

BUSINESSSAFE

BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.

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BusinessSafe Sector – Houses of Worship

Public gathering spaces are designed to be open, accessible and inviting. This sense of a communal environment is especially strong for houses of worship, which are particularly vulnerable to attack due to a lack of security measures and high concentrations of people. Attacks on these locations may be due to prejudice against the religious group or sect associated with the targeted location, by the presence of an intended target in the audience, or simply a crime of opportunity. According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), attacks on these institutions occur less frequently than other public gathering places but the effects to the community are no less devastating.

Criminal Activity

Targeted Attacks – Houses of worship are identified as soft targets because of their lack of security, ease of accessibility, and the tendency for a large number of attendees. These factors leave them open to several types of physical attacks, including shootings, bombings, arson, and more. Many, but not all, attacks occur when there is an expected large gathering. Compared to similar attack methods against other venues, houses of worship often experience higher injury and fatality rates due to the common theme of large crowds in contained spaces with few exits. Physical attacks may cause significant loss of life, property damage, financial loss, and introduce a sense of fear in the community.

[Church Shooting Survivor: Gunman 'Disengaged,' Sat Alone](#)
[Indonesia Church Bombing Wounds 20 On Palm Sunday](#)
[Neighbor Charged with Arson After Bartow Church Destroyed](#)

Cyberattacks – Houses of worship are not commonly thought of as potential targets for cyberattacks. However, like other organizations that are connected to the internet and hold information, houses of worship are susceptible to this type of attack. Cyber criminals



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have a variety of reasons for targeting houses of worship to include seeking financial data for personal gain, gaining access to the personal identifiable information on staff and congregants, or acting on various political or ideological views which conflict with the congregants or community. Cyberattacks can cause financial loss in the form of financial data theft, ransom payments or the loss of congregants.

[The Mormon Church has been hit by a major cyberattack](#)
[Cybercriminals Steal \\$1.75 Million From an Ohio Church](#)
[Hackers leak huge cache of data from evangelical organization that supported Dobbs decision](#)

Resources

- The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) provides a [website](#) with resources for faith-based organizations, including a self-assessment, videos and guides.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides websites with guidance on avoiding [arson](#) as well as designing and implementing [emergency operations plans](#).
- Visit [StopRansomware.gov](#) for information and resources related to protecting your organization from ransomware attacks.
- For more cyber safety information or to schedule a free cybersecurity awareness training class, visit [SecureFlorida.org](#).
- If you are the victim of a ransomware attack, contact your local [Federal Bureau of Investigation field office](#), file a report with the FBI's [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) and submit a report with CISA.

“If You See Something, Say Something” – Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency, on the FDLE website using Florida’s [See Something, Saw Something Tool Kit](#) or by calling 8855-FLA-Safe. In an emergency, call 911.



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