liaison with emergency management personnel. However, the Safety and Security Coordinator may delegate portions of this responsibility as appropriate to other external organizations (medical staff, the media, other churches, the Raleigh Baptist Association, the Red Cross, etc.).