

SECURITY TIPS FOR ORGANIZATION GREETERS



Three Tasks Greeters Should Be Prepared to Perform Together

- **Be Welcoming.** If you see someone you do not know or recognize, approach, and welcome them. Introduce yourself, then ask their name and ask what brings them here today. Be warm, be interested, be natural. Remember that you are simultaneously welcoming and screening.
- **Be Alert.** Actively watch, look, and see what is going on around you. Do not assume the security guard or another greeter has already noticed and taken care of an unattended bag or someone behaving suspiciously. Even if you notice nothing amiss, you are making the synagogue safer: your presence outside the entrance conveys to any observer that there is someone alert and watchful who will engage with anyone unfamiliar.
- **Be Curious.** Ask open-ended rather than yes/no questions and pay attention to non-verbal as well as verbal communication. Notice their body language, their facial expressions, and whether they are consistent with the answers they give you. Be mindful and compassionate as this person may have a condition that makes it difficult for them to engage with you in a neurotypical way. If there is a mismatch between their words and their behavior, engage the assistance of someone in charge or a fellow greeter. Trust your intuition, not your biases.

De-Escalation Techniques to Manage Unexpected Situations

Most interactions will be routine and friendly. There may be instances in the course of screening where you encounter a difficult or disruptive individual, but it does not immediately merit calling 911. In those ambiguous cases, use these techniques to resolve the situation.

- **Control your behavior.** Project empathy, be respectful, and do not shout.
"I can see you are upset, and I apologize if I upset you. How can I better assist you?"
- **Manage expectations.** Avoid defensiveness, be honest, and explain limits.
"I understand where you're coming from, but it is against our policy to let people into this area unsupervised."
- **Use your senses.** Watch their body language and their hands, and listen intently.
"I can see you are very animated, and I want to understand. Could you tell me what I can help you with?"
- **Be safe.** Maintain a safe distance, back away if the situation escalates and call for assistance.
"I am going to have my colleague come over to further assist you." "Please respect my space or I will have to call the police if this continues."

What to Do in the Event of an Emergency

Make sure you know who on site is designated to make the decision to call police or 911.

Unless it is a clear emergency, greeters should not be responsible for making those decisions. In the rare event of a worst-case scenario (such as a hostile armed individual), have a clear plan in place so that greeters, ushers, guards, and staff know how to immediately sound the alarm and call 911.

For more information on ways to strengthen your Jewish organization's security, contact the **Community Security Team**, at **415.512.6231** or at **security@sfjcf.org**.