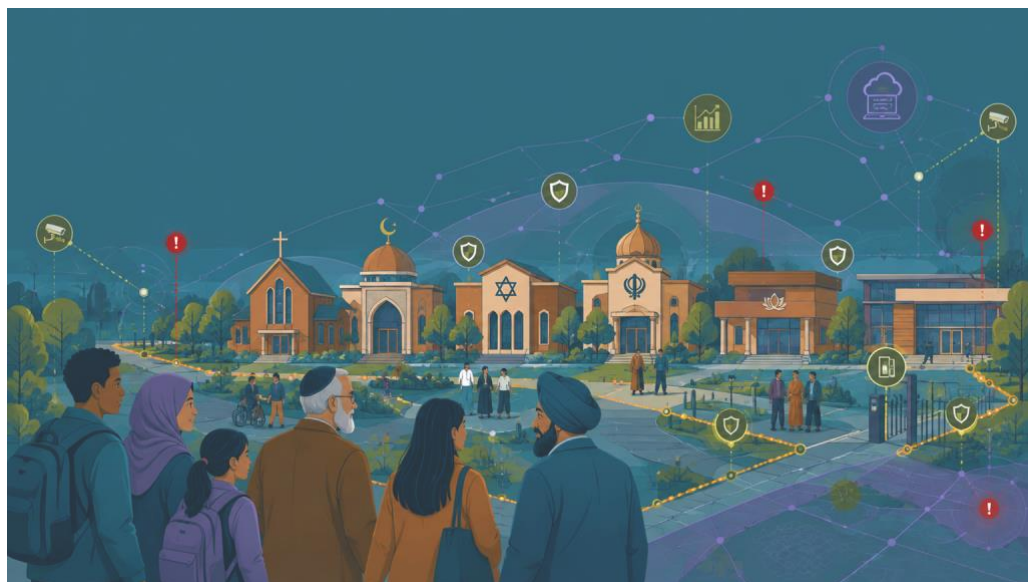




**Vandalism, Violence,
Arson, Active Shooters,
Cyber Attacks, and More:
Understanding Today's
Threats to Houses of
Worship Across All Faith
Communities**

Attacks on Houses of Worship

2025 Year in Review

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About Faith-Based ISAO

The FB-ISA O provides members with information, analysis, and capabilities to help reduce risk while enhancing preparedness, security, and resilience. The FB-ISA O is an all-faiths and all-hazards information-sharing organization. If you are not yet a member of FB-ISA O, learn more about **the benefits of membership**.

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Attacks on Houses of Worship

2025 Year in Review

Vandalism, Violence, Arson, Active Shooters, Cyber Attacks, and More: Understanding Today's Threats to Houses of Worship Across All Faith Communities

Executive Summary

Houses of worship across the United States face a broad and evolving range of security threats.¹ However, the 2025 data show the threat environment is becoming more physical, exterior-focused, and casualty-producing. While theft, vandalism, assault, arson, graffiti, intimidation, communicated threats of violence, demonstrations, trespassing, cyber-attacks, and other disruptive acts remain part of the overall landscape, the most important shift is the growing share of incidents involving direct physical contact, exterior attacks, and casualties involving firearms and other weapons. This trend requires security leaders to look beyond the most visible catastrophic scenarios and focus on the patterns most likely to affect congregations in practice.

The **FB-ISA Attacks on Houses of Worship 2025 Year in Review** provides an all-faiths examination of these malicious acts, focusing specifically on incidents in which a **house of worship** (as opposed to faith-based community centers, businesses, restaurants, residences, schools, or other institutions) was directly involved or identified as the target or nexus. This all-faiths approach addresses a key gap in existing data sources, which often focus narrowly on hate crimes, a single faith community, or a particular geographic area. By examining security concerns across traditions and regions, this analysis offers a more comprehensive view of the risks confronting houses of worship nationwide. The **Purpose and Scope** and **Data Sources and Methodology** sections describe the scope of the analysis and the methodology used to develop it.

¹ As used in this report, the word **threat** has three distinct connotations: (1) a malicious *communicated statement of intent to commit violence*, injury or harm directed against an individual, congregation, or sacred space; (2) a perceived or actual *institutional vulnerability* to damage from an attack exploiting an assessed systemic vulnerability or weakness, such as unsecured digital networks, gaps in financial oversight, or a lack of emergency preparedness protocols (e.g., “range of security threats” or “threat environment”); or (3) an *objective environmental hazard*, referring to non-malicious but catastrophic risks like severe weather, structural decay, or natural disasters that endanger both the property and the safety of a house of worship’s members. When used in the context of a data point, table, or figure, it refers to a **communicated threat** of violence or harm.

The 2025 dataset identified **915 reported incidents involving houses of worship**, compared with 841 incidents in 2024 and 1,030 in 2023. The 2025 total represents an 8.8% increase over 2024 and a 17% decline from 2023's peak.

The most significant finding is that the threat environment is growing more physical and violent. Assaults and theft doubled over the period examined. Arson increased by approximately 25%. Incidents involving casualties increased from approximately 69 in 2024 to 111 in 2025, a roughly 60% increase, and double 2023's total.

At the same time, the most common occurrences are not the headline grabbing catastrophic events like active shooter or mass casualty events. **Theft, vandalism, assault, arson, graffiti, and communicated threats of violence account for approximately 80% of reported incidents.** Active-shooter events and other mass-casualty attacks remain important security concerns, but they represent only one part of a much broader threat environment.

The data reveal substantial differences across faith communities. Protestant and Catholic houses of worship suffer a greater proportion of property crime and physical assault, while synagogues and mosques experience substantially higher distribution of communicated threats, intimidation, and disruptive activity. Accordingly, security planning must be tailored to the distinct risk profiles, vulnerabilities, and potential consequences facing each faith community rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all model.

Another important finding addresses **where incidents occur**. More than **half of all incidents** occur outside the building, with fewer than one-third occurring inside. Occurrence also varies by type of incident. In 2025, approximately **89% of all casualties** and **78% of assaults** took place outside, but most **thefts (~69%)** occur inside. These findings indicate that parking lots, exterior approaches, and the space between the public street and the building warrant significantly greater security attention.

Cybersecurity represents another significant, and likely underreported dimension of the threat environment. Cyber incidents reported in 2025 include phishing, credential compromise, remote access, data theft, and extortion. Houses of worship maintain valuable donor, financial, counseling, personnel, and children's ministry information. A successful cyber-attack can affect not only finances and data, but also trust, reputation, communications, worship services, giving systems, and ministry continuity. *Supplement A* provides an overview of the tracked cyber incidents, common attack pathways, and practical safeguards.

The variances in attack types, targets, casualties – which themselves differ according to denomination and location – support the need for a **risk-based, data-informed approach to security**. While preparing for the serious threat of an active shooter, security resources should also address the much more likely risk of theft, vandalism, assault, arson, perimeter vulnerabilities, access control failures, weather-related and other natural disasters, and cyber compromise.

The central lesson of the 2025 data is straightforward:

Security strategies should be guided by the threats that are most likely to occur – not only those that are most visible or frightening.

Overall Assessment

Security planning should prioritize the threats most likely to occur, while still preparing for high-impact events.

Purpose and Scope

FB-ISAO initiated the Threat Data Project in response to a gap in publicly available information. Numerous organizations collect valuable data on hate crimes and attacks against specific faith communities. For example, advocacy groups representing Jewish, Catholic, Latter-day Saint, Muslim, Hindu, and other communities often collect and report incidents affecting their own members in isolation of crimes against other faith groups. Other organizations focus on particular types of crimes (hate crimes, arson, bombings), or crimes within specific jurisdictions. However, there has historically been less comprehensive information examining threats and attacks against houses of worship across multiple faith traditions that help security managers assess risk within a broader context, and spot trends developing against other faith communities and analogous facilities.

Project Focus

The purpose of this project is to examine the threat environment from the perspective of those responsible for protecting any house of worship.

The analysis addresses several fundamental questions:

- What types of incidents are occurring?
- How frequently are they occurring?
- Are trends changing over time?
- Do threats differ among faith communities? If so, how?
- What motivates these incidents?
- Where do incidents occur on or around houses of worship?
- What weapons or implements are involved?
- Which incidents produce casualties?
- Where are geographic concentrations occurring?
- What can security leaders learn from these patterns?

The analysis focuses specifically on incidents occurring at or in the immediate vicinity of a house of worship where the house of worship is identifiable as the target or is directly involved in the event. Incidents occurring elsewhere – including at public events, community centers, or unrelated public locations – are generally excluded unless the house of worship itself can reasonably be identified as *the* target.

This distinction is important. The dataset is not a general study of hate crimes or all religiously motivated incidents. It is specifically an examination of attacks directed at houses of worship.

Data Sources and Methodology

The dataset consists of publicly reported incidents collected from:

- National and local news organizations
- Regional and community media
- Social media
- Publicly accessible online records
- Other open-source reporting and data collections
- Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs), when available

As previously mentioned, there is no comprehensive centralized national reporting system on crimes or attacks against houses of worship to draw from. Instead, incidents are identified through ongoing monitoring of publicly available information. The resulting dataset is therefore **not a population study and should not be interpreted as a complete count of every incident occurring against a house of worship in the United States** but is sufficiently consistent in sources and collection methods to impart significance to its findings.

Many incidents involving houses of worship receive little or no national attention. A substantial portion appear only in local or regional media or on social media platforms. Underreporting is particularly likely for cyber incidents, minor property crimes, threats resolved without public attention, and incidents organizations choose not to publicize.

Where possible, incidents can be traced to their original public source, and the affected house of worship or its address is identified when that information is publicly available.

The data should therefore be viewed as a **threat indicator and trend-monitoring resource rather than a definitive census**.

The 2025 Threat Environment

FB-ISAQ recorded a total of 915 attacks on houses of worship during 2025, compared to 841 attacks in 2024 (an increase of 8.8%) and a decrease from the 1030 attacks recorded in 2023.² The monthly distribution of these attacks is shown in Figure 1.

