



Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

675 Red Mills Road Walkkill NY 12589-3292 Phone: (845) 306-1100

July 16, 2018

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

Re: Measures for Kingdom Hall Security

Dear Brothers:

Jesus warned his disciples that many would live in areas filled with crime and violence during the time of the end. (Matt. 24:12; 2 Tim. 3:1-3) Though difficult situations cannot be entirely avoided, practical steps should be taken to ensure the security of our brothers as they are gathered to worship Jehovah. (Prov. 22:3) Thus, the body of elders should review what security measures are necessary at the Kingdom Hall and prepare a written security plan adapted to local circumstances. If the Kingdom Hall is used by more than one congregation, the operating committee should prepare a Kingdom Hall security plan for review and implementation by the respective bodies of elders. Each body of elders may feel free to apply additional security measures specific to the needs of their publishers.

Locking Kingdom Hall Doors: When the Kingdom Hall is used by smaller groups, such as meetings for field service, conducting Bible studies, cleaning, or elders' meetings, the doors should remain locked at all times. However, the elders should decide whether Kingdom Hall doors and gates should be locked during the midweek and weekend meetings. (*km* 11/84 Question Box) For example, it may be appropriate to assign two attendants at the Kingdom Hall door to watch all who come in, being alert for suspicious-looking persons and tactfully inquiring of their intent before granting access into the building. The elders should work with their assigned LDC maintenance trainer to determine if the installation of an electronic security system is warranted for their Kingdom Hall.—See letter dated December 2, 2017, par. 36.

Kingdom Hall Keys: A list of responsible publishers who have been issued Kingdom Hall keys should be prepared and kept updated. (*km* 6/04 p. 3) Periodically, the congregation secretary should perform an audit of this list to confirm that all of the keys are accounted for and are entrusted to publishers in good standing. If keys are lost or stolen, consideration should be given to changing the building locks.

Communication with Local Law Enforcement: The elders should have up-to-date phone numbers for the police. Two elders (or a capable ministerial servant along with one elder) should be designated to visit the police station to promote good relations, expressing appreciation for their assistance if called upon. It may be advisable to ask the local authorities if they have any security suggestions. Where several congregations are in the vicinity of the same police station, there should be good communication and coordination as to how this contact with the police will be maintained. In all cases, only two brothers per Kingdom Hall should visit the local police station.

Reporting Security Incidents: Security incidents should be communicated to the congregations who meet in the same building and in nearby Kingdom Halls that may be affected,

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as well as reported to the circuit overseer. In some instances, it will also be necessary to contact the branch.—See letters dated December 2, 2017, par. 38, and November 6, 2014, pars. 18, 19.

Kingdom Hall Security Plan: A written plan should be prepared outlining the arrangements made for Kingdom Hall security. It may include:

- General security measures to be implemented, such as locking of doors and gates and the use of electronic security systems
- Attendant positions and responsibilities
- How to handle disruptions
- Steps for evacuating the Kingdom Hall

The attached checklist and sample plan can be used as models and adapted to the needs of the congregations. Elders may find it appropriate to review some of the arrangements made with the congregation during a local needs part.

Attendant Training Program: Once the Kingdom Hall security plan has been finalized, each body of elders should present the *Congregation Attendant Training Program* to all elders and ministerial servants, along with any other brothers that serve as attendants. The outlines for this meeting are available in the “Forms” section of the “Documents” tab on jw.org. During this meeting, all attendants should be informed of the local Kingdom Hall security plan.

The first and last outlines will be presented by a member of the branch committee as a prerecorded talk, which may be downloaded from the “Event Media” section of the “Documents” tab. The body should assign capable elders to present the remaining outlines as well as the opening and closing prayers. Periodically, as the elders feel it is necessary, arrangements may be made to repeat this training program.

This letter has been added to the list of policy letters that will be cited in *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22).

Thank you for giving attention to these important matters, protecting the interests of our brothers. We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Circuit overseers

PS to circuit overseers:

During your next visit, please confirm that each congregation has established a written security plan and implemented an attendant training program.