



SECURITY TEAMS FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP WHAT IS THE LAW?

ARE HOUSES OF WORSHIP REQUIRED TO HIRE LICENSED SECURITY GUARDS?

No. Texas law allows a church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship to utilize volunteers to provide security services. However, these volunteers may not receive compensation for these services.

Houses of worship may also hire law enforcement officers or licensed security guards to provide security. Paid security services from either law enforcement officers or licensed security guards are regulated by Texas law. To utilize paid security services, a house of worship may need to obtain a "letter of authority" from the Texas Department of Public Safety, Regulatory Services Division.

MAY VOLUNTEER SECURITY TEAM MEMBERS WEAR A UNIFORM OR BADGE THAT IDENTIFIES THEM AS SECURITY?

No. A volunteer security team member may not wear a uniform or badge that contains the word "security" or that suggests that the individual is a security guard or law enforcement officer.

DOES THE LAW REQUIRE ANY SPECIAL TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEER SECURITY TEAM MEMBERS?

No. Texas law allows houses of worship to determine any minimum training requirements that may be appropriate to provide volunteer security services.

CAN VOLUNTEER SECURITY TEAM MEMBERS LEGALLY CARRY FIREARMS?

Yes, but only as permitted under Texas law.

Generally, a person may carry loaded long guns (rifles and shotguns) in Texas without a license. Texas law also allows a person to carry loaded handguns on property or in a vehicle the person owns or controls without a license. To lawfully carry a handgun on property or in a vehicle the person does not own or control, the person must obtain a license to carry a handgun from the Texas Department of Public Safety. In any case, however, it is a crime to carry a firearm "in a manner calculated to alarm"—carrying in a way that would frighten an ordinary, reasonable person.

DOES TEXAS LAW PLACE ANY SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE LAWFUL CARRY OF FIREARMS IN PLACES OF WORSHIP?

No; however, prohibitions on carrying firearms in schools, government buildings, and other locations could apply, depending on the circumstances. For example, if a house of worship rents a public-school building for its services, it will need to verify it is in compliance with other Texas laws regulating the carrying of firearms on school property.

CAN HOUSES OF WORSHIP PROHIBIT THE CARRY OF FIREARMS ON THEIR PREMISES?

Yes. A house of worship possesses the same right to exclude guns from its property as all other private property owners. With respect to handguns, a house of worship may prohibit a person licensed to carry a handgun by providing the type of notice required by Texas Penal Code sections 30.06 and 30.07.

