

TLP: CLEAR

[FB-ISAQ Current Threat Level](#)

FB-ISAQ Physical Threat Level: **ELEVATED**

FB-ISAQ Physical Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations:
"ELEVATED."

FB-ISAQ's definition of the Physical Threat Levels, **"ELEVATED"** means FB-ISAQ is unaware of any specific events. Still, there is a concern that an event is more likely than normal.

FB-ISAQ Cyber Threat Level:
ELEVATED

FB-ISAQ has assessed the general Cyber Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations as **"ELEVATED."**

FB-ISAQ's definition of the Cyber Threat Levels, **"ELEVATED"** means FB-ISAQ is unaware of any specific events. Still, there is a concern that an event is more likely than normal.

[Board of Advisors](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Email](#)

[Website](#)

[How to join](#)

[Join FB-ISAQ Slack Channel](#)

[FB-ISAQ Events page](#)

Active Shooters



Recent mass-casualty events across the United States highlight the ongoing threat of public shootings and the need for integrated, layered security frameworks.

Incidents such as the South Carolina bar shooting that left four dead and over 20 injured and the Michigan church attack demonstrate the range of public spaces being targeted. RAND's October 2025 commentary, [Defending Against Mass Shooters](#), argues that prevention depends on integrated security layers—linking behavioral awareness, access control, early detection, and rapid medical response to reduce casualties.

- RAND's [Improving the Security of Soft Targets](#) analysis highlights that layered measures (access control, trained response, rapid EMS) collectively reduce harm more effectively than standalone systems.
- Research indicates most attackers exhibit observable pre-attack behaviors, underscoring the value of insider awareness and early behavioral intervention.
- According to the [Gun Violence Archive](#) and coverage by [Axios](#), the U.S. is on pace for over 340 mass shootings this year, confirming the scale and persistence of the threat.
- Over-hardening and intrusive surveillance can undermine accessibility and community trust, requiring risk-based tailoring of controls.

The [national incident trend remains steady](#). The [Michigan church arson-shooting](#) underscores that religious venues remain vulnerable. RAND's research series ([Defending Against Mass Shooters](#); [Improving the Security of Soft Targets](#)) frames the challenge as a systems problem: attackers need only succeed once, but defenders can multiply their odds by stacking deterrent and response layers.

Defending against mass shooters requires not only physical barriers and technology but also human awareness, training, and medical capability. A security program that integrates all four layers—prevent, detect, mitigate, recover—offers the best pathway to reducing casualties and restoring safety during active threats.

- **Implement behavioral threat reporting.** Establish trusted, confidential mechanisms for employees and the public to report concerning behaviors.
- **Train and exercise regularly.** Conduct active-shooter drills, including lockdown, evacuation, and medical-response components.
- **Harden access points proportionally.** Secure entryways, improve visibility, and ensure rapid-locking capabilities without impeding daily operations.
- **Deploy verified detection tools.** Integrate gunshot or acoustic sensors with existing surveillance and alerting systems.
- **Strengthen medical readiness.** Position bleeding-control kits in accessible locations and train staff in emergency trauma care.
- **Coordinate externally.** Maintain direct relationships and data-sharing protocols with law enforcement and EMS.
- **Review and refine after incidents.** Conduct structured after-action reviews and update procedures based on response performance metrics.

Fire as a Weapon

Fire is a low-cost, high-impact weapon that continues to be used by malicious actors because it is accessible, scalable, and symbolically powerful. [CISA](#) reports an increase in assailants using fire as a weapon to damage critical infrastructure or harm people, underscoring the need to treat incendiary threats as a central security concern. While this trend highlights fire as a stand-alone tactic, recent incidents – such as the attack on an [LDS meetinghouse in Michigan](#) that combined arson with vehicle-ramming and gunfire – demonstrate how fire can also be integrated into complex attacks.

Michigan Attack. On 28 September 2025, Thomas Jacob Sanford rammed a truck into a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints meetinghouse in [Grand Blanc Township, Michigan](#), opened fire with a rifle, and set the structure on fire using gasoline. The incident resulted in four casualties and eight wounded, including gunshot wounds and smoke inhalation. The fire consumed much of the meetinghouse, leading to structural collapse and compounding risks for both survivors and responding personnel.

This case illustrates how incendiary tactics can be deliberately integrated with ballistic and vehicular methods, magnifying both destruction and casualty counts, and underscores the need for integrated preparedness against complex attacks.

Planning. Organizations are encouraged to **incorporate arson and “fire as a weapon” into potential threat tactics** and recognize they could be targeted with weapons involving fire.

- Coordinate with the local fire department, to do a walk-through of the building / facility and help identify potential hazard as part of the Organizational Fire Plan.
- Designate fire marshals to help the organization plan and organize efforts should a fire occur.
- Additional considerations outlined in the [Emergency Preparedness Checklist](#) by the National Fire Prevention Association.

Training and Exercises. Employees may receive training on what to do in the event of a fire, and if possible, exercises can be used to reinforce that training while allowing the organization the opportunity to identify potential gaps or vulnerabilities within the plan as the incident walk-through is taking place. Regular fire drills - scheduled and unscheduled - can help reinforce understanding, as well as identify potential issues with the fire plan.

FB-ISAO recorded 841 incidents at houses of worship in 2024. Of those, 79 involved arson. More on **FB-ISAO’s 2024 Threat Data Report** can be found [here](#).

Spotlight: More FB-ISAO Education!

As part of FB-ISAO’s education sessions, we’ve held discussions on three important topics. If you haven’t participated in prior sessions, please consider joining the upcoming 2026 series as soon as it’s announced. Our sessions are recorded and made available to all members. However, there’s no substitute for being part of the conversation where you can share your own experiences, ask questions, and most importantly engage with the community of your peers grappling with similar challenges!!

- The most recent session kicked off a series continuing in 2026 on the intelligence function. Please consider joining as we delve into how a deeper understanding of intelligence better informs resilience-building activities.
- Previous series addressed [FireArms in the House](#) and [Standing Up Teams](#).
- Our recording library is available on the FB-ISAO Slack workspace.

**Thank you for
sharing this
newsletter
with a friend!**