



## The SALAM Project Security Guide

### Prevent

Report  
Surveillance  
Control  
Access  
Mark  
Territory

### Prepare

Build a team  
Evacuation  
Lockdown  
Greeting  
Committee  
De-escalate

### Respond

Communicate  
Run  
Hide  
Defend  
Stop the  
Bleed

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## *Emergency Response*

Police take an average of 5-7 minutes to respond to an emergency. Research in Disaster Management shows that people on scene at the time of crisis, or “**zero responders**” have the biggest effect on impact reduction. YOUR actions can make the difference between life and death. This whitepaper is designed to empower your

community to better handle crisis, and deter any would-be terrorists.

1. **COMMUNICATE:** Calmly and clearly communicate that there is an emergency situation and direct others to evacuate. People will look for leadership in an emergency situation, and panic is contagious. Rick Rescorla, the Chief Security Officer of Morgan Stanley during 9/11, saved 2,687 lives that day with effective communication and established evacuation training.
2. **RUN:** Know your Evacuation Routes: Ensure that whenever you enter a building, you make note of emergency exits. Run regular evacuation drills for fires within your building. During an emergency, your brain uses shortcuts and will only want to

use familiar paths. Walk around the building and understand where you can get to safety.

Guide others to safety and help those with mobility issues leave. Break windows if you must. During the Christchurch assault, many people were not able to break windows to escape. During the Orlando Nightclub shooting, a Marine veteran was able to open a locked door and safely evacuated 70 people. When at a safe distance, call 911 and provide as many details as possible, namely the address, the type of threat, and casualties.

In the Las Vegas shooting, people who ran away were much more likely to survive than those who tried to hide. Before every major

event, have personnel walk through emergency exit routes to ensure clear space and accessibility. Congested routes lead will increase casualties during an emergency. Moving targets are very difficult for even experienced marksmen to hit.

3. **HIDE:** Barricade and Conceal: If you cannot run away, find a place to hide, minimize noise and turn off the lights. Turn your phones to silent mode. Barricade the doors with whatever objects can be found. Strategically place heavy objects close to doors such as bookshelves or cabinets so they can function as blockades in an emergency.

Do not open the door for anyone (use your judgement), as shooters often pretend to be police officers. Police will enter on their own.

During the Parkland Shooting, many teachers broke protocol to hide more students.

4. **DEFEND:** The New Zealand shooting ended when a single man decided to pick up a credit card reader and fight back, chasing away the attacker. In Norway, a 65-year old man tackled a heavily armed shooter before anyone in the mosque was injured. In a Denver, Colorado school, a gunman was pinned down by three students. From 2000-2016, the FBI found 21 shooter incidences in which a civilian stopped the shooter.

While it may be very dangerous to fight back against a gunman, if all other options fail, it may be the only strategy that will preserve life, and history clearly demonstrates that it has worked effectively in

the past. Group together and use the elements of surprise. Distract with tools like light, sound, and use improvised weapons. For example, a fire extinguisher can be used to create a smokescreen which will disorient the attacker. It is very difficult for a shooter to stop a crowd, and attackers often do not have professional training.

Typically, a shooter is expecting little to no resistance and is expecting “easy targets.” Every second you resist, his own will to fight decreases. With little experience, they are often easily scared by anyone fighting back. If one person can make a difference, many people in a coordinated effort certainly can.

Guns have a maximum ammunition reserve which will run out and reloading takes time. Taking control of the barrel of the gun

ensures that you can manipulate the trajectory of the next bullets, potentially neutralizing a shooter.

A common rule in martial arts is to get close when the attacker has a gun to remove the advantage of range, and to run away when the attacker has a knife or other melee weapon, which is very difficult to counteract unless you have a weapon of opportunity.

5. **Stop the Bleed:** During many life safety events, it has been observed that people are sometimes too afraid to offer medical assistance out of fear of making the situation worse. However, some basic principles of bleeding control can greatly impact a person's survivability.

Stop the Bleed was developed in the United States by medical professionals and promoted by President Obama to prepare the public to reduce injury via bleeding. It can greatly reduce the lives lost during a shooting incident.

