

TLP: CLEAR

[FB-ISAO Current Threat Level](#)

FB-ISAO Physical Threat Level: SEVERE

FB-ISAO Physical Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations: "SEVERE."

FB-ISAO's definition of the Physical Threat Level, "SEVERE" means FB-ISAO is unaware of any specific events. Still, there is a concern that an event is highly likely.

FB-ISAO Cyber Threat Level: ELEVATED

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

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

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Welcoming and Watchful: 2026 Holiday Threat Environment

The holiday season (from mid-September through New Year's Day) creates predictable changes in how organizations operate and utilize their facilities. Public events often coincide with staffing changes that can degrade normal procedures. Holiday gatherings create a unique security challenge for facilities as organizations manage larger crowds and more open public access.



Why this matters for ministry leaders. For FB-ISAO members, the holiday period can place unusual pressure on houses of worship that already balance open public access with limited staffing and security resources. Although this period does not hold the same religious significance across all faith traditions, many significant religious observances fall between mid-September and New Year's. Services and community programs may draw people who do not regularly use the facility, while employees and volunteers may be operating on different schedules. Organizations may also rely more heavily on vendors during this period, yet those providers could be managing their own staffing constraints. The resulting environment can make routine problems harder to recognize and incidents more difficult to manage or mitigate.

Mitigation. Holiday preparedness is most effective when it reflects how the organization will operate during the season. Reviewing staffing, technical dependencies, and major events in advance identifies problems that become harder to address once holiday schedules are already in effect.

- **Review Holiday Coverage.** Organizations can identify where leave schedules affect important security or approval functions and establish alternates before peak holiday activity begins.
- **Reinforce Verification.** Personnel responsible for payments or account changes can use established verification procedures when instructions are unusual or unexpected.
- **Reduce Known Exposure.** Organizations can prioritize significant internet-facing vulnerabilities and confirm that critical vendor escalation contacts remain current.
- **Review Event Plans.** Organizations hosting major holiday gatherings can assess how the event changes normal facility use and coordinate with local law enforcement where appropriate.
- **Validate Continuity.** Organizations can confirm that critical systems can be restored and that response personnel know how to communicate if normal technology becomes unavailable.

Caring for Our Community: Recognizing Concerning Behavior



Welcoming others and protecting our community go hand in hand. Relationships among faith leaders, staff, volunteers, and congregants can bring concerning behavior to light, but also make reporting someone we know difficult. A clear process lets people seek help without deciding whether someone poses a threat.

Report observable conduct and context, not assumptions about identity or beliefs. An isolated grievance does not establish violent intent. Escalating threats, specific statements about harm, or apparent preparations deserve trained assessment. Share what happened, when, and the surrounding circumstances.

Why this matters for ministry leaders. Treat preparedness as an extension of pastoral care. Name a safety contact, ensure greeters and ministry volunteers know how to report concerns, and review when to request emergency assistance. Offer compassionate support while leaving threat assessment to trained personnel. Reporting observable behavior – not judging identity or beliefs – helps keep worship welcoming and prepared.

Mitigation. Organizations can strengthen behavioral threat awareness by focusing on observable activity, clear reporting, and proportionate escalation.

- **Establish Escalation Thresholds.** Define which behaviors require routine reporting and which circumstances warrant immediate emergency action.
- **Make Reporting Simple.** Personnel can be given a known method for communicating concerning behavior without requiring them to determine motive or diagnose the individual.
- **Train and Exercise.** Incorporate [CISA's Pathway to Violence](#) and [Gate 15's Hostile Event Attack Cycle \(HEAC\)](#) into recurring training, then use scenarios to test how supervisors and security personnel handle escalating information.
- **Use Multidisciplinary Assessment.** Concerning behavior can be evaluated with relevant information from appropriate organizational functions rather than relying on one observer's interpretation.
- **Coordinate With Local Law Enforcement.** Establish relationships with local law enforcement and the nearest FBI field office before an incident occurs.

Spotlight: Have you Seen FB-ISAO's 2025 Threat Data Report?

Have you seen FB-ISAO's 2025 Threat Data report **Attacks on Houses of Worship**? Put it on the agenda for your next leadership or safety team meeting and make it a starting point for a conversation about preparedness.

Turn information into action. As you review the report, consider: Which findings are most relevant to our house of worship? What assumptions should we revisit? What practical step could strengthen our preparedness?

Share the report with your leadership, staff, and volunteers responsible for safety. Use the discussion to identify priorities, guide follow-up questions, and keep preparedness connected to your organization's mission.

Explore the **Attacks on Houses of Worship 2025 Year in Review** here: <https://faithbased-isao.org/fb-isao-releases-an-all-faiths-analysis-of-attacks-on-us-houses-of-worship-in-2025/>

Thank you for sharing this newsletter with a friend!