

A collage of three religious buildings: a white Gothic-style church on the left, a yellow domed structure with a star on top in the middle, and a mosque with a large golden dome and minaret on the right.

Safety for Faith-Based Events and Houses of Worship

Domestic and international terrorism plots did not end with 9/11—in fact, they continue to threaten the United States, its citizens, and its critical infrastructure. Informed and alert community members play an important role in keeping our nation safe; this role includes the reporting of suspicious activity to law enforcement to assist in the prevention and investigation of criminal activity, including terrorism.

The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI)—a collaborative effort by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners—was established to create a national capacity for gathering, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing SAR information. This approach includes participation by citizens and community members, as the prevention of terrorism and other crimes takes everyone's involvement.

The NSI is founded on the protection of privacy and civil liberties of all persons. This foundation is designed to assure community members that all information reported to law enforcement is vetted and analyzed by trained professionals to ensure that only information that is reasonably indicative of terrorism activity is shared.

The NSI is committed to partnering with faith-based communities

to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorists. Faith-based events and houses of worship, such as churches, synagogues, and mosques, are inherently welcoming, with open access and publicly announced schedules for religious services and special events; however, this welcoming nature can pose risks. An open environment where a significant number of people of the same faith congregate regularly at specified times to worship, study, celebrate special events, commemorate days of significance, and host public gatherings presents unique security challenges. Members of the nation's faith-based organizations and houses of worship can take steps to proactively reduce risks and provide safe, secure, and resilient places of worship and faith-based gatherings. The NSI is a standardized process—including stakeholder outreach, privacy protections, training, and facilitation of technology—for identifying and reporting suspicious activity in jurisdictions across the country and also serves as the unified focal point for sharing SAR information.

The NSI and its partner agencies will engage the faith-based community in an effort to bolster emergency preparedness efforts and to foster best practices to keep faith-based events and houses of worship safe. Informed, alert communities—including clergy, lay leaders, congregants, and visitors to places of worship—play a critical role in keeping our nation safe.



DHS's "If You See Something, Say Something"™

campaign is an effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper local law enforcement authorities. The campaign has also initiated partnerships with faith-based organizations

to help engage religious leaders and congregants with the message of vigilance in identifying and reporting indicators of terrorism and other threats. Both the "If You See Something, Say Something"™ campaign and the NSI underscore the concept that homeland security begins with hometown security, where an alert public plays a critical role in keeping our nation safe.

Resources for Security Personnel, Law Enforcement, and First Responders



SAR Training for Hometown Security Partners
https://nsi.ncirc.gov/training_online.aspx

"If You See Something, Say Something™" Campaign
<https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>

DHS Active Shooter Preparedness
<https://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness>

NSI Resources
<https://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>

FBI Resources for Law Enforcement, Businesses, Victim Assistance, and Parents
<https://www.fbi.gov/resources>

Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN)
Contact HSINCS@dhs.gov to obtain a username and a password that will allow access to several tools, including a webinar entitled "The Evolving Threat: What You Can Do."
http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1156888108137.shtm

Additional Resources

Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship
https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.PDF

Resources to Protect Your House of Worship
<https://www.fema.gov/faith-resources>

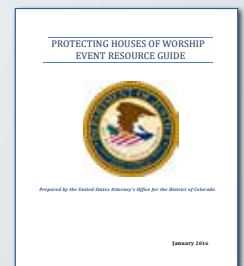
Protecting Houses of Worship Event Resource Guide
<https://www.hsd.org/?view&did=790107>

Safeguarding Houses of Worship
https://www.justnet.org/resources/Houses_of_Worship.html

Praise & Preparedness Initiative
<http://www.praise.ga.gov/>

Houses of Worship Security Practices Guide
https://www.illinois.gov/ready/plan/Documents/DHS_Houses_of_Worship_Security_Practices_Guide.pdf

DHS Community Engagement, Outreach, and Training Resources
<http://www.dhs.gov/community-outreach-and-training>



ILLINOIS.gov



DHS.gov

nsi.ncirc.gov

FBI.gov

Additional Resources (continued)

Protective Security Advisors, DHS Infrastructure Protection
http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1265310793722.shtm

FEMA Management Institute Training Resources
<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMI>

FEMA Guide for All-Hazards Emergency Operations Planning
<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/plan/slq101.pdf>

Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101
http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1828-25045-0014/cpg_101_comprehensive_preparedness_guide_developing_and_maintaining_emergency_operations_plans_2010.pdf

Community Preparation Through the Hometown Security Program
<https://www.dhs.gov/hometown-security>

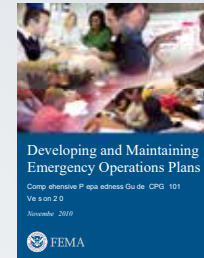
DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Community Engagement Section
<http://www.dhs.gov/crcl>

U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service
<http://www.justice.gov/crs/index.html>

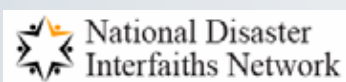
FBI, Information on Hate Crimes
http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/civilrights/hate_crimes/hate_crimes/



FEMA



Nonprofit/Private Sector Resources



Secure Community Network
<https://scnus.org/institutional-security>

Christian Emergency Network
<http://www.christianemergencynetwork.org/>

National Disaster Interfaiths Network
<http://www.n-din.org/>

Active Shooter in a House of Worship
http://www.n-din.org/ndin_resources/tipsheets_v1208/07_NDIN_TS_ActiveShooter.pdf

Recommended Best Practices for Securing Houses of Worship
<https://www.asisonline.org/About-ASIS/Documents/SecuringHOWs.pdf>

ASIS International
<https://www.asisonline.org/Membership/Member-Center/Security-Spotlight/Pages/Security-for-Houses-of-Worship.aspx>

DHS.gov

nsi.ncirc.gov

FBI.gov