



Utica National Insurance Risk Management Department Bulletin

## 5 Quick Tips to Practicing a Proper Lock-Down Procedure - at Your Religious Institution

*Excerpts from the original article reprinted with permission of Kenneth C. Mitchell, National Account Manager for Secure Church International a disabled veteran owned organization located in southern California providing protection to churches and church leaders.*

We all have heard the old saying, “NO ONE EVER PLANS TO FAIL, THEY FAIL TO PLAN”, this cannot be more true than with “lockdown procedures”. This simple, yet extremely important action can save lives, limit liability and instill confidence in your staff. Yet, without well thought out and practiced procedures, it can hinder, cause panic and heighten incidents of potential disaster.

First and foremost, HAVE A PLAN, second of all HAVE A PLAN and finally HAVE A PLAN.....get it?

Recent and reoccurring events have led us to have a need to have such a procedure in place. This heightened awareness has made us all ultra sensitive to the safety and protection of our most valuable assets, our fellow human beings. Having a plan and practicing it on a regular basis creates a feeling of awareness, self confidence and professionalism. But this all has to be done with consistency. You can have the best formulated plan, pay hundreds of dollars for someone to come in and assist you in developing that plan, have charts, graphs, written procedures and a special place on your office shelf for that beautiful leather bound procedure manual, but if you do not practice, it will be a panicked reaction with everyone not knowing what to do.

### 5 Quick Tips to Practicing a Proper Lock Down Procedure

1. Remove students, staff, visitors and faculty from the threat. Announce clearly and concisely over the public address system, “LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, ENTER YOUR PRE-DESIGNATED AREAS OF SAFETY IMMEDIATELY, WE ARE NOW INITIATING A LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE”. This message should be repeated until all procedures and roll calls have been completed.
2. Above all, remain calm, professional and aware. Provide assistance to those who require it due to physical challenges, learning disabilities or communication barriers.
3. Lock and/or barricade doors to your predetermined “safe areas”, turn off projectors, draw curtains, turn off lights, remain calm and quiet. (This gives the appearance that the room is unoccupied)
4. Conduct an immediate head count or roll call and advise the LOCKDOWN OFFICER(S) of your situation. Do not respond to knocks on the doors, plea’s to open the doors or verbal commands of unknowns from the outside, without visual recognition.
5. Wait for the “ALL CLEAR” to be given by the LOCKDOWN OFFICER(S) and wait for instructions over the public address system. Assist all in your area of responsibility to the predetermined rally point, for debriefing and final instructions.

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Practice does not make perfect, perfect practice makes for perfect execution.

- Have fun with it, have your staff involved in every portion of the process, open dialogue.
- Have casual Thursday and make it a day of fellowship and practice, but take it serious and make it part of your routine.
- Execute roll playing, scenarios that are realistic, don't work off of fear, work off of confidence.
- Let your staff know that if some unforeseen event takes place, they will have the know how and confidence to make sure that the crisis scenario they are witnessing unfolding in their presence, will be minimized and hopefully averted, because of their dedication to the safety of their fellow Christians and their ability to react properly.

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