



FORMING A SECURITY COMMITTEE

The Security Committee

One of the most effective ways to ensure the success of a community-wide safety and security program is to engage the community in a proactive and positive manner. Traditional security programs have often been relegated to individuals who deal with facilities, access control, and infrastructure. However, a community-wide, all-hazards approach that emphasizes the engagement of the community and stresses the criticality of awareness and training can have the greatest impact while also being the most cost-effective and sustainable.

For many communities, the creation and ongoing engagement of a Security Committee is a critical and pivotal component of a successful security program. The Security Committee will often serve as an executive or steering committee, driving the development and implementation process for a security plan. Additionally, it will set the strategic agenda, goals, and objectives on behalf of the Federation, organization, or entire community.

The Security Committee may convene professional and lay leadership in collaboration with public safety partners to ensure support as a comprehensive security strategy is developed and implemented. Professional and lay leadership, working together, can help ensure that a community's wider constituency is engaged with and accepts the security framework, which can ultimately mean the difference between effective solutions and failure.

The formal existence of a Security Committee can further assist an organization or community by ensuring that the issue of security remains a priority for all community organizations. Often, security and safety are addressed after a high-profile event, and only then in a piecemeal, reactive fashion. The Security Committee can facilitate an ongoing, strategic, and proactive approach to security matters. The Committee can serve as a means by which leadership messages, involves, and reassure stakeholders and constituents that the community takes seriously the issue of security.

Ultimately, the Committee should take responsibility for directing the development and ongoing maintenance of security policies, procedures, and training. It can help devise and implement a training plan and ensure proposed safety and security strategies are effectively evaluated. Furthermore, a Security Committee provides an excellent opportunity to involve lay leaders in a critically important program that impacts the entire community. There are clear lessons to be learned from Colleyville: members of every Jewish community in America must be trained. The training must be professional, detailed, and ongoing. It must be part of a broader strategy to bolster the community's security.



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Security Committee Best Practices

The sections below outline a best practice approach to establishing your own Security Committee. A clearly defined set of operating policies that leadership and Board Members understand and support will serve as the constitution of your Security Committee. Whether your Security Committee is tasked with approving and initiating new or continuing projects or simply with raising awareness of security issues, written policies will help you make well-informed and consistent decisions.

Structure of Committee(s)

SCN recommends consideration of at least three types of Security Committees:

Federation Security Committee (FSC): This committee focuses on the specific security needs and issues related to the Federation and its physical facility. Depending on the size of the Federation, this committee should consist generally of executive staff and leaders with a wide variety of experience. This committee will review security related policies, procedures, and suggestions made by the security professional. They can also assist with the implementation of new and ongoing Federation related security matters.

Community Security Committee (CSC): This committee should focus on the broader security needs and strategy for the whole community. As such, its composition should represent the entire community being served. This can be accomplished by ensuring that every organization within a community is represented by at least one member. However, this approach may result in a committee that is too large to properly function. As an alternative, members should be chosen from a cross-section of organizations within the community, to include the larger and more influential organizations as well as smaller, underserved, less participatory organizations. This committee will disseminate information to community organizations and advocate for increased participation with community security initiatives.

Facility/Organization Security Committee (FOSC): This committee focuses on the security plans and strategy of an individual facility (e.g., a day school, community center, etc.) and should be made up of members from the facility or organization they represent. They should communicate with the FSC and the CSC to share facility or organizational concerns when the need arises or when assistance is required. They should also facilitate the sharing of safety and security related information received from the security professional, the FSC, or from the CSC with its staff or members.

Much like the relationship between a City Council or County Board of Supervisors and staff, the mission or role of security committees should be to review and, when appropriate, vote on and approve recommendations initiated by the security professional.

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Create A Mission Statement

Committees cannot be effective without a clearly defined purpose, and are typically tasked with one or both of the following missions:

Policies, Plans, and Initiatives. Committees are tasked with creating and implementing policies and initiatives which may concern Access Control, Visitor Management, Crisis & Incident Response Plans, and Communications Plans. All policies and plans should be widely distributed amongst the organization to assist in implementation and enforcement.