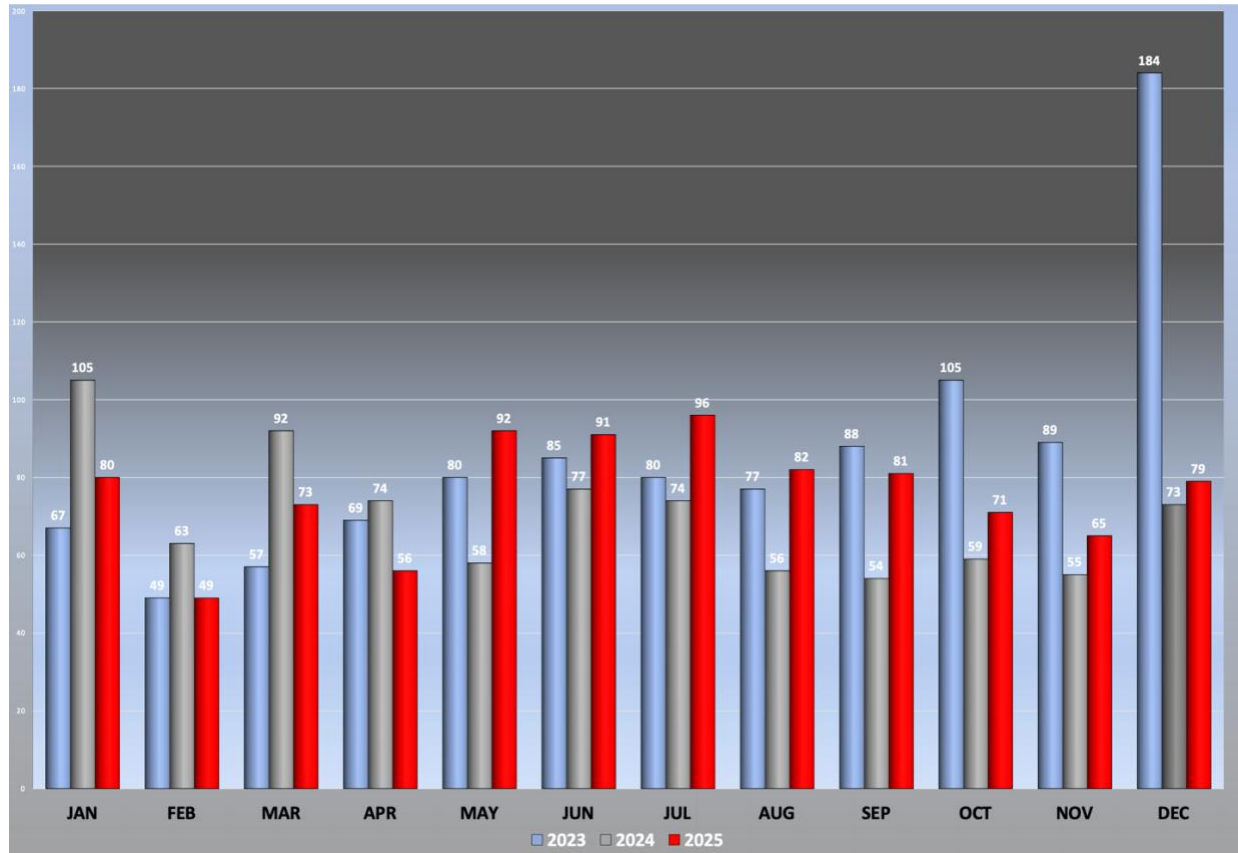


Figure 1: Incidents by Month and Year, 2023 - 2025

The Most Common Threats

The six most frequently recorded incident types in 2025 were:

1. **Theft**
2. **Vandalism**
3. **Assault**

² The 2023 data requires special consideration due to the abnormally large number of bomb threats perpetrated against houses of worship, particularly Jewish, following the October 7, 2023, attacks in Israel. Although hoaxes, the wave of attacks generated substantial national attention, significantly traumatized the targeted institutions and the wider Jewish community, and substantially increased the total number of reported incidents over an eight-month period.

4. **Arson**
5. **Graffiti**
6. **Communicated Threats**

These accounted for more than 80% of all reported incidents. For analytic purposes, the panoply of attack types denoted in Figure 2 can be aggregated into 3 categories: attacks on property (shown in green), violent attacks against people (red), and disruptive attacks designed to intimidate, harass or elicit a reaction (blue). In 2025, over half of all attacks focused on property; a quarter were assaults on people, and 20% were disruptive acts of intimidation or elicitation.

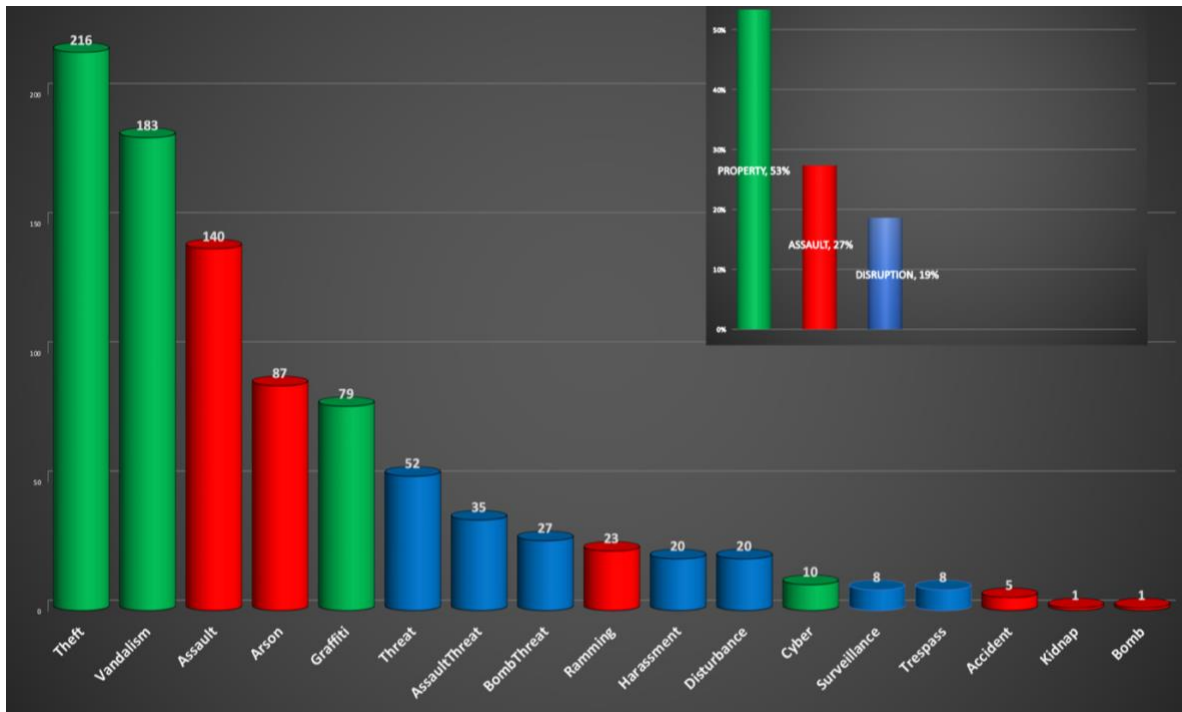


Figure 2: 2025 Incidents by Type

This finding challenges the tendency to define house of worship security primarily through low frequency but high-impact active shooter and other mass-casualty scenarios. Houses of worship are much more likely to experience wanton vandalism, arson, theft, protests, harassment, medical emergencies and other disruptions than an active shooter event. While less headline grabbing, these more frequent everyday security events impose their own significant financial, operational, emotional, and reputational costs.

Attack Types Over Time: Shift Toward More Physical Violence

While **Property** crimes (Vandalism, Graffiti, Theft, and Cyber) remain the most prevalent category, as depicted in Figure 3, the distribution of incident types has changed, and the use of violence has increased. Year-on-year comparisons reveal a marked **decrease** in **Vandalism** (**down 33%** in two years) toward **Assaults** (**doubled** in two years), **Theft** (**doubled**), and **Arson** (**up 25%**). The shift in violence can be seen in the move from **Disruption** (**down 63%**) to **Assaults** involving use of physical force (**assaults, arson, ramming, kidnaps, bombing**) **up 59%**.

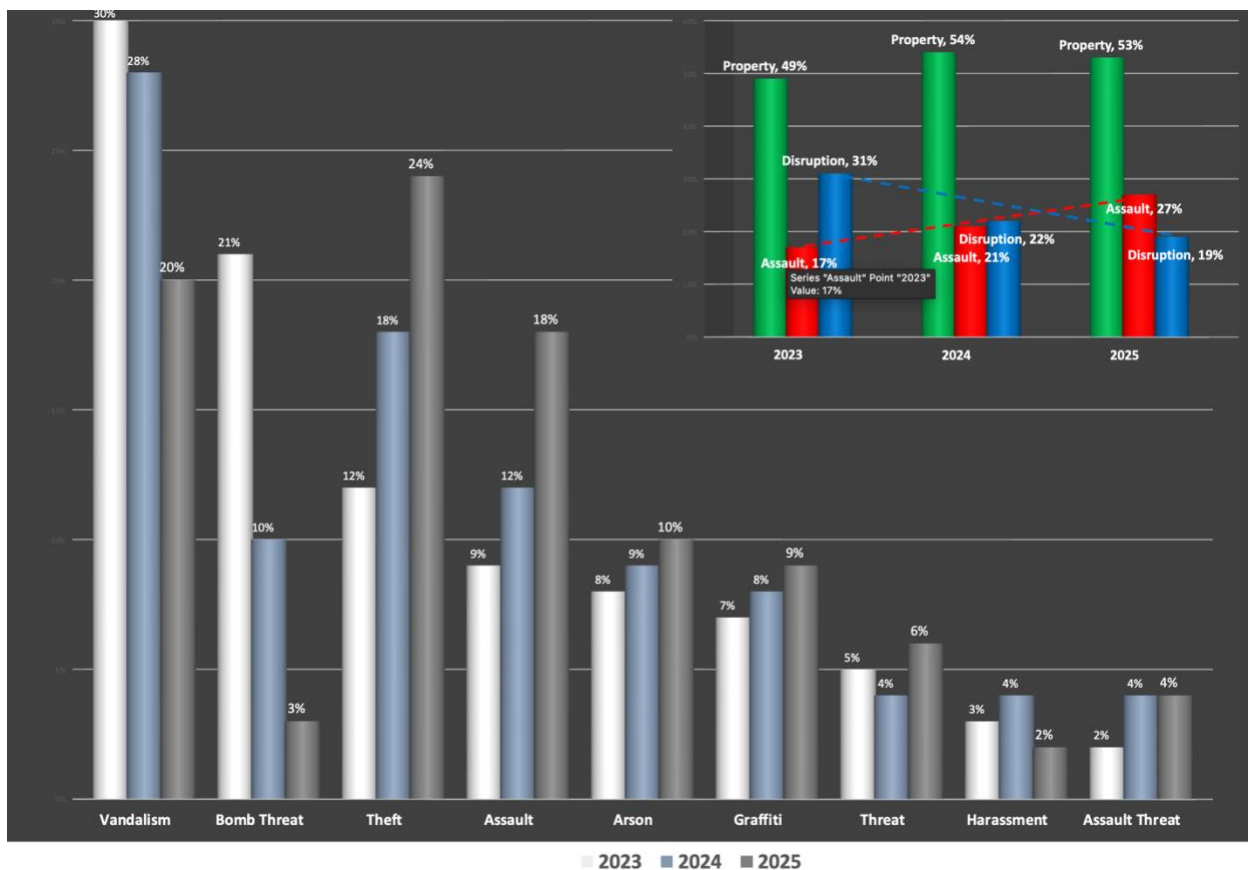


Figure 3: Incidents by Type and Year, 2023-2025

The overall pattern suggests movement away from some forms of relatively lower-risk property damage toward a greater proportion of incidents involving direct physical contact, theft, assault, and arson. This is illustrated in the inset box in Figure 3 above. Approximately 53% of incidents in 2025 involved attacks on property. Approximately 27% involved physical assaults against people. Approximately 19% involved communicated threats, intimidation, demonstrations, harassment, verbal aggression, or other non-kinetic disruptive activity.

