

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

STANDARD NO(S):

NYSSA CS# 33, 35-37

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REFER TO:

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## I. OBJECTIVE:

The SCSO has developed the following policies and procedures to insure that the guidelines are in place in the event an emergency should arise. To insure that all emergency situations are handled in a safe and efficient manner, the court security division shall provide all facility members with a plan of emergency preparedness. These emergency preparedness plans shall be based on the following list of priorities:

1. Safety of the general public;
2. Safety of all Judicial staff;
3. Safety of all Court Security staff;
4. Safety of all inmates;
5. Restoration of order and control;
6. Protection of property;
7. Investigation, follow-up, issuance of reports, and corrective actions.

## II. POLICY:

The Court Security division shall make every attempt to follow the emergency preparedness plan that best fits the emergency situation at hand. Emergency situations that are not addressed by the established policies and procedures shall be handled by court security in a timely and responsible manner. Court Security Officers shall use reasonable judgement based on the above list of priorities. The purpose of this policy is to insure that proper procedures are followed when department personnel and support agencies are activated for the purpose of an emergency situation.

## III. DETAILS:

### A. **Building Evacuation:**

During any emergency situations, conditions may arise which will pose an eminent danger to the individuals within the building. To insure a safe evacuation, promptly remove such individuals from the affected area(s). The

evacuation plan will be promptly put into effect. It will also be the policy, and in accordance with local building/fire codes, to have evacuation routes posted prominently throughout the building.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide all Court Security Officers with guidelines and procedures for the safe, secure, evacuation of the courthouse in an emergency that renders or will potentially render a portion, or the entire building unsafe.

1. The need for emergency evacuation is a possibility in fires, natural disasters, or in the aftermath of a disturbance. In the event one of these situations were to occur, the following is the protocol:
  - a. The officer who discovers the situation will advise the Court Security Sergeant. The Court Security Sergeant will assess the situation and ascertain if all or part of the building should be evacuated.
  - b. If it is determined that the building needs to be evacuated:
    1. The Court Security Sergeant will announce, via public address system, that all people in the building, by order of security, must leave the building at once.
    2. Court Security will direct everyone in the immediate vicinity towards the closest exit, and instruct them to gather in the park across the street to the south of the courthouse.
    3. Once it appears that everyone has left the building, Court Security Officers shall effect a floor-by-floor search of the building to insure that there is no one left in the building.
    4. If the evacuation is the result of a disturbance by people attending court, a sufficient number of Court Security Officers will remain at the location of the disturbance to maintain control. Remaining Court Security Officers shall assist with the evacuation and building search.  
  
\*See Courtroom Disturbance (this policy) for further policies and procedures relating to courtroom disturbances and evacuations.
5. At an appropriate time, Court Security shall notify the Sheriff, Under Sheriff, and Chief Deputy of the evacuation.

- c. Once the building has been deemed safe, the public and court staff shall be allowed to re-enter the building. Court Staff may enter through whichever door is most convenient for them. However, the members of the public must enter through the main door, located at on the south side of the building.

**B. Fire Alarm Activation:**

1. In the event of fire alarm activation, a warning alarm will sound and the fire beacons located throughout the building will flash a bright light.
2. Court Security will see that everyone in the building is evacuated out of the building and instruct them to assemble across the street near the sidewalk in the park located to the south of the courthouse.
3. Court Security will quickly conduct a search of the building to make sure there is no one left inside.
4. Court Security will then stand at the base of the stairs to the building, to insure that no one tries to re-enter the building, until authorized to do so.
5. Once the fire department responds, the situation will be turned over to them.
6. When, and if, the fire department deems it safe to return into the building, everyone will be allowed to re-enter.
7. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.

**C. Bomb and Hazardous Devices Threats/Incidents:**

1. It shall be the policy to regard and respond to each report of the presence of a bomb, or any type of explosive device or ordinance, as a valid and serious threat to life and/or property.
2. All staff in the building have bomb threat questionnaire cards located underneath their telephones.
3. Upon receiving a call informing them of a bomb threat, staff have been instructed to get as much of the card filled out as possible.
4. The threat is then immediately reported to Court Security, who will then evacuate the building.
5. Everyone, except the Judge, will be evacuated to the sidewalk along Routes 5 & 20, in the park across the street from the courthouse.

