




Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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5 Things to Consider Before Hosting an Active Shooter Drill

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Reports of active shooter situations and the tragic stories from survivors seem to inundate our daily news. Church leaders are looking for better ways to protect and prepare their congregations and many plan to participate in an active shooter drill for [Safety Sabbath 2018](#).

However, before conducting this kind of drill, here are a few things to keep in mind.

1. Prepare, Don't Scare

Preparing your church congregation for an active shooter drill will be different than preparing for a fire or earthquake drill. Keep in mind that members, especially children, may be frightened or feel scared during the drill. Take precautions and be aware of how you relay information to your congregation. In preparing for your drill, members should feel confident in what to do when the exercise begins rather than scared and unsure.

2. Remind and Repeat

With any drill, repetition is the key to success. Announce the upcoming date of your active shooter drill multiple times to your congregation. Review the plan as well as what members should do during the drill at least three times before the date of your drill. Remind members, both beforehand and on the drill date, that this is just a simulation and not a real event. Repeating this information to congregants will help them remember what to do and be assured that this is simply a drill.

If your church records and livestreams its programs, consider pausing or powering down these services for the duration of the drill. Remind leaders, members, and online viewers that recordings and livestreams will be paused on this day for the safety of your congregation.

3. Use All Available Resources

To have a successful drill, church leaders should take advantage of every available resource. Before the event, download all of the Safety Sabbath 2018 Active Shooter Drill materials from SafetySabbath.com. Reach out to your local emergency personnel and ask for any information they can provide to help your drill be a success. You may even invite them to your church to observe on the day of your drill and explain to congregants what local first responders may do during this situation.

4. Provide a Platform for Feedback

Hearing the perspective of others who participated in your drill may be helpful to you as a leader. Provide a platform where both leaders and members can give feedback. This information can be in the form of a church assembly or an online survey. Collect this information and have it ready to discuss with your church leaders.

5. Assess, Improve, and Try Again

Using the feedback from leaders, members, and local emergency personnel, assess your drill performance using the [Safety Sabbath Drill Evaluation form](#). Then see where these changes can be applied. Set a date later in the year to repeat the drill with the improvements and be ready to repeat the process.

An active shooter situation is something that each of us hopes never to experience. As church leaders, it is our responsibility to make sure that we are prepared if that day ever comes. For more information on church safety, visit [ARM's Church Safety page](#).

References:

<https://adventistrisk.org/en-US/Safety-Resources/Safety-Sabbath>

https://adventistrisk.org/Adventist_Risk/media/ARMSiteContent/Safety%20Resources/Safety%20Sabbath/GUIDE_SSActiveShooterBooklet_NAD-CAN-EN.pdf

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