

Checklist for Houses of Worship During Lockdown/Shelter In Place Orders

We understand the disruptive impact COVID-19 can have on your ministry. Empty buildings (including churches) are typically more susceptible to criminal activity and property damage. Consider these preparations should you choose to work and worship remotely:

- Make sure all employees and volunteers have emergency contact numbers for each other.
- Ensure your business protocols are shared with staff; share an organizational chart. Create one if it does not exist.
- Make sure your member roster is updated with contact information, including email addresses, to ensure continued connection with all who are part of the congregation.
- Put a hold or temporary forward on mail delivery so it doesn't pile up outside of the church. Reach out to your providers to see if all bills can be moved to electronic notification.
- Make sure all garbage is removed from inside and outside of the building.
- Conduct a thorough walk-through of your entire facility. Take photos and notes of current condition of the building. Make sure all heating vents and furnaces are kept clear of any debris such as clothing, paper products, etc.
- Make sure all windows are locked and secured, systems are safely shut down, and all unnecessary appliances are unplugged.
- If you have a security monitoring service, contact them to let them know your plans. If you do not have one, consider installing an alarm system. Alarms will deter individuals from attempting to enter your building and can quickly alert authorities when necessary.
- If you cannot install an alarm system at this time, consider contracting with a security company to patrol the property. Security services can be contracted to have Patrol Guards check your facility at random times. These guards are a great way to deter crime and can provide quick notification if there are any concerns.
- Consider motion-activated lights and general lighting which can help protect vacant buildings. Keeping entryways and other areas around the building well-lit will deter individuals from attempting to enter the building.
- Make sure to keep your thermostat set at an appropriate range. During these colder months, keep the temperature set at a minimum of 55 degrees in order to prevent pipes from freezing.
- Drive by the location several times a week to complete an exterior inspection. Vary the times/days so there is no set pattern.
- Think through transfer of authority if leadership is at risk of quarantine or has health restrictions. More than one person should be aware of the chain of command, so please share it with a few trusted sources.
- You should currently have two signers, but should one of those signers be unavailable for an extended amount of time, you should have a third identified to help pay bills and payroll.
- If your pastor becomes ill, notify your judicatory office.
- Investigate on-line giving options.
- Identify which operations are critical to survival and recovery: Include payroll, expedited financial decision-making, and accounting systems to track and document costs.
- Stored documents should be scanned and uploaded to the cloud (securely) if they are not already: insurance documents, church by-laws, personnel documents, leases, deeds, contracts, etc. If you do not or cannot store in the cloud, take documents with you.