

Emergency Procedures for Ushers

Listed below are instructions for assisting when unexpected circumstances arise. Your assistance helps the presiding priest maintain a sense of order in the church, as well as maintaining the safety of those present.

Medical Emergencies

Ushers should scan the congregation as people arrive – know who has medical training (physicians, nurses/CPR) and note their location. Should a medical emergency come to your attention, first assess the situation to see if the ill person is in danger to themselves or anyone else. If available, summon a Health Care Provider from the attending congregation to begin medical care. Know the location of the First Aid Kit and Automated External Defibrillator (if available).

If further assistance is necessary, call 911 using a cell phone. Station one usher outside the church to direct paramedics to the patient's location.

Hidden Illness

- If a person has a seizure, do not attempt to restrain them or put anything in their mouth. Move objects away to prevent injury. Loosen clothing, especially around the neck. Make the person feel comfortable after the seizure, perhaps by helping them to a comfortable place to rest and by offering assurance. Immediately summon a Health Care Provider from the attending congregation and call 911 using a cell phone.
- In the event of a sudden attack (a seizure, a stroke, or a reaction to medication), immediately find a Health Care Provider from the attending congregation and call 911 using a cell phone.
- Check for any medical alert tag the person may be wearing (necklace, anklet, bracelet, etc.).

Disturbances and Distraught Individuals

On occasion, an unknown/conspicuous person may enter the church seeking assistance. First, welcome them and offer to find them a seat. If not interested, usher them to the entryway (vestibule) of the church and inquire what assistance they might need. Should the person be in need of money, food, or clothing, assist as you wish or invite them to wait until the priest is available.

People with mental illness or certain addictions, could be disruptive and/or present a risk of injury to themselves or others.

- Behavioral clues include rocking, rolling eyes, irrational movements, constant mumbling, talking to one's self, staggering, pacing or wandering.
- Such people may be extremely unstable and ushers should intervene immediately.
- Find one or two ushers, Health Care Providers, or members of the congregation who are willing to approach the person quietly and ask them to accompany you to a quiet area in the church. Do your best to be respectful and make the person feel comfortable.
- Walk away from the person if there is any indication of violence and call 911.

In the event that someone becomes unruly and begins to cause a disturbance –

- Again, ushers should immediately intervene in a reasonable manner.
- If safely able, escort the person outside to discuss their intentions.
- If the disturbance occurs near the front altar, ushers should enter the sanctuary to assist the priest.
- If the unruly person becomes aggressive, call 911 immediately for police assistance.

Once the person is ushered outside, unless concerned for safety and 911 has been called, do not lock the doors as this could restrict emergency exiting. If necessary, station ushers at every door to prevent the person from re-entering the church.



Ushers should take the initiative to step in when a disturbance occurs. The priest will not inform you.

Any usher who is aware of a weapon brought into the church should:

- ## Fires

Fires in the church will require evacuation. The presiding priest will give instructions from the microphone that evacuation is necessary. Evacuation will require strong direction with calmness and authority. All ushers shall stand by the exits. People should leave by their nearest exit. Assure disabled persons in your area are assisted, as needed. Once the church has been evacuated, ushers should clear people away from the building (until an “all clear” can be called). One or two assigned ushers should report to the presiding priest for further instructions after the church is cleared.

Call 911 and notify the fire department of the emergency. Ushers should know the locations of the fire extinguishers in their worship site and how to use them. They are to be used for minor fires only.

Tornadoes are usually seasonal and may give us warning. If a tornado siren is heard, the presiding priest will direct people in an orderly and calm manner to the pre-planned shelter area. Assist disabled persons in your area, as needed.

- Interior hallways and stairways.
- Basements and areas away from windows and glass.

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