

SECURITY BULLETIN



After Finsbury Park, Keeping Calm and Maintaining Vigilance is Key

The United Kingdom is one of the safest countries in the world. However, there are simple steps that can be taken which can enhance personal and organisational confidence for mosques and their congregations. These steps can make a difference in supporting better spatial awareness for staff members working within mosques and those volunteering to ensure the safety of mosques, as well as members of the congregation.

Remember that in an emergency, it is essential that you call the Police on 999 and your personal safety is paramount. Do not wait to collect bags and items and leave the place where the emergency is taking place. Also, ensure that when contacting the Police, you provide as many details on the location, as well as around the incident itself. You may also choose to video and document details around the incident, which could be anti-Muslim in nature, though this should only be considered when you are a safe distance from the threat itself. Do not start taking video recordings if you are in the vicinity of danger and if the perpetrator may be further agitated by seeing you taking video footage.

In the case of a terrorist attack, there are 3 actions that you should take. These include the following actions:

- **RUN** if you can,
- **HIDE** if you can't
- **TELL** – call police and warn others to stay away

The key is to ensure that you move away from where the threat is coming out and seek safety whilst informing the police about it. Remember, your safety is paramount. If you do not try and ensure your safety first, you may be putting the safety of others at risk, however much you think you may be assisting others.

1.0 Maintain Spatial Awareness of Your Surroundings

- Ensure that when you enter and leave the mosque you do so mindful of others and with a view to ensuring that entrances and exits are kept as accessible as possible. 'Bunching' and large crowds around the entrances and exits of mosques are to be avoided and mosques should ensure that where possible, large groups of people at such points are moved on for their safety.
- 'Bunching' at entry and exit points also raises risk since it creates a vulnerability for the mosque and a greater probability of people being affected if someone was to try and target the congregation and the mosque. Therefore, ensuring the continual movement of worshippers after prayer times through entry and exit points is an essential part of ensuring the safety of the congregation and mosques.
- The mosque is a public space which requires users to take ownership and responsibility for the safety of themselves and where possible, others. If people are acting suspiciously within and around the bounds of the mosque, you may choose to ask them where they are going and who they may be looking for, whilst maintaining an

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SECURITY BULLETIN



open and friendly posture towards them. At all times, maintain a distance where you can be heard and where you can comfortably exit the scene if need be.

- It is essential that you maintain awareness of the environment around you. This means reporting in to staff members at the mosque any unattended luggage and bags. You may also be aware of vehicles that park close to the mosque and which arouse your suspicion. You may want to note down the registration details to give them to staff at the mosque if you are concerned about suspicious activity around vehicles and their drivers. Remember, it is better to be cautious, than complacent.
- You should ensure that you make yourself aware of exit points from the building. It takes a little time to familiarise yourself with these points in a mosque and allows you to orient yourself in relation to the building. In the event of an emergency, knowing the building and its exit points can save valuable time and give you added confidence to protect yourself by exiting the building as fast as possible.

2.0 Minimising General Risks to the Public

- Site threat assessments can be requested from your local police force. Mosques should ask for this, if they have been targeted for anti-Muslim hatred within the last 3 years. Nonetheless, we would urge all mosques to ask for a threat assessment review by the police if this has not taken place before. Information from these assessments can also help to support better safeguarding for members of the congregation.
- As part of the [Government's Hate Crime Action plan](#), the Government provides funding for protective security measures against places of worship that have been subject to, or are vulnerable to a hate crime attack. Further information can be found [HERE](#). This support means that mosques can enhance their safety if staff or the building have previously been targeted for anti-Muslim hate incidents.
- Mosques should consider developing a 'Dynamic Lock Down' procedure. This means being able to restrict access to a site or building through physical measures, if there is a real and present danger such as someone entering with a weapon. A 'Dynamic Lock Down' procedure will reduce access to other parts of the building and ensure that the risk is contained within a specific area. Further information can be obtained [HERE](#).
- You have the right to refuse access to anyone who may be acting suspiciously. If you are unsure, be polite but firm though not aggressive. Ask where the individual is going and whether he or she has an appointment? Are there looking for a specific person? By asking questions, there is a likelihood that anyone trying to enter the mosque with harmful motives may be dissuaded from entering the mosque.

SECURITY BULLETIN



3.0 Checking Post, Packages and CCTV Cameras – Mosques

- Incoming post and parcels should be checked and if they arouse suspicion, clear the area and maintain a safe distance from the package. At no point should people handle any package that is deemed to be suspicious and the police should be called via 999.
- Material that is deemed to be anti-Muslim in nature or threatening should not be discarded. It should be kept and a picture taken and these can be sent to Tell MAMA, (www.tellmamauk.org), when you contact them. Tell MAMA can also arrange for any letters or written material to be reported and delivered to the police and the evidence documented for law enforcement. You may also choose to report in the material through 101.
- Ensure that CCTV cameras are checked and that they are working properly. It is also important to ensure that the date and time stamps are accurate since if the material is used as evidence, it needs to correlate to when an incident took place.
- Letter openers should be used to open envelopes where possible. Envelopes used to send malicious materials to mosques should be protected as evidence, since there may be DNA material of the perpetrator on such items and this may assist Police in their investigations. At no point, should malicious material be discarded.

This document is meant to act as a guide for some basic security procedures that mosques, their staff and congregation members can undertake. They are not meant to be a comprehensive guide and mosques should work with their local Police contacts in ensuring that risk assessments take place. There is nothing more important than building and maintaining those local force contacts.

The United Kingdom is one of the safest countries in the world. We would urge members of the public within Muslim communities to 'Keep Calm and Carry On' and to do what so many have done in the last 6-12 months and that has been to stand with, campaign and collectively support other communities. Only by supporting one another, as local residents, neighbours, friends and colleagues, can we build a society that is based on the principles of maintaining equality and dignity for all. At the very least, we should all be striving to build and maintain such a society.

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