

# Congregational Commitments



**In the wake of the October 7th Hamas terrorist attack on Israel, we have seen record numbers of antisemitic and security risk events across North America, constituting the most complex and dynamic threat environment in our history.**

Secure Community Network (SCN) urges rabbis to join together with their synagogue leadership partners to join together in a *Brit*, a sacred covenant, to protect their congregations against these persistent and growing threats. By agreeing to lead our community through each of the steps outlined below, you are making a sacred commitment to the safety and well-being of your synagogue and to the future of the Jewish people.

## **We agree to encourage the creation a security committee and to help identify a qualified leader to coordinate all security matters.**

Every synagogue has unique security concerns and challenges. Having a standing security committee (comprised of lay and professional leadership) will help ensure the safety and comfort of the entire congregation. Be sure that one person is clearly assigned to lead the group so there is continuity, accountability, and strong coordination.



## **We agree to support the performance of a facility assessment.**

Developing a security strategy begins with understanding the security related strengths and weaknesses of our facility, grounds, and organization. An assessment, conducted by reputable professionals familiar with the unique needs and challenges of the Jewish community, will allow for the development of an effective security strategy.



## **We agree to participate in detailed security strategies for a variety of scenarios.**

Adopting a security strategy that addresses strengths and weaknesses as identified in the security assessment, and which takes into account the unique character of every community and its different events and programs, is critical.



## **We agree that our synagogue doors will be locked and that our community will be welcoming.**

A single main entrance that can be locked and monitored is vital to safety of every congregation. Members and guests can still be warmly welcomed while vigilant attention is paid to safety and security matters and people are monitored for behavior that may indicate a security risk. It's important to recognize that everybody is created "*B'tzelehm Elohim*," in the image of G-d, while warmly welcoming people of different ethnicities, religious backgrounds, or sexual orientations.



## **We agree that our synagogue leadership needs to be trained, and then we will trained again.**

Security requires diligence and attention, and security plans need to be practiced regularly to be effective during an emergency. Staff and ushers must be trained to recognize suspicious activity and know how to respond. As many people as possible should be trained in what to do in what to do in an emergency, from fire and natural disasters to active shooter threats. All members of the community can have a role in training, from clergy and staff to lay leaders, volunteers, and participants.



## **We agree that our leadership will build and sustain meaningful relationships with law enforcement.**

Inviting local law enforcement to our facility builds relationships. Law enforcement needs to know the layout of our facility and how the community uses the space. In an emergency, a few seconds saved by such familiarity can save lives.



## **We agree to reinforce the importance of providing first aid and medical supplies.**

Every facility should have and maintain functional automatic defibrillation devices, first aid kits, and Stop the Bleed kits in places where people regularly gather.