- Scene survey: ensure that it is (relatively) safe for yourself to provide medical assistance.
- Take any cloth (preferably clean) and cover the wound, applying continuous pressure until medical professionals arrive.
- If the wound is large and deep, try to “stuff” the cloth down into the wound.

**ALWAYS** ensure that medical professionals are contacted as soon as possible and,

preferentially train members of the staff in first aid.

Is the person undergoing a seizure? Leave the person alone until the seizure subsides and ensure they do not hurt themselves.

Have first aid kits mounted around high traffic areas in the facility, and ensure regular checks to restock.

*Will I break the law for defending myself or others? How about offering medical assistance?*

Good Samaritan Laws across many countries offer legal protection to people who give reasonable assistance to those who are, or whom they believe to be, injured, ill, in peril, or otherwise incapacitated. You should know

that if you do try to help someone, you are protected by the law in most countries.

From Ontario's Good Samaritan Act, 2001, section 2: Protection from liability

2. (1) Despite the rules of common law, a person described in subsection (2) who voluntarily and without reasonable expectation of compensation or reward provides the services described in that subsection is not liable for damages that result from the person's negligence in acting or failing to act while providing the services, unless it is established that the damages were caused by the gross negligence of the person. 2001, c. 2, s. 2

*Security Marshals*

Recruit from your volunteers and staff. While hiring private security companies or paid duty police officers can be effective, volunteers have inside knowledge of the community and established relationships, along with an emotional investment in protecting those close to them. Volunteers will also gain valuable experience that will prove useful in career development and strengthening community bonds. The SALAM Security Marshal model is flexible to allow organizations to adopt it with minimal disruption to operations. All Marshals will ideally require radios or “walkie talkies.” This model consists of the following:

- **Overwatch:** designated to review cameras and alarm systems. During an emergency, they will be reviewing cameras to gather evidence and provide

updates to the police. Recommended that a system be used that can be accessed by mobile devices.

- **External/parking patrol team:** Many organizations have parking teams during major events, it is recommended that they also be trained in security. This team will serve to screen potential attackers and act as a greeting committee. Should a threat be confirmed, they will warn the inside team. The external marshals need to be able to understand suspicious behavior and be ready to note down details of the individual. This includes concerning words spoken, actions, clothing and shoes (criminals rarely change their shoes).
- **Internal security team:** Should a threat be confirmed, this team will be notified of

where the threat is coming from. They will begin procedures of locking down and barricading entrances, and if needed will lead attendees to evacuate or find safe areas to hide. Internal security can also implement **Controlled Access**: Certain marshals are assigned to keep doors to the facility closed, only allowing entry when individuals are close by. This measure has been shown to successfully prevent attacks on numerous occasions.

Someone with ill intentions often acts to conceal their behavior, avoiding contact and looking around. They may ask questions about the mosque and its security cameras, or questions that are incongruent with typical dialogue from a newcomer. Shoplifters are often seen looking around to make sure they are not being seen, displaying a “nervous

demeanor”. Many criminals suffer from well documented mental health issues. It is important to understand that this is a complex topic that requires professional help and is beyond the scope of this document. It is important to utilize any members of the congregation who have mental health experience.

Marshals should possess a checklist to be consulted before major events to conduct a safety check, such as ensuring all exits are unobstructed, first aid kits replenished and safety equipment is in order.

## *Security Operating Procedures*

- **Aggressive behavior and de-escalation:**  
Should you be placed in a position where

an individual is acting aggressively, it is recommended that at least three marshals be present. While engaging the individual, speak calmly, clearly and with pauses. DO NOT speak quickly or attempt to escalate the situation. Focus on active LISTENING and demonstrating empathy while preventing inappropriate behavior and establishing clear boundaries. In a January 2021 incident in Calgary, an imam was able to delay a potential knife attacker for 3 minutes, long enough for police to arrive and apprehend the suspect.

- While marshals are engaging with the individual, another will call the police and advise them of all pertinent details. Take careful notes of specific instances of hate

speech and any potential physical altercation.