Compared with 2023 and 2024, while **property crime remains the dominant threat category, physical violence is increasing** both in the number of incidents and their percentage of the whole, while the incidence of disturbances, harassment, trespass and communicated threat incidents are in decline.

Key Observation

The threat environment is not simply expanding; it appears to be becoming more violent and combative.

Threats Across Faith Communities

As illustrated in Figure 4, nearly two thirds (63%) of all attacks in 2025 occurred at Protestant churches, followed by 14% at Catholic churches, 12% at synagogues, and 5% at mosques.

Faith Community	Share of Incidents
Protestant	63%
Catholic	14%
Jewish	12%
Muslim	5%
Latter Day Saints	2%
Hindu/Sikh/Buddhist/Quaker/Orthodox	Less than 2% each

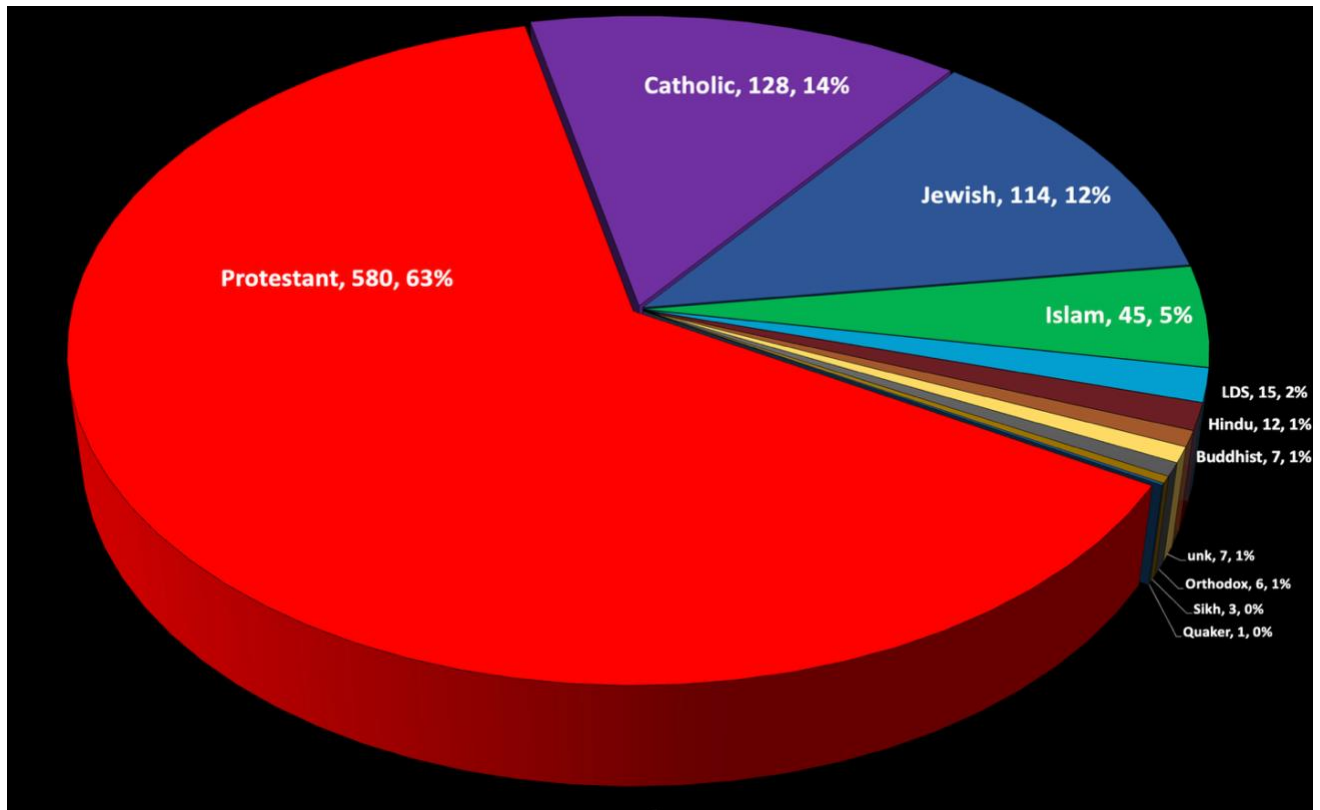


Figure 4: 2025 Incidents by Faith

These figures are disproportionate to the number of adherents in each denomination. According to the 2021 [Duke University National Congregations Study](#), Protestant congregations constitute approximately 85% of U.S. congregations but account for only 63% of reported attacks. Catholic churches represent approximately 6% of all houses of worship but are targeted in 14% of incidents. Synagogues make up approximately 3.2% of houses of worship but are targeted in 12% of attacks, while mosques represent less than 1% of houses of worship, but were attacked in 5% of incidents.

This inverse correlation between the size of the movement and the incidence of attacks is similarly born out in studies of hate crimes. Jews, Muslims, and Catholics suffer a significantly disproportionate share of attacks relative to their populations, while attacks on Protestant houses of worship are under-represented in the distribution.

Different Faiths, Different Threat Profiles

The distribution of attack types also varies by faith. This is seen most clearly in Figure 5 in the ratio of property attacks to disruptive acts, and in the reduced incidence of assaults against synagogues as compared to the other major faiths.

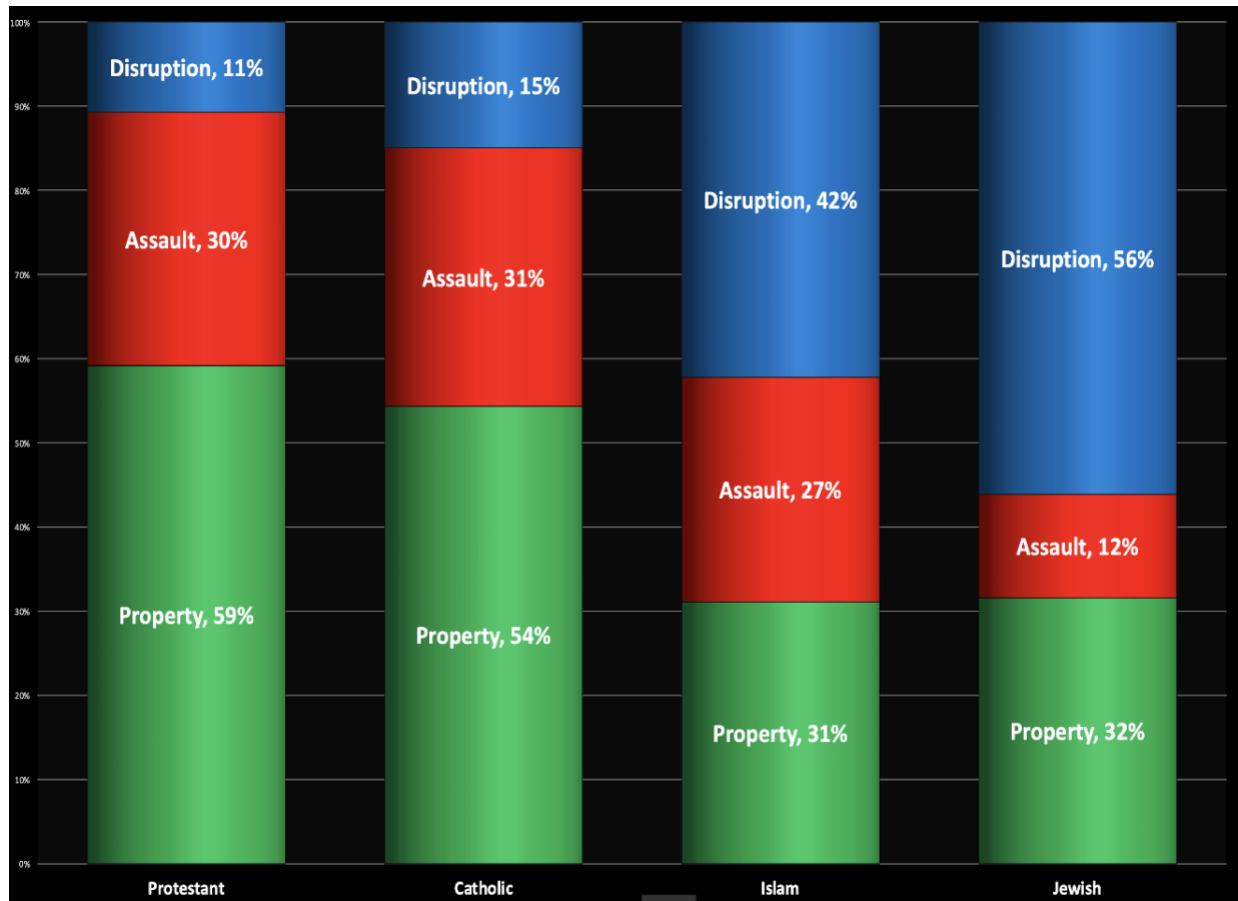


Figure 5: 2025 Incidents by Type and Faith

These differences have direct implications for security planning. A Protestant church may need to place greater emphasis on theft prevention, vandalism, exterior security, assault prevention, and arson prevention. A synagogue may require comparatively greater emphasis on threat assessment, communications monitoring, access control, and de-escalation. Mosques may similarly require heightened attention to threat assessment, intimidation, and hate-motivated activity.

The appropriate security posture should therefore reflect the specific threat profile of the congregation rather than rely on a universal model.

Different Faiths, Varying Motivations Behind Attacks

The analysis identifies several broad categories of motivation:

- Hate or bias
- Ideological or single-issue activity
- Criminal activity
- Interpersonal disputes

- Mischief or wanton destruction
- Accidental incidents
- Unknown motivation

Motive is determined through a combination of:

- Statements made by perpetrators
- Social-media postings
- Graffiti or written messages
- Statements made during investigations
- Criminal charges
- The nature of the incident
- Evidence discovered after the event

Roughly 70% of motive determinations are based on direct evidence, confessions, or subsequent investigation, while approximately 30% are inferred from the nature of the incident.

As highlighted in Figure 6, overall, hate (32%) and criminal (36%) motivations are relatively evenly divided while mischief, interpersonal or doctrinal disputes, accidents, and single-issue concerns such as LGBTQ and abortion rights drive the rest.