Operations and Communications. Committees must also obtain security related information and ensure that congregants and members are well informed, well educated, and well trained. When setting up a Security Committee to handle operations and communications, leadership should consider where they are obtaining their information, what type of information is urgent, how it will be disseminated, and how well members and congregants are trained to respond.

Clearly Define the Committee's Objectives

Key objectives vary between organizations. As such, a good starting point is to level-set by determining the current safety and security posture needs of your organization or congregation, and those of the facilities within your purview. Ultimately, the Committee's goal is to help create a safer and more secure community for everyone through increased communication and collaboration.

Best Practice Goals

- Mission Statement
- Threat, Vulnerability, & Risk Assessment
- Incident & Crisis Response Plan
- Communications Plan
- Access Control / Visitor Policies
- Training Programs
- Law Enforcement Relationships

The Committee's Potential Responsibilities

No two Committees are the same. However, regardless of the organization's size, the risks and vulnerabilities remain the same and must be addressed. Below are a few examples of additional responsibilities with which a Security Committee may be tasked:

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SECURITY UPGRADES

Facility assessments can be a daunting task to an untrained person or committee and should always be discussed with an expert prior to hiring outside vendors or contractors.

A Security Committee may be asked to prioritize or simply identify facilities within their purview that need attention. This can include upgrades to any of the following possible vulnerabilities: technology, access control, landscaping, window film, and entry/exit points.

SCN or a facility security director can assist with any of these potential issues.

TRAININGS & DRILLS

An important measure of a successful training program is its access and ability to train and drill routinely. Training is paramount to keep Committee members informed, educated, and resourceful in the case of an emergency.

SCN offers various trainings to the community-at-large, including capstone courses:

- BeAware: Introduction to Situational Awareness
- Countering Active Threat Training
- Stop the Bleed®

HIRING SECURITY OFFICERS

High Holidays are not the only time to consider the hiring of security officers. Often, the needs and the budget for additional protection will lie with the Security Committee.

Consider the following when determining your needs:

- Which facilities lack aspects of physical security and are vulnerable (i.e., ease-of-access)?
- What scheduled events have been or will be highly publicized?
- Do any facilities have shared spaces or rent to or host other organizations that make access control difficult?

Consult SCN's white papers at securecommunitynetwork.org/institutional-security for detailed guidance on how to consider armed security and private security services.

NONPROFIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security established the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), as part of the Department's Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI). The NSGP was designed to provide grant funding to eligible nonprofit organizations determined to be at risk of a terrorist attack, with specific objectives of supporting the acquisition and installation of physical target hardening measures and related security equipment as well as security planning and training efforts.

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Typically, NSGP application and implementation is delegated to an organization's Security Director. In the absence of a Security Director, the responsibility may be steered to the Security Committee.

SCN can provide an organization's Security Committee with the necessary guidance to navigate the complexities of the grant process.

Framing Your Committee

Determine how often your committee will meet. While there is no set timeframe, it is a best practice to maintain consistency and to meet at least quarterly at the same day and time. However, when an issue arises that requires immediate attention, or when the community is dealing with a crisis, additional meetings may be required. Providing an agenda will help drive the meeting's purpose and timeframe to effectively delineate an overall briefing, next steps, clearly-understood responsibilities, tasking, etc.

COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

CHAIRPERSON

The Committee chairperson's primary functions are preparing and running meetings. The chair sets meeting dates and locations, calls meetings to order, manages the agenda, takes votes and adjourns meetings. The chair works with Committee members and organizational staff to ensure preparations necessary for a productive meeting. If the chair is the public face of the organization, they might take the title of president and make speeches, write articles, or give media interviews.

VICE CHAIR

The vice chair, sometimes referred to as first vice president, performs the duties of the chair when they are not able to, and is often the next in line to take the chair position. The vice chair may contribute to the Committee in substantive ways.

TREASURER

The treasurer collaborates with the person who manages the organization's financial records. At small organizations, they may be asked to keep the books. If the organization has a bookkeeper or other financial staff, the treasurer will review the organization's finances on a regular basis, sign checks, and deliver financial reports at each Committee meeting.