- If a **suspicious person or vehicle** is seen and leaves before the marshals can engage, take notes of all the details of the incident and physical descriptors. License plates, clothing, shoes (criminals may change their clothes on a return visit, but usually keep the same shoes), vehicle make, model and color. Preserve all footage from cameras. This will all be stored and reported to the police. All congregants should be provided basic awareness training that will allow them to report suspicious behavior and aid the security team.
- Signs of suspicious behavior: Trying to hide something (wearing oversized

clothes), not making eye contact, extreme nervousness, asking unusual questions or inappropriate comments.

- Typical corporate security measures include advanced **incident logging** software to ensure that all events are stored for future reference. This can be incredibly useful; for example, if a suspicious person makes multiple visits and different team members are on shift at each event. In lieu of these typically unaffordable tools, mosques can leverage the power of mobile devices to offer decentralized alternatives through messaging apps.
- One example is WhatsApp, Telegram or Signal: Set up a group on one of these platforms with all team members present.

All members will use these apps to log incidences and post photos. This has numerous advantages: It is a tool most mosque attendees are well familiar with, all messages and pictures will be stored on other teammates phones and backups automatically, and setting up a simple report structure with date, time and type of incidents can allow easy searchability should an incident need to be revisited.

## *Hate Crime Prevention*

If you see something suspicious, say something: Inform the Police and your community so that they are aware of the suspicious activity. Many criminals conduct unusual activity beforehand, sometimes scoping the site in advance. The Quebec City

Mosque Shooter visited twice and angrily argued with a staff member who did not tell anyone. In January of 2019, 4 men amassed 21 guns and 3 explosives to attack a Muslim community in New York. They were only stopped when a high school student noticed something suspicious and reported it to the police.

There have been numerous incidents in recent years of suspicious people being discovered conducting reconnaissance on places of worship and running away when questioned. Report hate crimes to the police so they of any issues.

Even if there is no action taken from an initial report, consistent reports of threats and hate crime will provide data to police that can justify units deploying more resources to protect your community. Contact local By-

Law officers to deal with smaller violations and disturbances. Understand your rights. In Canada, as per the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, you have a right to practice your religion without interference.

Report Hate Crimes to the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) or the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), who are actively involved in advocacy across Canada and the US respectively. NCCM maintains an active Hate Crime Tracker Map and a team that provides assistance to mosques across the country. Both CAIR and NCCM will make politicians and police more aware of any issues faced by your community and will advocate for increased protection and dealing with hate groups.

# *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*

Effective design of your premises can greatly deter crime. “Broken Window” Theory posits that the less a premise is well maintained, the more likely a criminal is likely to utilize opportunities to try and break in or commit crimes.

- **Surveillance:** Are there any areas of the facility that cannot be monitored easily? Does shrubbery or trees block any views? Are there any hidden spaces or blindspots in the cameras? Is the lighting sufficient? The 2016 Orlando shooter originally planned to attack Disney World, but was deterred by seeing police officers nearby. Criminals are afraid of being seen. If you

are walking alone at night, for example, and see a suspicious person approach, you can greatly reduce the chances of being attacked by going to a well-lit area and that has more people within eyeshot.

- **Access Control:** It is recommended to minimize the number of entrances to reduce the potential attack vectors, while also maximizing the number of one-way exits to ensure people can evacuate. These ideally should be accessible to persons with disabilities/mobility requirements. As aforementioned, having a guard present to screen individuals is a great measure. Is parking access controlled? Are women's areas accessible, are their hallways sufficiently wide to enable rapid egress?

- **Territoriality:** Defining a space as being part of your property. Ensure clear borders, fencing, signage and a high level of upkeep. Schedule regular community cleanups to remove debris and ensure good maintenance of the premises.

## *Accessibility*

While many mosques have accessible entrances for persons with disabilities, this is often limited to a single entrance. More investment needs to be made in ensuring sufficient accommodations for persons with disabilities.

**Inclusion:** People from all backgrounds within the mosque need to be involved in

security planning. For example, sisters' sections within mosques are often neglected and not as well maintained, making them more susceptible to attack. Sisters also need to be fully included within security planning and operations, as they are often excluded despite being uniquely targeted. In the recent past, multiple suspects at mosques have been observed disguising themselves within niqabs to conduct surveillance, before being confronted by sisters and driven off.

Want more education and resources? -  
Instagram: younus.imam

**Safety and Security is YOUR responsibility.  
Prepare and be aware.**