

PROTECTING PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

The church has a **tremendous investment** in its physical property and should be attentive to ways of protecting it. Much can be done to **prevent** loss and/or damage to property. The following suggestions are positive actions to be taken in the stewardship of property management.

Risk of Fire

Circuit breakers or fuses should be installed to trip at the required tolerances. Always watch for the overloading of electrical outlets by too many plugs. Use as **few** extension cords as possible and avoid placing them under carpets. **Do not use frayed** extension cords or cords that are not in good repair.

Have all wiring inspected by a **competent, licensed** electrician and repairs made only by a **professional** electrician. (Unprofessional repairs are a high cause of loss.) Be sure wiring is brought up to current code as this is a major cause of fire loss in churches.

Consider installation of an approved **lightning protection system**, which should include both arresters as well as exterior lightning rods to protect your equipment from damage by lightning. Lightning is another top cause of fires to churches.

Install **proper smoke detectors/alarms** and maintain an adequate supply of multi-use **fire extinguishers**. Make sure the extinguishers are at full charge with the annual inspection tag clearly shown and know how to use them.

There should be a minimum of **one** fire extinguisher **for every 3,000 square feet** of building area. There should not be more than seventy-five feet of walking distance between each fire extinguisher, and at least one located **near each heating and cooking unit**. Check with local fire officials for requirements in your area. The Fire Marshall should make routine safety checks of fire exits, fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, etc.

Install carbon monoxide detectors/alarms anywhere you have natural gas or propane appliances, furnaces, baptistry heaters, hot water systems, gas fire place starters, etc., to avoid fire and/or explosion. You also want to protect everyone from carbon monoxide poisoning/asphyxiation.

Maintain a clean, grease-free kitchen exhaust system, which is another high cause of fires.

Never allow smoking within the building.

If candles are used, use with utmost caution.

Do not store combustible materials in the furnace or heating areas. Remove all cardboard boxes, debris, rags, carpet, or anything of flammable nature. Store rags in a metal container suitable for this purpose. Careful handling of oily rags is a must.

Do not store paint, liquid cleaning supplies, waxes or any other combustible material **near heating or cooking areas**. Store in properly identified fireproof metal cabinets designed for this purpose.

Risk of Vandalism/Theft/Arson

Install an **intrusion alarm system** that reports to a central station.

Store all mowers and yard equipment in a safe and secure place. Such facility should be tamper-proof with deadbolt locks, tamper-proof hinges, and steel doors when possible. The intrusion alarm system should be extended to this facility.

Provide **adequate** lighting on all sides of the church, while paying particular attention to the hard-to-see areas.