# Starting a Safety Ministry

Focusing on three basic concepts can help you start an effective safety ministry at your church or religious organization.

1. **VALUE —** Recognize the value of the people and facilities under your care, and embrace their safety and security as a key value in your religious organization;
2. **TEAM —** Assemble a team of people dedicated to safety and security; and
3. **WORK —** Set the team to work, assisted by the many valuable safety resources provided by GuideOne.

## *Value*

First, look at value. While fear of legal claims and lawsuits against the religious organization may motivate action, another motivation arises by focusing on the people themselves. Leaders of religious organizations are called to be *shepherds* to their congregation. One aspect of shepherding is to protect the flock against wolves (hazards) that may come after them. Leaders of religious organizations are also called to be good s*tewards* of the people and property that have been entrusted to their care. Finally, by showing concern for the safety and security of your congregation, you are expressing *love* to one another. Focusing on the values of *shepherding*, *stewardship*, and *love* may help to motivate your religious organization to protect the valuable ministry and members under your care.

## *Team*

Second, create a "Safety and Security Team" that will focus on safety. This team should include congregation members who will educate themselves and the other members of the congregation on safety and security issues. By identifying members of the church or religious organization whose jobs and/or interest relate to safety and risk management – such as those in the fields of facility or property management, human resources, law, accounting, law enforcement, insurance, or safety – a committed group of three to eight members can successfully run the risk management program. While pastoral or board *participation* on the team is not essential, pastoral and board *support* is crucial to the team's success.

## *Work*

Third, the team will get to work identifying areas of risk at your church or religious organization and taking steps to address those risks. By no means is the team alone in this effort. GuideOne provides fact sheets, checklists, sample forms, policies, and more to assist the team as it begins its work.

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