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Security and the High Holy Days . . . And Every Day^{*}

The High Holy Days raise special security concerns for the Jewish community. This year many factors contribute to that concern: the situation in Israel, the war on terror, increased anti-Semitic activity (compared to this time last year) and more virulent anti-Semitic attitudes.

This guide is designed to help Jewish community institutions prepare for holiday (and every day) security in a calm and rational manner. Enhanced security does not have to come at the expense of an open and welcoming environment. And it doesn't have to come at the expense of a balanced budget. But it requires a commitment from an institution's management and constituency to make security a part of an institution's culture.

General Recommendations

- *Think Security.* Bear in mind that it is everyone's responsibility to keep a watchful eye on their community institutions and we must all take responsibility for security.
 1. *Leadership* should assess the risks and realities facing the institution and develop a security plan seeking professional guidance, if needed. Of course, not all institutions run the same risk, but all run some risk.
 2. *Congregants and community members* must care about security and let others know that they do. Active cooperation with security procedures and your powers of observation are two of the most important assets you have.

In sum, we must all keep security in our thoughts. We must *think security*.

- Have a *security* (prevention) and an *emergency* (reaction) plan which includes (but is not limited to):
 - 1 Notifying people and evacuating them, if necessary. Designate a meeting place to ensure that everyone is safe.
 - 2 Having a cell phone handy in case you need to call for help from outside the facility. Consider having the local police department's emergency phone number as well as 911 programmed into the phone.
 - 3 Having a person in charge of security and prevention -- and vesting that person with the authority to direct a response during an incident.

ADL's guide [Security for Community Institutions](#) can help you develop a plan by alerting you to certain security considerations. Contact your [ADL Regional Office](#) for more information. Once a plan is written, make sure that all leaders, employees and community members are familiar with it and implement it. Also, consider conducting drills, including role-playing.

- Speak to local law enforcement about High Holy Day schedules and invite officers and the fire marshal to the facility for a security review -- especially if the facilities are not the one you usually use. Ensure patrol officers are aware of the times during which you will be holding events and during which large numbers of congregants will be walking on the local streets. Consider presenting copies of schedules for distribution at your Police Department's roll call.
- Coordinate ushering and security staff. This is especially important when you are

bringing in outside help for the holidays (e.g., off duty police or a security guard). Review ADL's [guidelines for hiring a security contractor](#), which are available from your [ADL Regional Office](#). Note: ushers and security should be placed in reasonable proximity to each other so that ushers can quickly alert security to a problem.

- A facility should have as few entry points as possible (ideally, one). However, remember to obey all fire codes and ensure adequate routes for exiting the building.
- Ensure that existing safety devices are working and used -- especially if you are renting a facility. Video cameras should have tape, parking lot lights should work, etc.
- Ensure that ushers understand that they play a critical role in security matters (even where there is a security staff) as they are often used to control access to the sanctuary (e.g., by taking tickets) and are in a position to spot trouble early on. Meet with your ushers prior to services to make sure everyone understands their role and security procedures.

Recognizing and Dealing With Suspicious People

Suspicious people may often be identified by their behavior. While no one behavioral activity is proof that someone is planning to act inappropriately (and many of the following behavioral indicators are perfectly consistent with innocent behavior), these factors can help you assess whether someone poses a threat. Behavioral factors to watch for include:

- Nervousness, nervous glancing or other signs of mental discomfort/being ill-at-ease. This may include sweating, "tunnel vision" (staring forward inappropriately), and repeated inappropriate prayer (e.g., outside the facility) or muttering. This may also include repeated entrances and exits from the building or facility.
- Inappropriate, oversized, loose-fitting clothes (e.g., a heavy overcoat on a warm day).
- Keeping hands in pockets or cupping hands (as in holding a triggering device).
- Constantly favoring one side or one area of the body as if wearing something unusual/uncomfortable (e.g., a holster). Pay attention to a person constantly adjusting waistbands, ankles, or other clothing. Projected angles under clothing may also be indicative of a firearm, e.g., at the waist or the ankle. Suicide bombers have been known to repeatedly pat themselves to verify that the bomb vest or belt is still attached.
- Carrying packages (see below regarding food donations).
- Lack of understanding of basic religious procedure/norms appropriate to the institution such as a synagogue.

Security people should be told, where possible, to observe people as they exit their cars; by watching how they adjust clothing and how they approach the building, they can look for signs that a person might be carrying a weapon, etc.

The most important thing is to be observant. For example, Israelis have become aware that some suicide bombers shaved off beards prior to committing their acts, thus leaving untanned skin and unusual facial tan lines. (The majority of suicide bombers there have been males, 18 - 27). Some also anointed themselves with scented oil, which may be obvious to someone in their vicinity.

While, again, no one factor is a certain indicator of a problem, once a problem is identified, ushers and security personnel have three options: do nothing, investigate and decide whether to take emergency steps, or immediately take emergency steps. **This is a decision only you can make in light of the circumstances, your personal comfort level and safety considerations.**

If you choose to investigate, greet the person in a friendly fashion, asking "Can I be of assistance?" or "Welcome, is this your first time here?" (Your membership committee will appreciate this gesture). Evasive or unusual answers may trigger your emergency procedures. Excuse yourself and initiate your procedures,

perhaps by using a pre-determined code-word with your colleagues. If you choose to admit the person to the sanctuary pending assistance (e.g., arrival of police) invite the person to sit on an aisle seat. Assign an usher to inconspicuously monitor the location of the individual.