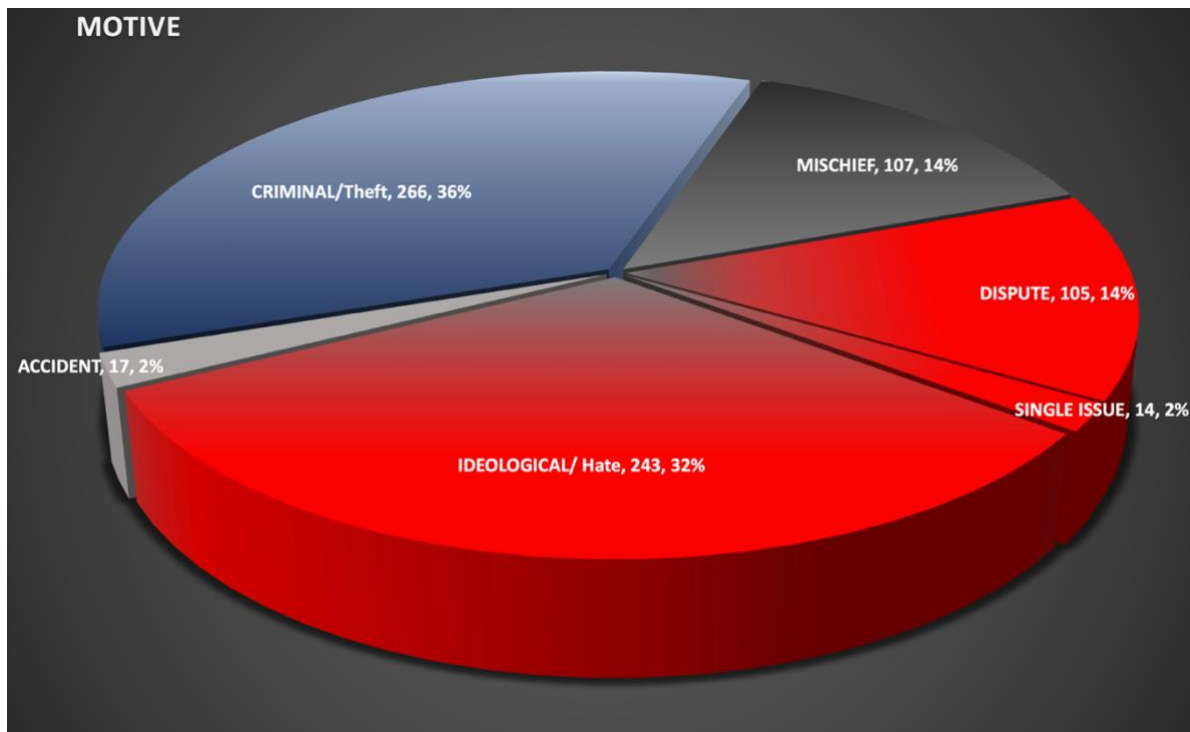


Figure 6: 2025 Motive

Motivation also varies significantly by faith – see Figure 7. Hate or bias is a much stronger motivating factor in incidents involving synagogues, mosques, and Hindu temples. By comparison,

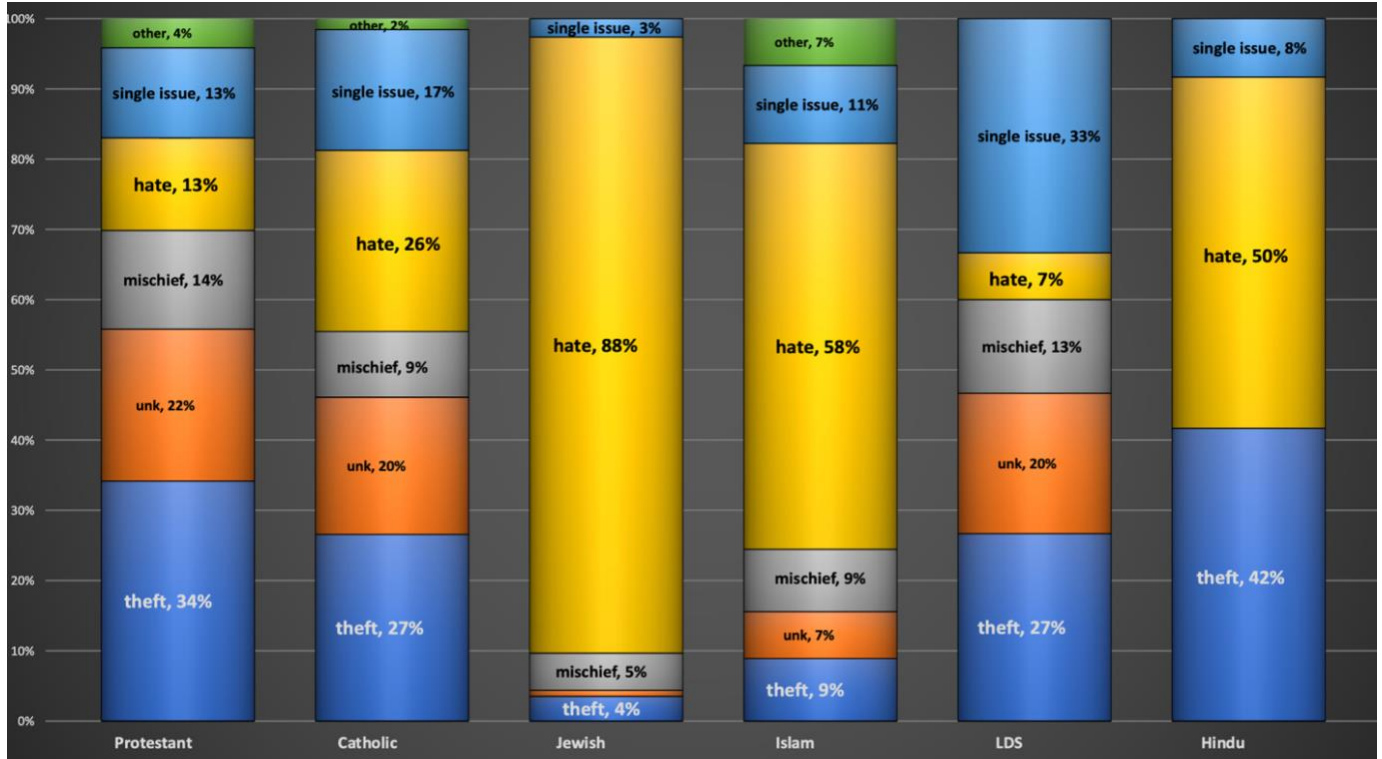


Figure 7: 2025 Motive by Affiliation

theft is reported as the leading motivation for attacks against Protestant churches. Catholic churches have a more even distribution among theft, hate, and single-issue activity (e.g., attacks related to abortion, support for alternative lifestyles, and prior sexual abuse). Antisemitism and Islamophobia (hate) drive attacks against synagogues and mosques while Hindu temples fall prey to both Hinduphobia (hate) and theft.

Kinetic (Physical) Violence Versus Psychological Attacks

The balance between physical harm or *kinetic* violence and acts of intimidation for *psychological* impact varies considerably by faith community.

Protestant and Catholic houses of worship experience a greater proportion of attacks involving actual physical violence. Synagogues and mosques experience a greater proportion of psychological or intimidation-based activity, including communicated threats, graffiti, verbal aggression, and disruptive conduct.

This distinction is important because threat *perception* versus actual incident *patterns* are not always the same. Our perceptions of the threat we face is often based on fear rather than the actual kinds of incidents perpetrated against us.

	Protestant	Catholic	Islam	Jewish
Arson	11%	7%	7%	7%
Assault	19%	24%	20%	5%
Theft	30%	20%	2%	4%
Vandalism	21%	28%	11%	12%
Cyber	2%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Kinetic</i>	83%	79%	40%	28%

Graffiti	7%	6%	18%	16%
Threat	6%	12%	20%	45%
Disturbance	4%	3%	22%	11%
<i>Psyop</i>	17%	21%	60%	72%

In the table above, the numbers in red and green are the number one and number two most common modes of attack for each faith, respectively. Note the preponderance of Theft, Assault, and Vandalism against Protestant and Catholic churches as compared to the incidence of Graffiti, Communicated Threats, and Disturbances against mosques and synagogues. Most of all attacks against Protestant and Catholic churches are oriented toward inflicting physical damage or harm. Many attacks against mosques and synagogues are psychological, largely meant to intimidate, harass, and instill fear. As far as attacks on Jews are concerned, our research here and a review of hate crime reporting suggests that most physical attacks take place in the street, at places of business, and at schools and universities. This may be because of perceptions that synagogues are better protected than churches and the fact that many Jews are easily identifiable on the street and in Jewish enclaves in many cities, and thus more exposed and vulnerable to hit-and-run street attacks and spontaneous assaults.

Security leaders understandably prepare for the worst – the active shooter or other catastrophic attack. These must not be ignored, and as we’ll see below, the number of assaults and resulting casualties is rising. However, the data demonstrate that theft, vandalism, assault, graffiti, communicated threats, and intimidation are more likely to occur and warrant greater attention when it comes to identifying and mitigating vulnerabilities, controlling access, training, and planning for emergency response.

Casualties and Increasing Violence

The casualty data are among the most serious findings.

In 2025, the *number* of incidents with casualties increased **60%** from **69** in 2024 to **111**, and more than doubled (**113%**) from 2023.

The *percentage* of incidents with casualties increased **50%**, from 8% to 12% overall, and more than doubled (**140%**) from 2023.

The majority of all casualties stemmed from assaults. Assaults were responsible for 90% of all deaths (43 of 48 lives lost), 86% of all less than lethal injuries (133 of 154) and overall, 87% of total casualties (176 of 202).

Ramming produced the second highest casualty count: 14 total casualties, with 4 people (8%) killed, and 10 (6.5%) people wounded.

Property crimes (Arson, Graffiti, Theft, Vandalism) resulted in the remaining few casualties.

These numbers all far surpass previous years.

CASUALTIES	2023	2024	2025
Killed	25	23	48
Wounded	59	78	154
Total	84	101	202

The total number of casualties more than **doubled** from 2023, when 25 people were killed and 59 were wounded, and **doubled** from 2024 when 23 people were killed and 78 were wounded.

These casualties are not from mass-casualty events, but a rising number of individual encounters in which one or more people were injured or killed. This distinction is important. The threat is not limited to rare catastrophic events. A growing number of ordinary assaults are producing real physical harm. And the casualties were predominantly *Christian*.

Faith Community	Share of Casualties	Share of Attacks
Protestant	65%	63%
Catholic	18%	14%
LDS	5%	2%
Muslim	5%	5%
Jewish / Synagogues	2%	12%

Casualty-producing incidents overwhelmingly occur outdoors. As highlighted in Figure 8, comparatively few casualties occur inside houses of worship; most are incurred outside on the property, in the parking lot, or the adjacent street.