SECRETARY

The secretary is responsible for taking notes during Committee meetings. They should create and disseminate meeting agendas as set by the chair. Depending on the size of the Committee, they might be asked to keep the physical copies of the organization's key documents, such as its mission statement and past meeting minutes.

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members are the backbone of the Committee. They are responsible for attending meetings, engaging in discussion and planning, and assisting in tasks and assignments determined by the Committee or the Chair.

Characteristics of Committee Members to Consider

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS (SME)

It is good practice to recruit individuals with expertise or knowledge of security operations (e.g., law enforcement officers, military servicemembers, emergency services providers).

KNOWLEDGEABLE AND RESOURCEFUL

Members should understand the full range of the organization's mission, essential functions, and operations. They should be able to identify and engage with resources that can further the needs of the Committee.

LEADERS

Members should be influential leaders within the organization or community. They should encourage community members to engage with security efforts and to commit to supporting initiatives, projects, and programs.

PRACTICAL AND DISCIPLINED

With any new committee (or new member) comes a learning curve or acclimation period. To have success with the formation, culture, socialization, and effective communications within, committee members should take a practical and disciplined approach to collaboration and decision making. Overreaction and unpracticed ideas are counter-productive to the success of a Security Committee.

Note: It is particularly important that the members of the security committee act as a bridge between the Security Director and the community.

Collaborative Committees

Executives may ask to be involved or be invited to the Committee's meetings, or may ask that a representative occasionally brief Board members at meetings. Regardless of the request, the responsibility of the Committee remains constant and must be able to adapt to changes when presented. The Security Committee will need to periodically revisit the mission statement, the tasking, and the objective to ensure a seamless partnership between the Committee and executives.

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A strong and unified front is critical when a Committee is requesting finances for initiatives including but not limited to: training, hiring, various upgrades, and other necessities. Once the Committee has determined their requests and potential streams of funding, it then becomes the executive team's responsibility to further the discussion.

Keep Committee Meetings Interesting

Too often within organizations, projects initially met with enthusiasm and passion are overcome with boredom and monotony. Security Committees are no different. To keep the meetings informative, engaging, and constructive, consider the following approach:

Meet at different 'host' locations throughout the year.

IDENTIFY A MONTHLY MEETING TOPIC AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION.

Consider inviting a security specialist (e.g., a police department representative) to discuss the importance of an aspect of security

Ask members to undertake a task that will help advance the program as a take-away before the next meeting.

Meeting In-Session: A Recipe for Success

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Committee meetings need order and structure to focus on a proper agenda. Ensure all Committee officers and members are prepared and ready to discuss topics.

DISTRIBUTE THE AGENDA

Once the Committee is called to order, ensure the officers and members receive a copy of the agenda that will be followed for the duration of the meeting.

ATTENDANCE ROLL CALL

Taking attendance will assist in referencing past committee decisions and directions.

REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE

This report is an overview or briefing of the activities, actions, updates, and affairs since the past meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

The Committee will have the opportunity to address future projects, events, discussion points, taskings, etc.

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MEETING RECAP/OLD BUSINESS

After the report, the floor can open to members to discuss old business from the last meeting. This can include tasking progress, tabled discussions, project status, etc.

ADJOURN THE MEETING

Once the recap and new business has been discussed, the Committee's executives can adjourn the meeting.

Summary Committee Checklists

The checklists below are comprised of important tasks and topics that will help ensure a fluid and functioning Security Committee. Although your needs and responsibilities may differ from the topics listed below, it will give the Committee an operational template which will help you determine your goals and objectives.

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- ✓ Identify Officers and Members
- ✓ Define the Mission/Objective
- ✓ Determine Meeting Logistics
- ✓ Invite Police/Security Director
- ✓ Create & Distribute Agenda
- ✓ Determine Priorities/Tasking

TASKING A COMMITTEE

- ✓ Facility Assessments
- ✓ Community Trainings
- ✓ Security Officer Hiring
- ✓ Policies & Procedures
- ✓ TTXs and Drill Scenarios
- ✓ Engage Police/Security Director

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