

Risk Assessment and Its Importance for a House of Worship Security Program

What is Risk? According to the ANSI/ASIS standard for Security Risk Assessment it is the effect of uncertainty on the achievement of strategic, tactical, and operational objectives. Furthermore, risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences and likelihood of the outcomes of uncertainty. Those same standard notes that a Risk Analysis assesses the likelihood and consequences of a risk to provide the basis for risk evaluation and risk treatment decision-making. Finally, the standard states that a Risk Assessment is an overall and systematic process of evaluating the effects of uncertainty on achieving objectives which includes Risk Identification; Risk Analysis; and Risk Evaluation.

The assessment can be qualitative or quantitative for which you will need to supply numeric information and historic data. A Risk Assessment can be Ad Hoc or “Rules of Thumb”; it might be inductive in which case the evaluator starts with observations and data to gradually build the Assessment; or a Risk Assessment can be deductive in which case you begin with existing concepts and test them against the data you collect from the site. And you may find that what works is a mixture of all three.

Stated simply, a Risk Assessment is the process of defining how big the Risk is. You do so by attempting to answer:

1. What can go wrong?
2. What is the likelihood that it would go wrong?
3. What are the consequences?

Risk Assessment Methods:

Risk matrix: A tool that helps categorize the level of risk for each event.

Decision tree: A common risk assessment tool.

Failure modes and effects analysis (FMEA): A common risk assessment tool.

Bowtie model: A common risk assessment tool.

What-if analysis: A risk assessment technique.

Failure tree analysis: A risk assessment technique.

Layer of Protection Analysis (LOPA): A risk assessment technique.

Hazard and Operability (HAZOP) analysis: A risk assessment technique.

Qualitative risk assessment: Uses subjective judgments about likelihood and impact, and scales like high, medium, or low.

Asset-based risk assessment: Focuses on risks to an organization's assets, such as physical assets, company data, or intellectual property.

Consequence assessment: Describes and quantifies the relationship between exposure to a risk agent and adverse health effects.

Enterprise risk management (ERM): Helps large corporations identify, assess, and manage risks at both the operational and strategic levels.