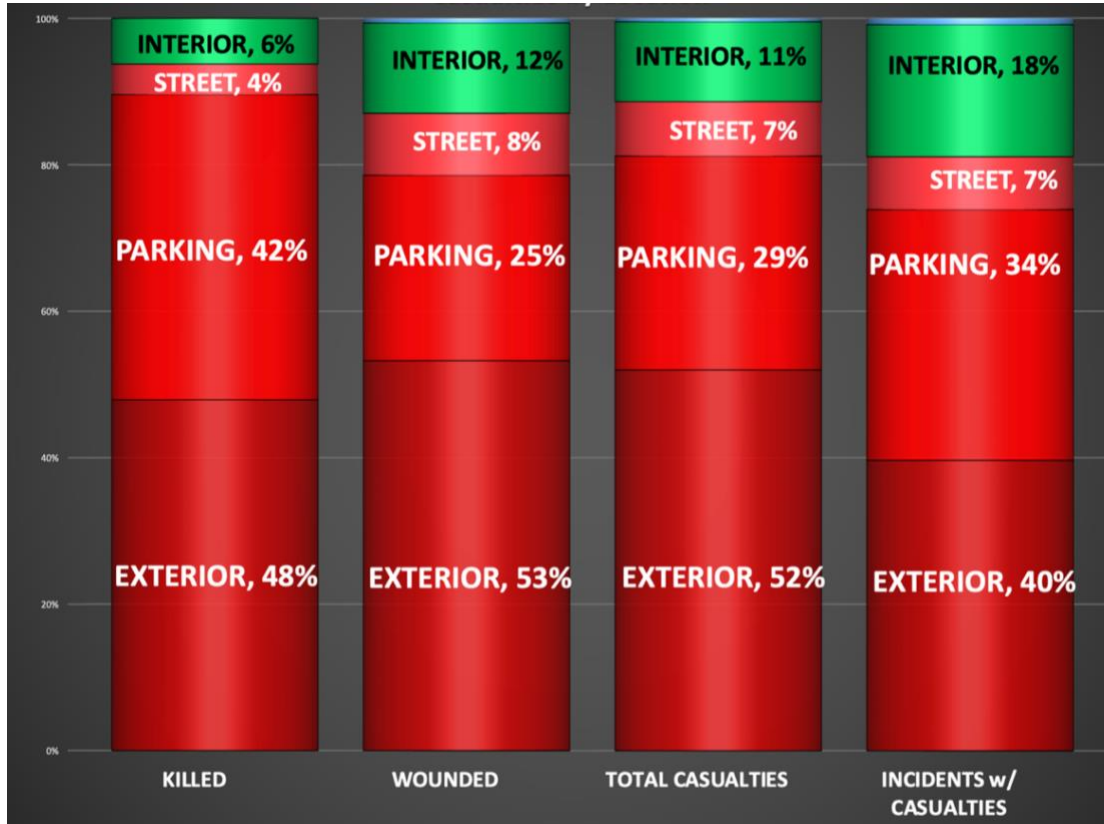


Figure 8: Casualties by Location

Key Observation

The operational implication is significant: the interior of a house of worship is generally safer than the exterior when access is effectively controlled.

Security programs should therefore emphasize parking-lot security, exterior surveillance, perimeter control, access management, monitoring approaches to the building, identification of suspicious behavior before individuals enter the property, and control of entry points.

Where Incidents Occur

Indeed, in keeping with the findings above, more than half of all incidents occurred outside the building, while fewer than one-third occur inside. The rest took place electronically or through communicated threats and therefore have no conventional physical location – see Figure 9.

Key Takeaway

Recognizing that relative vulnerability changes as you move through the site is a key finding consistently observed here and in other studies.

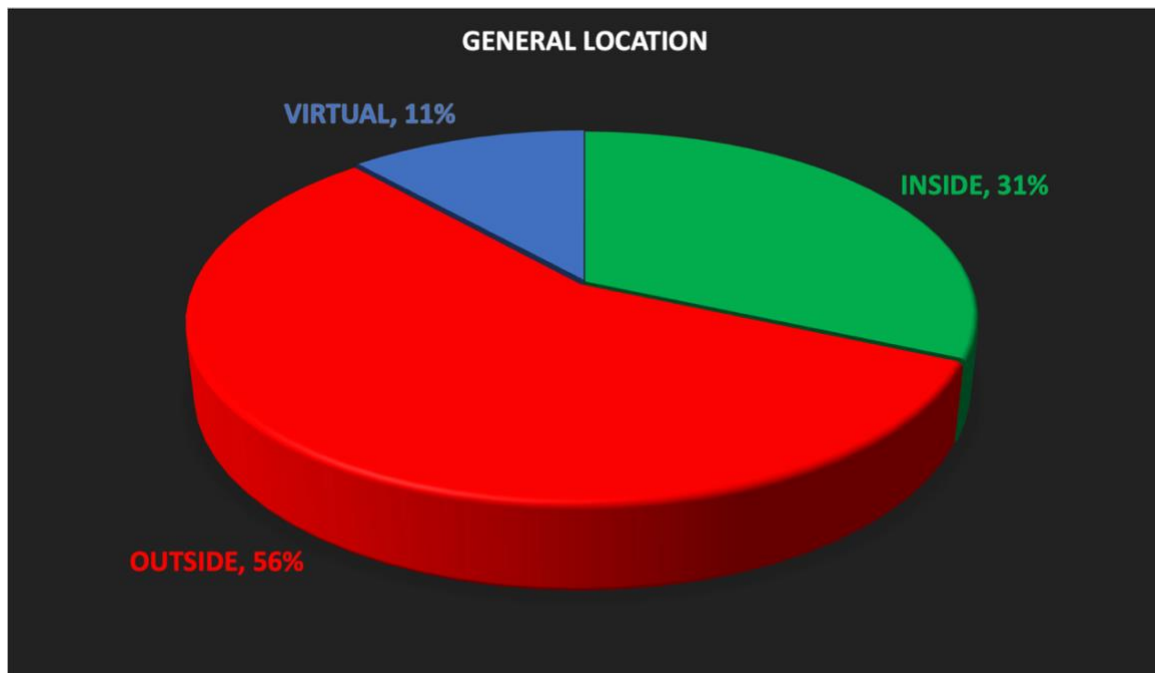


Figure 9: General Location

In this instance, “VIRTUAL” refers to communicated threats sent via email, telephone, social media, or some other electronic means, sent by regular mail, or delivered by hand.

Figure 10 represents those incidents occurring outdoors, where 18% occurred in the parking lot, 80% occurred elsewhere on the grounds and approaches (walkways, yards, playgrounds) and 3% took place in the street immediately adjacent to the facility.

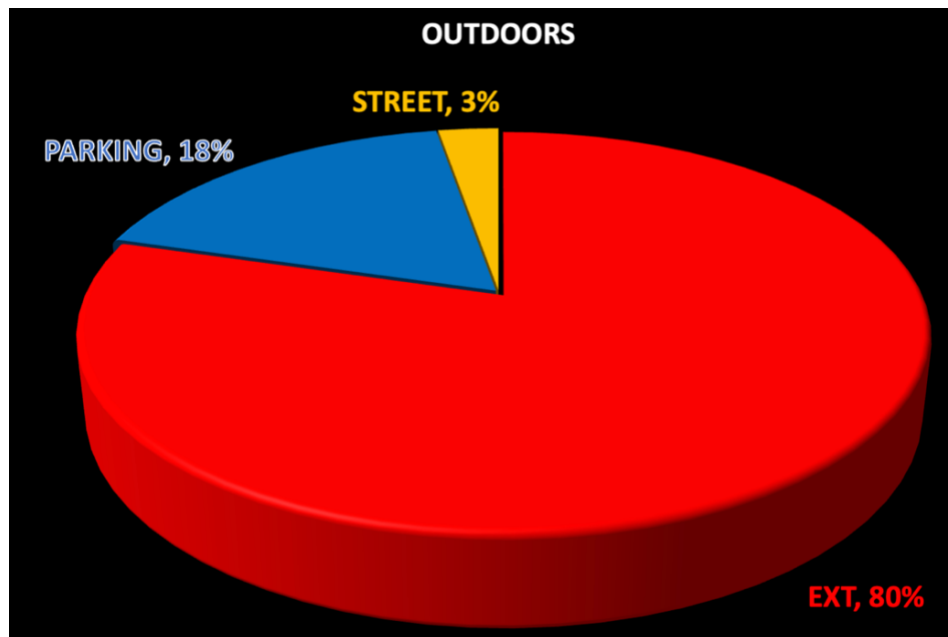


Figure 10: Where Incidents Occur Outdoors

Incident location also varies considerably by type:

The most common incidents occurring **inside** facilities include:

1. Theft
2. Vandalism
3. Assault
4. Arson

The most common incidents occurring **outside** facilities include:

1. Vandalism
2. Assault
3. Graffiti

Overall,

- 78% of assaults occur outside.
- 61% of arsons occur outside.
- 69% of thefts occur inside.
- Cyber incidents occur online.
- Nearly all graffiti occurs outdoors.
- Vandalism is primarily outdoors.
- Disturbances generally occur outdoors.
- Surveillance activity is predominantly outdoors.

Approximately 11% of all incidents involve verbal or electronically **communicated threats** that occur in cyber rather than physical space. The distribution of these, by method of delivery, is shown in Figure 11.

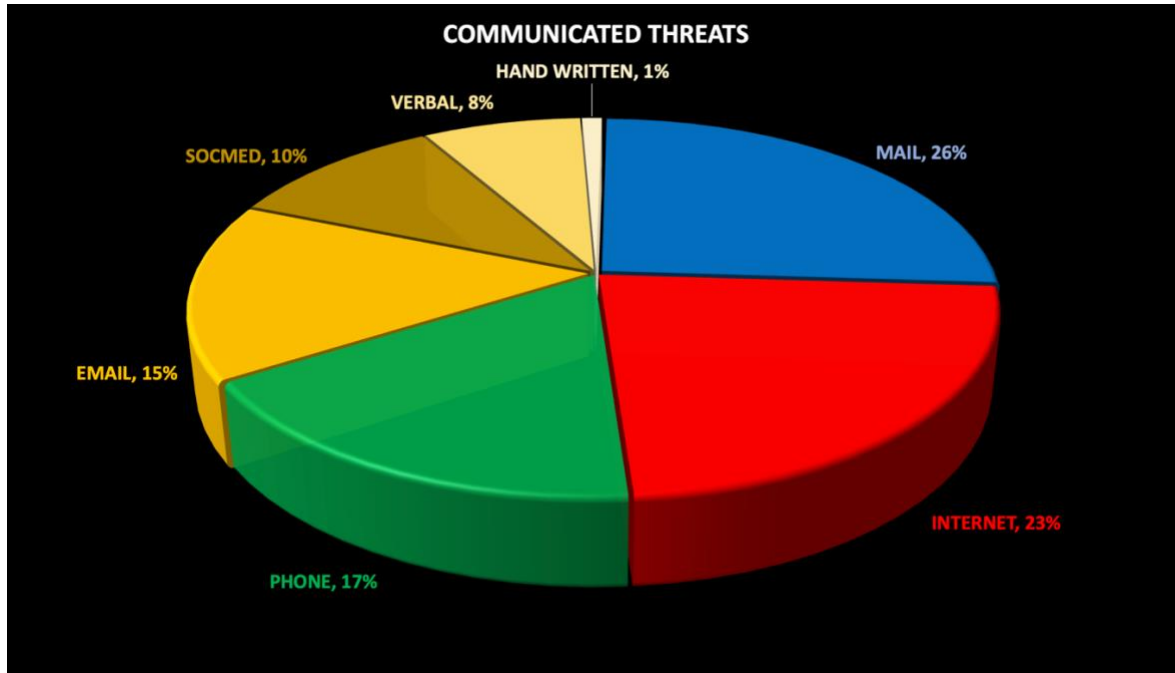


Figure 11: Communicated Threats by Method of Delivery

Faith again plays a role in where incidents occur on the complex, as depicted in Figure 12.

