

Safe In Seminary

Working together – Always a good idea!

If you are reading this page, it is very likely that you may have received a postcard telling about the new church security system in Seminary, Mississippi. Seminary is not a big city. It's not even a city. It is a town with less than 500 permanent residents. Yet it supports three schools, 15 churches (most of which are Baptist), a police department, an active merchant community, and the hub of one of the best canoeing destinations in the USA. In reality, the day time population averages around five times more than the resident population with another population spike on "church day"

What makes this little town so big is a progressive attitude. They don't wait for bad things, like hurricanes, to happen. They prepare for bad things BEFORE they happen. That is why Police Chief Michael Kelly became one of the first participants of the *Safe-City* program in the USA.

[Safe-City](#) is based on a community partnership involving first responders and those in the community at risk for assault, burglary, fire, medical emergencies, robbery, and vandalism. A church is such a place! The school office and/or school is at risk of a visit by an unruly person at any time. Case in point, the City of [Weaver](#), with a population of around 3,000 recently experienced a visit by one of those "unruly People". The personnel in City Hall were totally unprepared for an armed, angry man. In general, you can say that a church secretary would be even less prepared.

Problems can also occur in the nursery, including both medical emergencies as well as issues involving parental custody. As our population ages, there is a corresponding increase of medical emergencies during services that require immediate attention without the delays normally associated with commercial alarm systems or even calls to 911. A product known as [ActionAlert](#), and three personal wireless call buttons allows the Seminary Baptist Church to instantly contact the Seminary Police Department directly by 2-way radio as well as to specified PC's or smart phones in the event of any of the three aforementioned emergencies.

The Seminary story is told in more detail in a recent [Press Release](#). For now, the point is that every church, large and small, urban and rural is at risk for events involving human safety. Additionally, there is the risk of electrical malfunctions and/or fire at times when the church is unattended. Lightning and electrical wiring failure are the leading causes of church fires.

The bad news is that most churches do not have any type of security system, and even those that do often find that reporting through third party monitoring services and 911 is far too slow to be effective in a real emergency. That is why we developed the *ActionAlert* system for churches.

The system installed for Seminary Baptist Church was less than two thousand dollars and there are NO monthly fees. Those churches that have insurance (unfortunately, many do not), may find that the installation of the *ActionAlert* system may qualify for lower premiums. Over time, the system might actually pay for itself.

As good as this system is, there is the issue of who does the responding? Not every city, town, or first responder agency may be as capable or willing as is the case in Seminary. The fact is that it is much easier to get things done in a smaller community than in larger cities or in rural areas. The good news is that there are alternatives and we would be delighted to assist in developing a program that is just right for YOUR church. Let's look at a few options.

Preferred Program – Direct notification to first responders via 2-way radio

Local first responders (police, fire & rescue) are alerted directly by an emergency message broadcast directly over their 2-way radios. This bypasses third party monitoring services and even dispatch centers. The calls go directly to first responders. Similar programs are available for schools, municipal offices, and merchants at high risk for burglary or robbery. An agreement is required that outlines responsibilities for all parties. We have sample agreements available to assist you in setting up a program in your area. The Seminary system broadcasts the message on a special monitoring frequency used exclusively for this purpose as does the City of [Piedmont](#), AL. Other cities, such as Evergreen and Greenville, Alabama use their regular police dispatch frequency.

Alternate Program – Direct notification via text messaging

In some cases, operational standards of the municipality and/or 911 may not be compatible with direct notification, either on the primary dispatch channel or a designated alternate. There are several ways to address such a situation. One alternative is to convey the message by text, rather than voice via PC's, smart phones, or both directly to municipal first responders. The ideal situation is to send emergency messages both by 2-way radio AND text messaging (which is done in Seminary). We can help you set up a program that is just right for your city or town.

Alternate Program – Intermediate Intervention

Sometimes it is not possible to directly contact municipal first responders. A good example is in rural areas where there are no municipal services. In such areas law enforcement services are provided by the Sheriff. Fire and rescue services are provided by volunteers who may not have control over the primary radio system. Larger municipal areas generally do not allow direct notification either to the applicable agency or to 911. Fortunately, there is an option. We call it Intermediate Intervention.

Intermediate Intervention simply means that the distress or alarm call is sent to a third party who in turn reports the event to others. This adds a step to the notification process, but it provides a variety of rapid response options. In some cases, it can involve others with a common interest. Church deacons, for example, can often be on the scene much quicker than anyone else. The same can be true in a neighborhood. Nobody can be on the scene quicker than a neighbor.

The key to making Intermediate Intervention work is rapid notification. This can be done either by radio, by a text message to a pager, smart phone or both. Over time, we have experimented with a variety of solutions depending on the size of the area and the number of people to be served. See FalconCommunityServices.com for additional information.

Our most recent offering is a program known as *CareNet*. This is an ideal program for churches, schools, neighborhood associations, small communities, and merchant groups. Additional information is available at info4u.us/CareNet.pdf.

Summing it all up

The bottom line is that we can help you protect people, places, and property better, faster, and less expensively than any other alternative. Notification time is typically made in 10 seconds or less, not ten minutes or more. Response time is typically less than two minutes, not ten minutes, and there are no long term contracts or monthly fees.

If that make sense to you, give us a call at 205.854.2611 to arrange a demonstration and meeting at your convenience. It's the right thing to do for you and for your community!

The Falcon Team
At your service!