Make sure the dispatcher understands the emergency nature of the call and the need for a law enforcement response without sirens. Off-duty officers generally work armed and are aware of security procedures.

If you remain suspicious, trust your instincts.

If the person leaves immediately, you should call the police anyway.

Recognizing and Dealing with Unwarranted Interest in Your Facility

Many terrorist organizations first engage in surveillance on their potential targets. Thus, we should all be paying attention to anyone attempting to photograph or study our facilities -- especially in the days and weeks leading up to the holidays.

Someone examining your facility (or looking closely at the people arriving at or leaving from your building) should be cause for concern. If you spot someone you believe may be doing surveillance on your facility:

1. Call the police **immediately**. It is crucial that the dispatcher/911 operator be given all available information, starting with the fact that the location is a Jewish institution, and its exact address/location. Other important items would include a description of the suspicious individual, their approximate height and weight, what clothing they have on, type of car and license plate number if one is observed, and any unusual characteristics that would make him or her easy to identify.
2. **Consistent with your safety and personal comfort level**, consider getting a photo of the person doing surveillance. If the institution has video cameras which are actively monitored make sure the operators know what to look for and to get film of the incident. Every institution should be encouraged to have a camera available to take photos of suspects. Inexpensive disposable cameras will suffice.
3. If the person leaves before police arrive, you may choose, **consistent with your safety and personal comfort level**, to approach the individual and inquire as to why he or she is taking photos of the location. The response may be "none of your business, I can take pictures of whatever I want." This is true (unless the surveyor is trespassing) but will have the benefit of placing the surveillor "on notice" that his or her actions were observed. Get a picture of the subject/car as he or she leaves.
4. Even if the person leaves, police should be informed and given a report. If the responding Law Enforcement Officer refuses to take a report, call ADL. Also, here is where preexisting relationships with police help: contact the person you already know. If a dispatcher does not consider this an emergency, inform him or her that you feel threatened and require assistance immediately.
5. Your safety is of paramount importance. Remember: call the police first and act to take pictures, get license information, etc only if you are confident that it is safe to do so.

Why worry about this? This is in line with the "target hardening" concept whereby you make your facility a more difficult and less attractive target, so that a potential assailant will not select it as a target.

Recognizing and Dealing With Suspicious Objects

- Ushers and security guards should walk the perimeter, including parking lots and if possible, rooftops, as well as inside the facility prior to the start of services. They should do this in order to refresh their memories as to what belongs and what does not -- including detritus left in the parking lot that may damage cars. During the holidays, ushers and security guards should periodically patrol the facility.
- If you come across a suspicious item, **DO NOT MOVE IT OR TOUCH IT**. If you decide it may be an explosive device, evacuate the vicinity (*rule of thumb*: after you have evacuated, if you can see the device, you are too close). Call the police immediately -- but do not use a cell phone or any other electronic device (bombs may be triggered by radio signals) Also, have a bomb threat plan in place that includes an evacuation plan and policy.
- On Yom Kippur, many *shuls* invite their members to bring food to donate to the

hungry. This practice invites hundreds of unmarked and unidentified packages into the building. Consider only accepting donations from those who have passed through security or having an usher take each package and examine --even if only briefly -- its contents. If at all possible, consider renting a truck or van to accept donated packages at a safe distance from the building. At the very least, an usher should be assigned to watch for anyone depositing a package and then leaving the facility.

Recognizing and Dealing with Suspicious Vehicles

Truck and car bombs may often be identified by the outward appearance and the behavior of the driver. Suspicious facts include:

- The person driving the vehicle does not enter the facility (running or walking away instead).
- The car or truck appears to be sitting very low on its springs (indicating great weight).
- The car or truck is parked illegally or too close to your building. Your facility should restrict parking closest to the building. In an urban environment where on-street parking is close to the facility, consider making a request to the local police department for no-parking designations.
- The car or truck appears to have been modified or altered.
- Note that older cars and trucks are more likely to be used in a car bombing (as are rental vehicles). Be wary of any type of vehicle that appears to have been abandoned (e.g., inspection sticker expired or missing, registration, license plate expired or missing, etc.).
- Information has been received from the FBI that Al Qeda operatives discussed attacking Jewish institutions using bomb-laden fuel trucks. **Institutions should be extremely alert to fuel and tanker trucks parked near their facilities.** The police should be called immediately if any doubt exists about the legitimacy of such trucks (e.g., no fuel delivery expected).

ADL's commitment to Jewish institutional security awareness is part of our mission. We have materials that can be used by the largest community center or the smallest shul. We have professionals who can provide guidance on security concerns. ADL provides this all as a community service. For additional materials and for our comprehensive Security Awareness Manual, call your [ADL Regional Office](#)

Have a happy, healthy and safe holiday. . . and think security!

* This guide is intended to help institutions become aware of some basic security considerations. It is not intended to provide comprehensive, institution-specific advice on security matters nor is it meant to replace the advice of a security professional. For comprehensive, institution-specific security advice, a security professional should be consulted. ADL is not responsible for any loss or damage arising out of the use or misuse of this information.

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