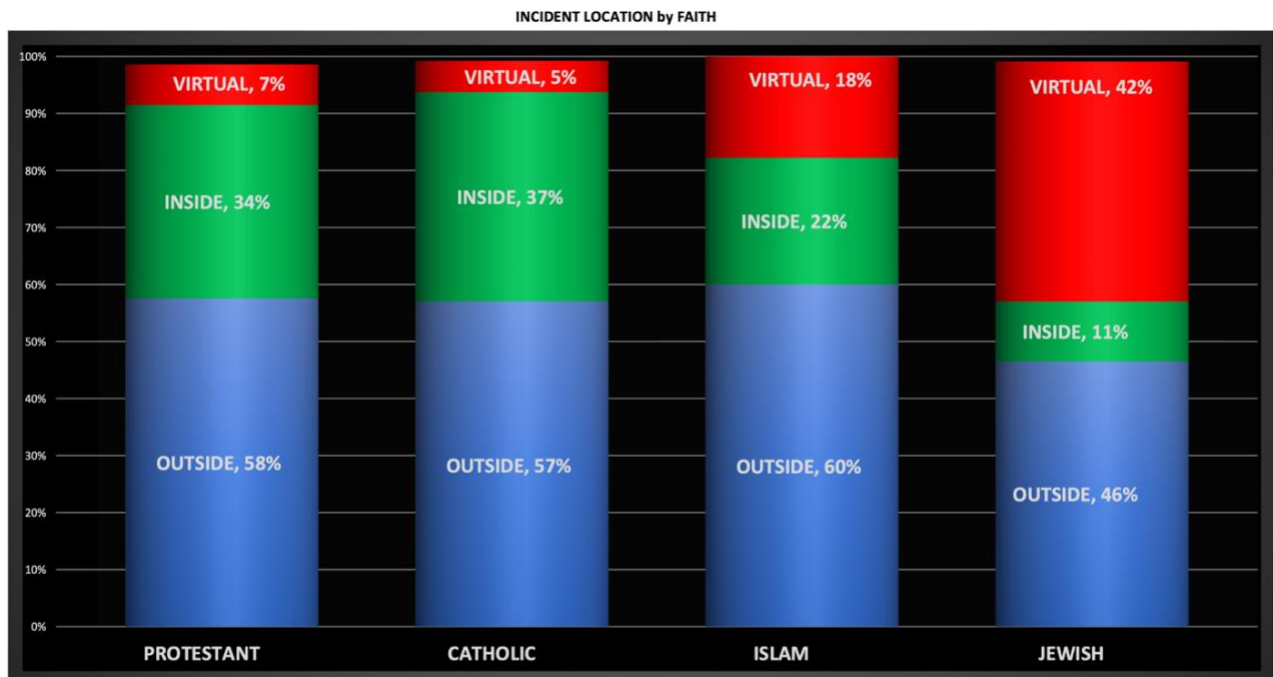


Figure 12: Incident Location by Faith

While the distribution of *Outside: Inside: Virtual* is static across Protestant and Catholic houses of worship, it skews toward virtual for mosques and more significantly for synagogues. The reason for this is likely some combination of would-be assailants being unfamiliar with what the insides of mosques and synagogues look like (given that combined they make up less than 4% of all houses of worship), where potential victims are likely to be found, and the assumption that they are better protected than churches.

Parking Lots and Perimeter Security

Traditional security planning emphasizes a house of worship's interior. The data suggest this focus should be reconsidered.

Most incidents occur outside. The majority of casualties occur outside. Many assaults and arsons occur outside, and firearms, when used, are overwhelmingly used in outdoor attacks.

Security resources should therefore be allocated to:

- Parking lots
- Exterior approaches
- Property boundaries
- Entrances and exits
- Vehicle access points
- Exterior lighting
- Surveillance
- Suspicious-activity detection
- Perimeter awareness

Key Takeaway

Securing the perimeters, parking lots and facility grounds to detect, deter, and resolve threats before they reach the building is as important as securing the building interior – and may arguably be more important.

The objective is not necessarily to create a fortress-like environment. Rather, the goal is to detect, deter, and resolve threats before they reach the building.

More effective access control, perimeter awareness, and early detection can reduce the probability of an incident occurring outside becoming a casualty-producing event.

Weapons and Implements Used

As highlighted in Figure 13, the most common “weapon” identified in the dataset is personal force: hands, fists, body weight, or personal ingenuity.

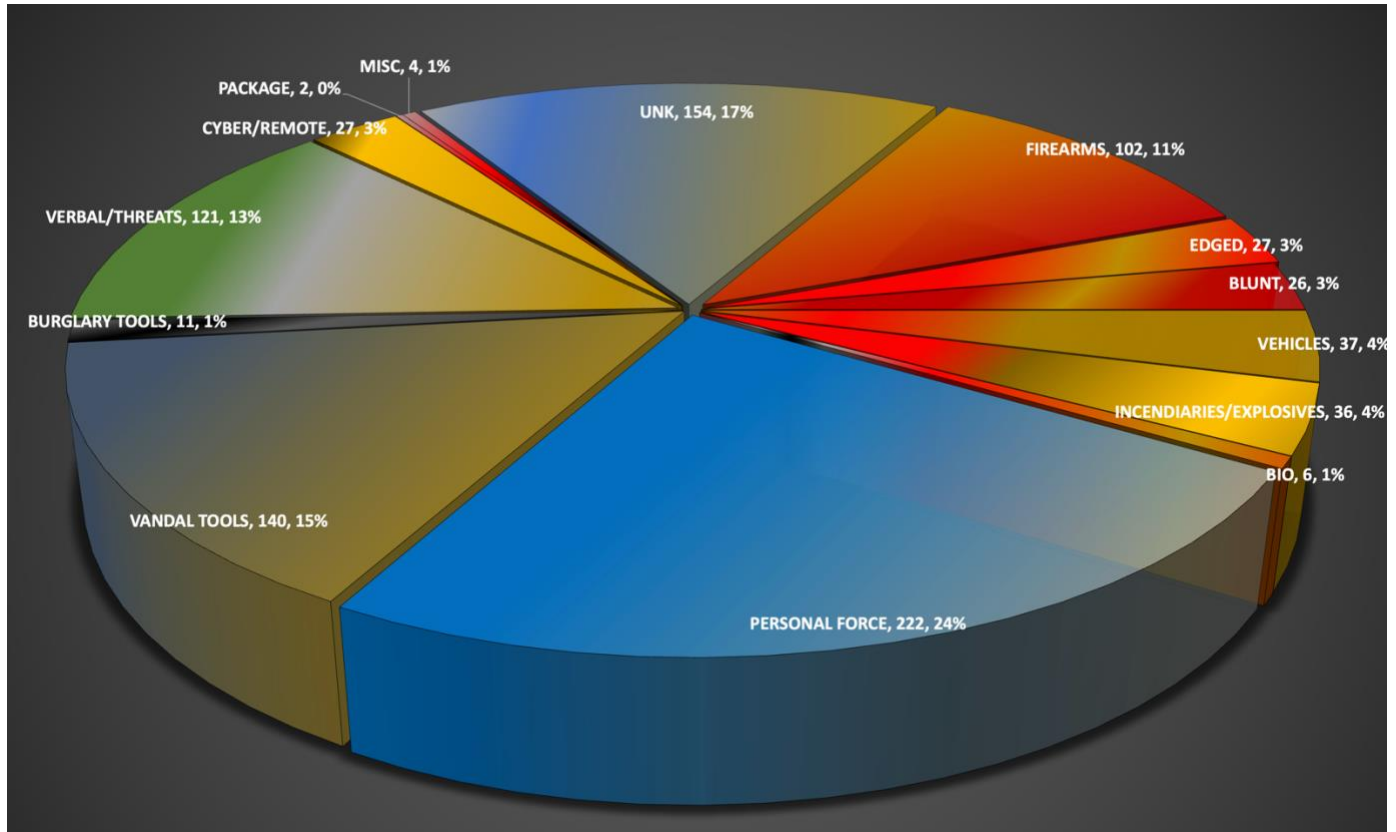


Figure 13: Weapons and Implements Used

Other implements include:

- Tools (vandal and burglary)
- Blunt weapons such as rocks, bricks, and landscaping materials
- Firearms
- Bladed weapons
- Incendiary devices
- Vehicles

One trend that leaps from the data is that houses of worship often provide the objects used against them. Rocks, bricks, landscaping materials, tools, detritus, and other unsecured objects are picked up and weaponized as instruments of vandalism, forced entry, or assault.

Key Observation

Reducing the availability of potential weapons and tools through better site maintenance, storage, landscaping design, and control of loose materials is a relatively simple preventive measure.

As Figure 14 shows, there is wide diversity in the distribution of weapons used across faiths – which also reflects the diversity in the types of actions perpetrated.

Key Observation

From a security standpoint, different weapons have different impacts, and require different tactical skills, protections, and response protocols to mitigate their effects. Understanding the impact and implications of different weapons is critical to mounting an effective response.

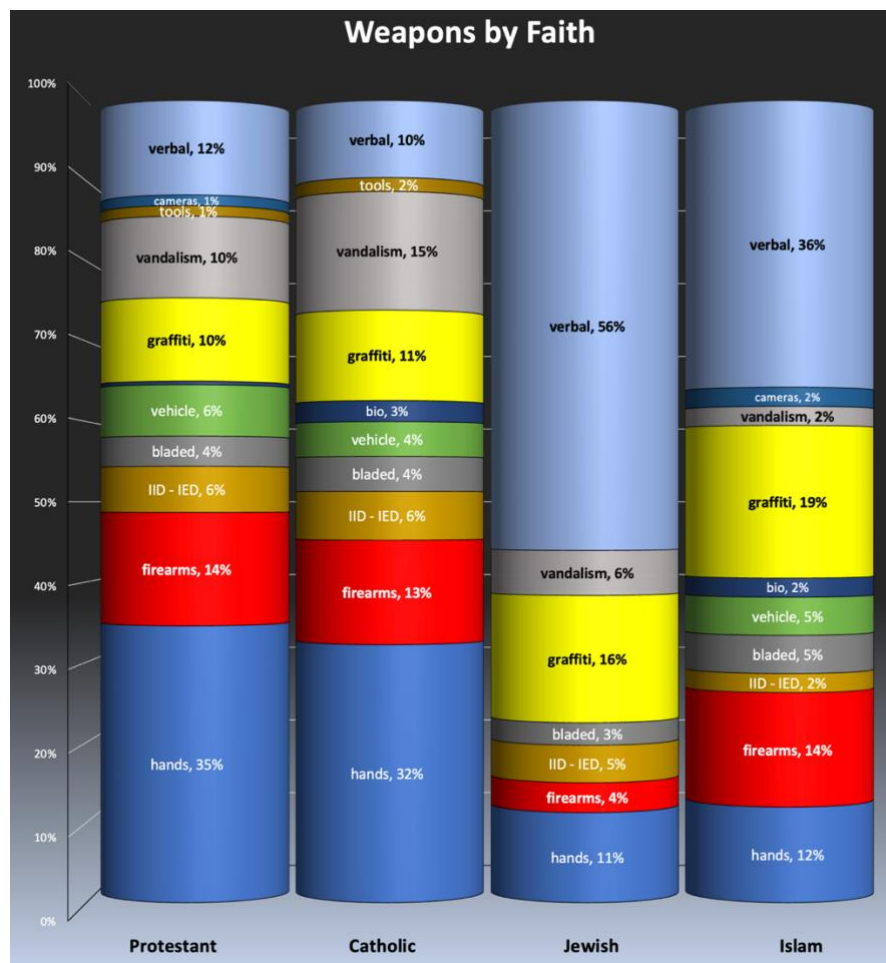


Figure 14: Weapons by Faith

Geographic Distribution

Incidents were identified in **49 of the 50 states**, with Rhode Island the only state without a reported incident in the 2025 dataset.

