

CAIR Muslim Community Safety Kit

A step-by-step guide to community safety

This “Muslim Community Safety Kit” has been developed to better equip you and your community with the knowledge necessary to protect against anti-Muslim or anti-Arab bigotry or attacks, and to secure your basic legal rights. In times of difficulty, we ask people to depend on God the Almighty, with sincere prayers, especially for those who are suffering.

How to use this resource kit:

- Read this kit carefully
- Circulate it to your friends and family
- Photocopy relevant portions and post in your local mosque, Islamic center or organization
- Contact CAIR if you have any questions or if you do not understand any part of this kit

Excerpts from CAIR Muslim Community Safety Kit

REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Muslims must do their part to ensure the safety and security of our nation. If anyone notes suspicious persons or activities in their community, they should report it immediately to the local Field Office of the FBI. SEE: <http://www.fbi.gov/minneapolis/>

DEVELOP A LEGAL CONTACT LIST

Develop a list of attorneys who are willing to be consulted by the Muslim community in response to backlash incidents. Ask Muslim attorneys to volunteer their services to community members during this time of crisis.

DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Community leaders should immediately coordinate meetings between representatives of the Muslim community and local, state and national law enforcement agencies. These meetings should focus on ways in which the community can help national security and on how authorities can protect Muslims and Arab-Americans from harassment and discrimination.

MEET WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Delegations of Muslim representatives should schedule meetings with local, state and national elected representatives or their key staff to discuss community concerns. To find out who represents your area on the national level, go to: <http://www.capwiz.com/cair/home/>

BUILD COALITIONS WITH INTERFAITH AND MINORITY GROUPS

Similar meetings should be coordinated with representatives of local interfaith and minority groups. These meetings should focus on building lines of communication and support, and hearing from these groups how they deal with discrimination and bigotry.

MEET WITH LOCAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO DISCUSS STUDENT SAFETY

Representatives of the Muslim community should meet with local school administrators to discuss safety plans for students and to sensitize the administrators to harassment of Muslim students.

BUILD AN EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

Community leaders should develop emergency e-mail and phone contact lists to be used in case of an incident that threatens the community's safety. Local imams, Islamic center board members, and Muslim activists should be on the lists.

A second list should be developed containing contact information for all local law enforcement agencies.

HOLD A COMMUNITY MEETING TO INFORM OTHERS ON SAFETY GUIDELINES

Call for a meeting of the local Muslim community to discuss the information outlined in this kit. The meeting should take place at a local mosque or Islamic center and should be advertised using the emergency contact list.

ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

Establish a network of community members who can offer emotional and material support to those who may be the victims of hate crimes or discrimination. Victims should not be left alone to deal with the negative impact of such incidents.

REACT TO INCIDENTS OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE

If you believe you have been the victim of an anti-Muslim hate crime or discrimination, you should:

- Report the incident to your local police station and FBI office IMMEDIATELY. Ask that the incident be treated as a hate crime. Ask witnesses to give you their name and contact information.
- Inform CAIR-MN even if you believe it is a "small" incident. Incidents may be reported online at: www.cairmn.com or TEL: 612-206-3360, E-MAIL: info@mn.cair.com
- Document the incident. Write down exactly what was said and/or done by the offender. Save evidence. Take photographs.

- Act quickly. Each incident must be dealt with when it happens, not when convenient.
- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken. Consider issuing a statement from community leaders, holding a news conference, organizing a protest, meeting with officials, or starting a letter writing campaign.
- Mobilize community support. Contact CAIR and a local mosque or organization.
- Stay on top of the situation.
- Announce results. When the incident is resolved, make an announcement to the same people and organizations originally contacted.

CAIR MOSQUE SECURITY GUIDELINES

Areas of Vulnerability:

- Mosques located in isolated areas.
- Mosques left unattended for extended periods of time.
- Mosques with unsecured doors and/or windows.
- Absence of a burglar alarm system.
- Heavy exterior vegetation (shrubs, etc.) in which criminals may hide.
- Absence of exterior lighting.

Take the following safety measures:

- Build good relationships with neighbors of the mosque. Invite them to visit your center.
- Try to have people attend the mosque as much as possible. Activity deters perpetrators.
- Make an appointment with the community relations officer of your local police department to tour your center and make suggestions on improving mosque security.
- Request additional police patrols in the vicinity of your center. Special attention should be paid to times of darkness and during prayers.
- Consider creating a security committee at your mosque.
- Post mosque members at entrances and parking areas during prayer times.
- Report suspicious packages to police. Do not touch them.
- Install perimeter floodlights outside the mosque.
- Install fire and burglar alarm systems.
- Replace hollow core doors with more secure solid doors.
- Install burglarproof bars on screens and large vents. (Note - Research local ordinances before beginning security renovations. For example, window bars should not limit evacuation in case of fire.)
- Trim shrubs and vines to reduce areas of concealment.
- Participate in neighborhood watch programs.
- Document descriptions of suspicious people or vehicles.
- Make duplicates of all important papers, computer disks and records.

- Remove potential fire hazards, such as trash and debris.
- Consider installing security cameras.

RESPONDING TO BOMB THREATS

- Distribute written instructions on handling bomb threats.
- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible. Ask that the message be repeated. Record or write down everything that is said.
- Ask for the location of the bomb.
- Inform the caller that the detonation of a bomb could hurt many innocent people.
- Pay attention to background noises such as music, which may give a clue to the caller's location.
- Listen closely to the caller's voice. Make note of accents, voice quality (calm, excited) or speech impediments.
- Report the threat immediately to the local police, ATF and FBI. Have appropriate phone numbers listed in written instructions.
- If the threat comes in the form of a letter, save all materials, including the envelope. Handle the letter as little as possible.
- Search the interior and exterior of the mosque. Evacuate the building if a suspicious package or device is found.

SUSPECT LETTERS AND PACKAGES

What to look for:

- Name and title of addressee are not accurate.
- No return address, or the sender is not known to the addressee.
- Handwriting is distorted.
- Unprofessionally wrapped, uneven, bulky, lopsided.
- Contains bulges or soft spots.
- Poorly wrapped package is marked "Fragile-Handle With Care," "Rush," or has unusual restrictions such as "Personal" or "Private."
- Excess amount of postage.
- Protruding wires or tin foil.
- Package makes a buzzing or ticking noise, a sloshing sound, or emits an odor.

What to do:

- DON'T open the package or letter.
- DON'T put it in water or in a confined space such as a drawer.
- DO isolate the article and secure the immediate area.
- DO open windows if possible to help vent potential explosive gases.
- DO contact your local police department and Postal Inspector.