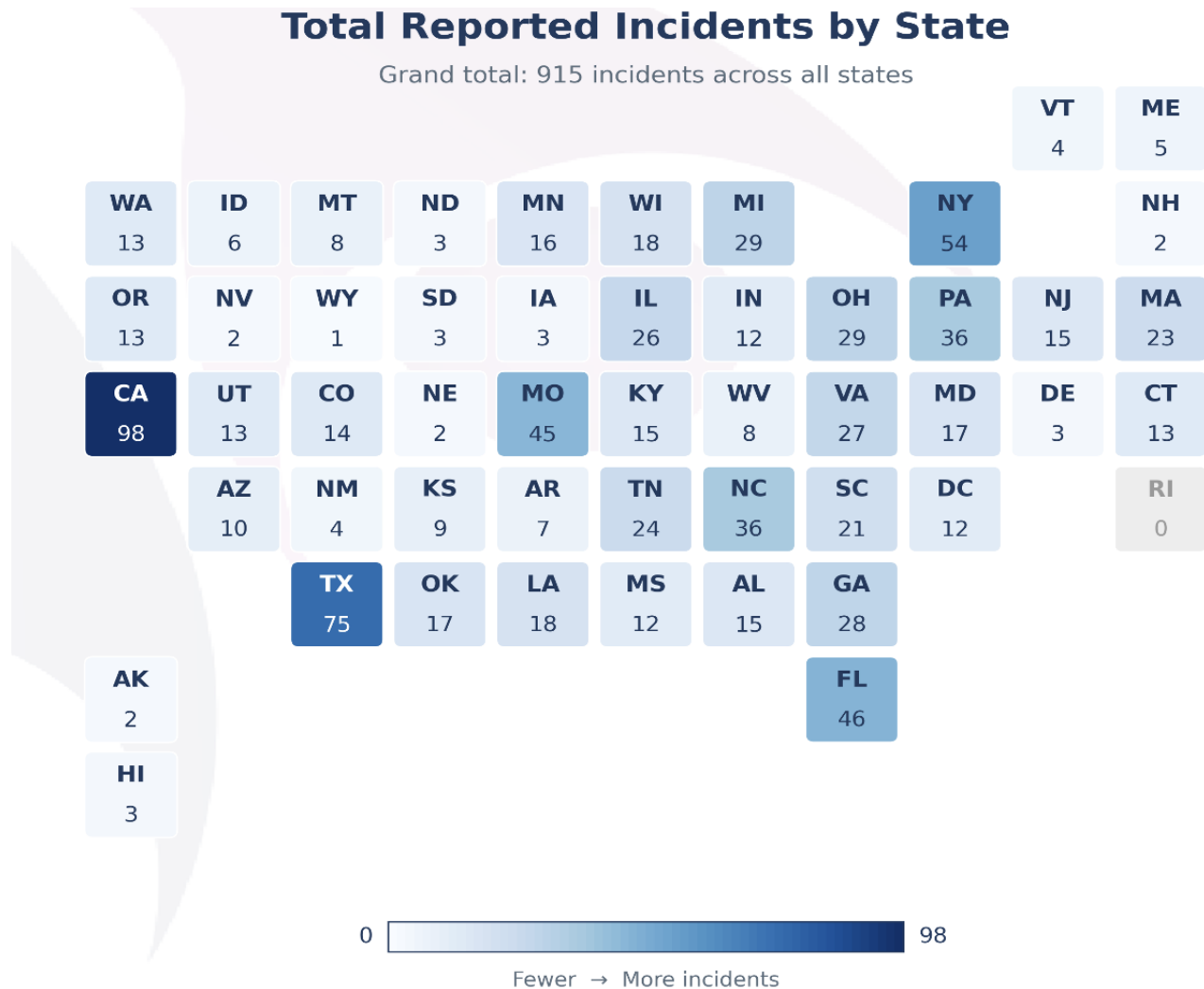


Figure 15: Incident Distribution by State

As identified in Figure 15, four states (**CA** (11%), **NY** (6%), **FL** (5%), **TX** (8%)) have consistently been in the top 5, accounting for ~ 30% of attacks year by year. **Pennsylvania** has been in the top 6 all three years as well. Those and four other states (OH, GA, TN, NC) have been in the top ten in 2 of the last 3 years.

23	24	25
NY	CA	CA
CA	NY	TX
FL	PA	NY
TX	FL	FL
OH	TX	MO
PA	MD	PA

The top ten states consistently experience 50% or more of all attacks.

The states with the highest numbers of incidents generally correspond to the nation's most populous states:

- California
- New York
- Florida
- Texas
- Pennsylvania

California was identified as the leading state for attacks in both 2024 and 2025, while New York ranked first in 2023.

California recorded particularly high numbers across multiple major categories, including:

- Assault
- Vandalism
- Arson
- Graffiti
- Harassment
- Threats
- Theft

Vandalism, assault, and arson were among the most geographically widespread incident types, while theft was the leading incident category in 14 states. Protestant houses of worship were the most common targets in 34 states and tied for the top position in several others. Catholic houses of worship were the leading target in four states, synagogues in five states, and mosques and LDS meeting houses in eight states.

Population is an important factor in understanding geographic distribution, but incident patterns also vary substantially from state to state. 35% of all vandalism occurred in three of the most populous states (California, Texas and New York) – but substantial numbers also occurred in Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Ohio and Georgia. 7% of all assaults occurred in California but were also numerous (>4% each) in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois and Utah. The state with the most communicated threats was Maryland.

Findings-at-a-Glance

- **Attacks in 2025 increased 8.8% over 2024, from 841 to 915.**
- The incidence of **violence has increased**. **Assault** increased from **17%** of all incidents in 2023 to **22%** in 2024, to **27%** in 2025. The number of *incidents* with casualties increased **60%** from 69 to 111, representing **12%** of all incidents, up from 8% the year before. The total *number of casualties* **doubled** from 101 in 2024 (23 killed, 78 wounded) to 202 in 2025 (48 killed, 154 wounded).
- The vast majority of casualties occurred during **Assaults**, which accounted for **89.6%** of deaths and **86.4%** of those wounded. Other casualties resulted from ramming incidents, robberies, accidents, and acts of vandalism.
- We train for the worst case, the active assailant. Yet **firearms and bladed weapons were reported in only 14%** of incidents. While low, this number was **up 8%** from last year. The **most common weapons** reported remain **fists** and **common everyday objects** found on-site, including **rocks, bricks, and blunt objects**. ***Keeping the grounds of houses of worship clear of rocks, scrap, and other items*** that can serendipitously be weaponized could significantly reduce damage to statuary, windows, and building exteriors.
- The incidence of **vehicle ramming** more than **tripled** from 7 to 23. Yet the majority of rammings stem from traffic accidents, not planned hostilities against houses of worship. *Whether intentional or accidental, the damage and impact to the house of worship is the same.*
- Reports of Cybercrime, though vastly underreported, increased from 7 to 10.
- Attacks on **Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic houses of worship** which represent **fewer than 10% of all houses of worship** continue to be **targeted disproportionately, in 31% of attacks**. This is down significantly from 2023 and 2024 when they were targeted in **51%** and **45%** of attacks respectively. Attacks on **Protestant** houses of worship have **surged 40%**.
- **Hardening entrances and barriers** to entry continues to pay off: **81%** (up from **73% in 2024 and 67%** in 2023) **of incidents involving casualties occurred outside the house of worship**. *Fences and security patrols can save lives by keeping assailants at bay; locked doors and enforced access controls keep them outside.*
- Incidents with **Casualties**: Handguns were used in 59 (53%) of the 111 incidents with casualties; **Long guns** were used in four incidents; **Bladed** weapons in 14 (13%). **Vehicles** were used in 13 (12%), Hands, bats, and fireworks were also used.
- **Targets vary by location, religion, and demographics**. The **types and targets of attack vary by religion and by state**. *Threat and risk assessments should take the identity and location of the house of worship into consideration.*
- 49 states and the District of Columbia experienced at least one incident, all except Rhode Island. **Half of all incidents were clustered in 9 states**, same as past 2 years.

Recommendations for Houses of Worship

Based on the 2025 threat data, houses of worship should consider the following priorities:

1. **Conduct a site-specific threat assessment.** Identify the threats most likely to affect the individual congregation.
2. **Secure the perimeter.** Give parking lots, exterior approaches, entrances, and property boundaries appropriate attention.
3. **Strengthen access control.** Maintain awareness of who enters the building and why while preserving the welcoming mission of the congregation.
4. **Protect against everyday crime.** Address theft, vandalism, graffiti, and arson through practical measures such as lighting, surveillance, alarms, and property management.
5. **Prepare for physical violence.** Ensure staff and volunteers understand how to recognize, report, and respond to escalating behavior.
6. **Establish threat-reporting procedures.** Create clear mechanisms for reporting suspicious activity, threats, and unusual behavior.
7. **Remove easily accessible implements.** Secure tools, landscaping materials, rocks, bricks, and other objects that could be used to damage the facility.
8. **Strengthen cybersecurity.** Implement multifactor authentication (MFA), restrict remote access, maintain backups, reduce unnecessary administrative privileges, and monitor for unusual activity.
9. **Build relationships with law enforcement.** Establish communication channels before an emergency occurs.
10. **Use threat data continuously.** Monitor local, regional, and national trends and adjust security measures as the threat environment changes.

Conclusion

The security environment for houses of worship that is broad, complex, and changing.

The most common threats are not necessarily the most dramatic. **Theft, vandalism, assault, graffiti, arson, and communicated threats account for the majority of reported incidents.** At the same time, the data indicate a concerning increase in physical violence and casualty-producing events.

The findings demonstrate that security cannot be reduced to a single threat scenario. A house of worship must consider the panoply of property crime, physical violence, arson, and intimidation; address deficiencies and reinforce access controls, perimeter security, cybersecurity, and emergency response if it seeks to build community resilience.

The data further demonstrate that threats vary significantly among faith communities. **The threats and risks faced by a Protestant church are simply not the same as those faced by a Catholic parish, synagogue, mosque, Hindu temple, LDS meeting house, or another house of worship.** The most effective approach therefore combines general security principles with a *specific understanding of local and faith-specific risks.*

Key Takeaway

Perhaps the most actionable finding is the importance of protecting the exterior environment.

- Most incidents occur **outside**.
- Most assaults occur **outside**.
- Most casualties occur **outside**.
- Most deaths occur **outside**.

Houses of worship can potentially reduce risk by strengthening their ability to observe, manage, reclaim, and control the space between the public sidewalk and the facility interior.

Cybersecurity deserves comparable attention. The available data almost certainly understate the scope of cyber threats, and the consequences of a successful attack can extend well beyond financial loss to affect sensitive information, donor trust, organizational reputation, and ministry continuity.

Ultimately, the value of threat data lies not in the statistics themselves but in what organizations do with them. The goal should be to move:

- **from awareness to preparedness,**
- **from preparedness to mitigation, and**
- **from mitigation to resilience.**

For houses of worship, that means understanding the threats that actually occur, identifying the vulnerabilities that matter most, and taking practical steps to reduce risk before an incident occurs.

Appendix – Tables by State

STATE	Theft	Vandalism	Assault	Arson	Graffiti	Threat	Assault/Threat	Bomb/Threat	Ramming	Disturbance	Harassment	Cyber	Surveillance	Trespass	Accident	Kidnap	Bomb	Grand Total
CA	20	24	10	9	14	2	6	3	1	1	5		1	1	1			98
TX	20	18	7	8	10	1	2	3	2		2	1		1				75
NY	9	22	6	3	3	3			2	1	4					1		54
FL	13	5	8	3	5		4	2	1	4	1							46
MO	24	3	2	6	1	4	1		2	1		1						45
NC	17	2	6	5	1		1	1	2	1								36
PA	8	7	5	2	3	4	1	1					2	1	1		1	36
MI	3	7	5	3	7	1	2			1								29
OH	11	6	4		2	1	2	1	1	1								29
GA	10	6	6	2			1				1	2						28
VA	12	3	5	1	2	1				1	1		1					27
IL	7	5	6	3	3								1		1			26
TN	2	9	3	5		1	1	2						1				24
MA	7	2	2	4	2	4	2											23
SC	3	3	4	2			1	1	3	3				1				21
LA	1	1	5	4	3		2		1			1						18
WI		11	3	1		1			1	1								18
MD	3	3	2		1	6				1			1					17
OK	2	3	5	1	2		1	1		1		1						17
MN	1	1	5	2	1	3		1						1	1			16
AL	6	1		2	1	1	1		3									15
KY	7	4	1			1	1			1								15
NJ	1	3		3	2	4		1			1							15
CO	3	2	2	1	1			2	1			2						14
CT	2	4	2			1		1		1	2							13
OR	2	3	3	3	1			1										13
UT		5	6					2										13
WA	1	1	3	3		1	1	1					2					13
DC	2	1	2	1		2				1	2			1				12
IN	3	1	2	1	4							1						12
MS	4	1	5		1										1			12
AZ		1	2	3	2	1	1											10
KS	4	2	1		1				1									9
MT		4		1	2							1						8
WV	1		4	3														8
AR	1	1	3				2											7
ID			1			4					1							6
ME		1	2			1	1											5
NM	1	1			1			1										4
VT	1					3												4
DE		1			1				1									3
HI	1							2										3
IA	1	1			1													3
ND		1				1			1									3
SD		1	1		1													3
AK	1	1																2
NE			1											1				2
NH	1			1														2
NV				1			1											2
WY		1																1
Total	216	183	140	87	79	52	35	27	23	20	20	10	8	8	5	1	1	915

Numbers in RED represent the state with the highest number of incidents by category of attack.

Grey boxes represent the most frequently observed attack type occurring in each state.

Table1: Incident Type per State

State	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Islam	LDS	Hindu	Buddhist	Orthodox	Quaker	Sikh	unk	Total
CA	49	17	16	5	2	6	0	1	0	1	1	98
TX	54	7	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	75
NY	14	18	11	3	0	0	6	0	1	1	0	54
FL	35	1	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	46
MO	39	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	45
NC	32	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
PA	17	11	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
MI	17	5	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
OH	20	6	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
GA	26	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
VA	22	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	27
IL	14	6	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	26
TN	21	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
MA	3	11	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	23
SC	18	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	21
LA	14	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
WI	11	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
MD	5	1	9	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
OK	14	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	17
MN	6	5	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
AL	14	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
KY	13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	15
NJ	1	4	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	15
CO	11	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
CT	6	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
OR	10	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
UT	2	0	1	1	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	13
WA	9	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
DC	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
IN	7	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	12
MS	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
AZ	3	0	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
KS	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
MT	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
WV	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
AR	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
ID	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
ME	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
NM	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
VT	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
DE	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
HI	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
IA	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
ND	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
SD	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
AK	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
NE	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
NH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
NV	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
WY	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SUM	577	128	114	45	15	12	7	6	1	3	7	915

Numbers in **RED** represent the faith most frequently targeted in each state.

Yellow  boxes represent the state in which each faith received the highest number of attacks.

Table 2: Incidents by Faith per State

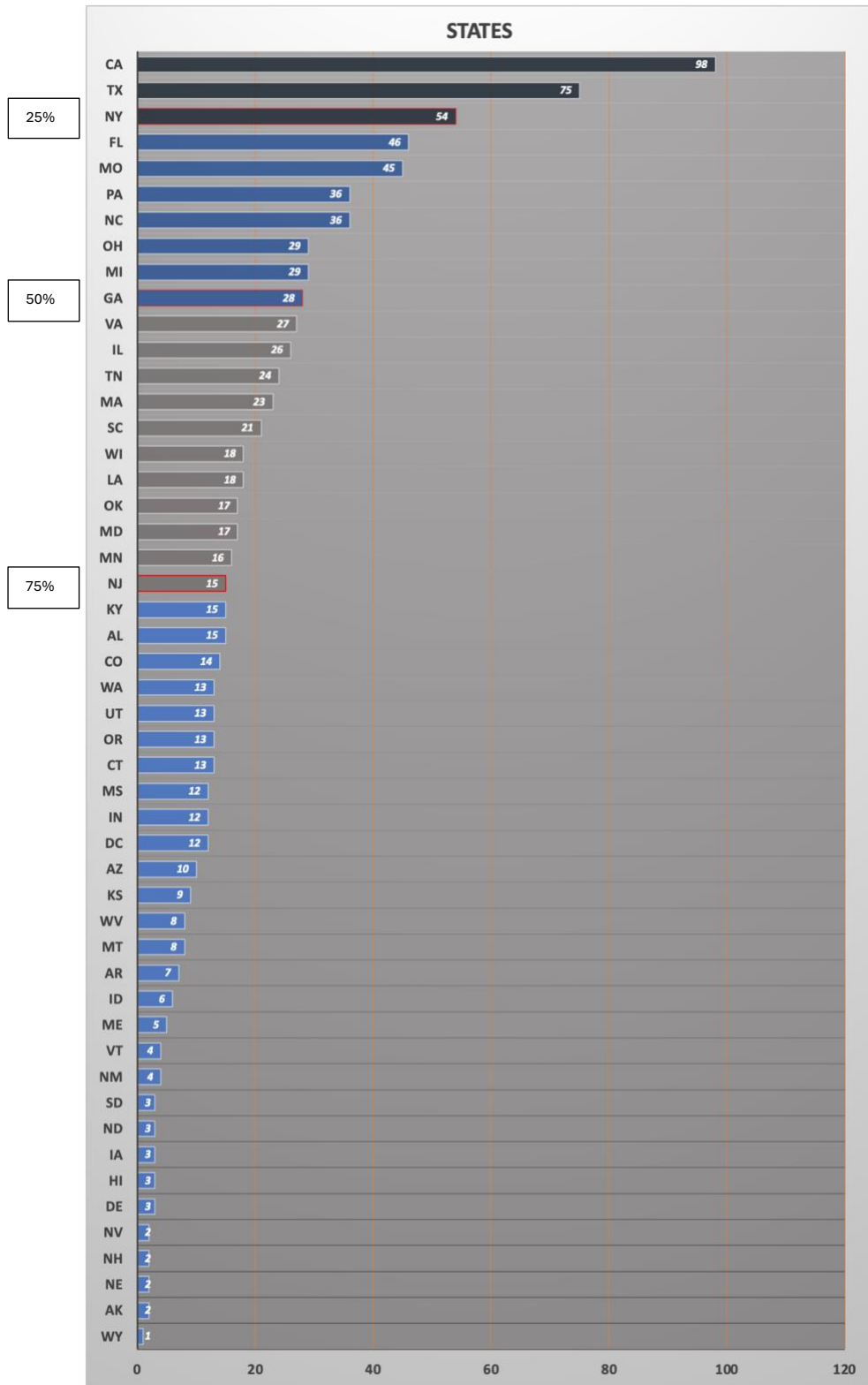


Table 3: Total Incidents per State

Supplement A – Cybersecurity: An Underreported Threat

Cybersecurity represents an important and likely undercounted component of the overall threat environment.

Approximately 10 cyber incidents were identified in the dataset, but this figure is unlikely to represent the full scope of cyber activity affecting houses of worship.

Possible reasons for underreporting include:

- The organization considers the incident minor.
- The organization restores access quickly.
- Leaders fear reputational damage.
- Leaders do not want to alarm congregants.
- The organization does not recognize the event as a cyber-attack.

Houses of worship maintain sensitive information involving:

- Donors
- Financial accounts
- Payroll
- Employees
- Counseling
- Children's programs
- Members and congregants

Cybercriminals may target these systems because they contain valuable information and because disruption can have an outsized effect on organizational trust and continuity.

The potential impact extends across four major areas: **Data. People. Trust. Operations.**

The Common Cyber Attack Path

A common cyber-attack sequence identified in the data is:

Phishing → Credential Compromise → Remote Access → Lateral Movement → Privilege Escalation → Data Theft → Extortion

An attacker may begin with a fraudulent email, obtain a user's credentials, gain access through a web portal, Virtual Private Network (VPN), or remote desktop system, move through the network, obtain additional privileges, locate sensitive information, and ultimately steal, encrypt, and threaten to disclose data.

A successful attack can interrupt:

- Giving
- Payroll
- Communications
- Worship services
- Ministry operations
- Children's programs
- Counseling services

Cybersecurity is therefore not simply an IT concern. A cyber incident can affect the mission and continuity of the entire organization.

PRACTICAL SAFEGUARDS

Cyber Risk Reduction Checklist

START HERE: Prioritize controls that reduce account takeover, limit access, protect critical data, and speed reporting.

- **Implement Multi-Factor Authentication.** MFA is one of the most effective protections against credential-based account takeover.
- **Restrict Remote Access.** Organizations should minimize unnecessary exposure of remote desktop services, VPN access, donor platforms, websites, and administrative portals.
- **Establish Alerts.** Organizations should monitor for suspicious logins, unusual activity, and other indicators of compromise.
- **Separate Critical Systems.** Where practical, donor, financial, administrative, and general office systems should be appropriately separated.
- **Maintain Backups.** Critical information should be backed up in a manner that protects it from compromise or ransomware.
- **Limit Administrative Privileges.** Users should have only the access necessary to perform their responsibilities.
- **Encourage Reporting.** Cybersecurity is not exclusively an IT function. Administrative personnel, staff members, and volunteers may be the first people to notice an unusual email, suspicious login, or unexpected system change. *Any effort to phish, hack, or penetrate a house of worship's automated systems should immediately be reported to local law enforcement, your fusion center, and the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at <https://www.ic3.gov/>.*

When something looks unusual, report it immediately – even if you are unsure whether it is a cyber incident.