6. The Judge will be evacuated to the far side of the VFW Parking lot.
7. Court Security will contact the E-911 Center and request that they notify the Sheriff, Under Sheriff, and Chief Deputy, and request the response of the Emergency Response Team (ERT).
8. Court Security will also have the E-911 Center contact Waterloo Village Police Department, and advise them of the situation, and request assistance in evacuating the Main Street Elementary School, and nearby houses.
9. Court Security will secure the building until the ERT arrives on scene.
10. Once the ERT arrives, the situation will be turned over to them, and Court Security will assist the ERT as they require.
11. Once the building has been cleared by the ERT, people will be allowed to re-enter.
12. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.
13. If the situation turns out to be lengthy, alternate arrangements may need to be made for member of the public wishing to leave, and members of the facility staff. Location where the evacuees will assemble may need to be changed due to weather or other factors present at the time.

**D. Criminal Incident:**

1. Courtroom Disturbance:
  - a. In the event of a courtroom disturbance, i.e. member of the public starts the fight, goes to attack the Judge, etc., the Judge will be immediately escorted from the courtroom to his chambers by the Court Security Officer assigned to that courtroom.
  - b. Court Security will request back-up, assess the situation and act accordingly to stop the disturbance, while at the same time, insuring the safety of the Judge, Court Clerks, and the public still in the courtroom.
  - c. If there is a second Court Security Officer working the courtroom, that officer will evacuate all non-essential persons. If there is only one officer working the courtroom, then the back-up officer, upon entering courtroom, will evacuate non-essential persons, provided that the officer handling the disturbance has subject/situation under control.

- d. If there is a jury present, the second Court Security Officer (officer assigned to work the back of the courtroom) will escort the jury from the courtroom, to the jury deliberation room. Back-up officer responding to the courtroom will evacuate non-essential persons.
- e. Court Security Officers will secure witnesses and detain perpetrators according to law. Charges to be filed if warranted.
- f. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.

**2. In Case of other Safety Concerns, Threats, or Criminal Incidents:**

- a. Court Security will announce over the public address system, that employees should go into “lockdown”, that is, locking themselves in their offices until further instructed by Court Security.
- b. If an evacuation is needed, Court Security is to give these instructions over the public address system.
- c. Once the safety concerns have been addressed, Court Security will instruct the employees to return to normal business.
- d. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.

**3. Hostage Incident:**

- a. In the event of a hostage being taken within the confines of the courthouse, Court Security will be immediately notified.
- b. Court Security will immediately respond to the location of the incident and attempt to establish communication with the hostage-taker.
- c. Other Court Security Officer’s will evacuate everyone from the building who can be safely evacuated.
- d. Court Security will notify the E-911 Center and request assistance from SCSO, Waterloo PD and NYSP to establish an inner and outer perimeter. E-911 will be requested to notify the Sheriff, Under Sheriff, and Chief Deputy, and request the response of an Emergency Response Team (ERT). (See “**Administrative Notifications**”) this manual.
- e. Incident command will be turned over to the highest ranking SCSO Officer on the scene. Court Security Officers will assist in securing the Courthouse complex as directed.

- f. Court Security Officers will provide technical assistance as required by the ERT.
- g. Once the courthouse has been deemed safe by the ERT and Sheriff, or his designee, court staff and the public will be allowed to re-enter.
- h. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.

4. **Prisoner Escape:**

- a. In the event an inmate escapes from the courthouse, Court Security will immediately pursue fleeing inmate.
- b. If inmate is in the custody of a Corrections Officer, Court Security will assist that officer with pursuit of the inmate.
- c. If there is more than one inmate in custody, priority will be given to preventing additional escapes by remaining inmates.
- d. Court Security will notify the E-911 Center and request they notify the Sheriff, Under Sheriff, and Chief Deputy, and the Waterloo Police Department, of the escape and update them as necessary. (See “**Administrative Notifications**”) this manual.
- e. The Court Security Sergeant will request back-up and the assistance of additional agencies as needed, to recapture the fleeing inmate.
- f. At no time during the incident will the magnetometer/X-ray screening station be abandoned to pursue the fleeing inmate.
- g. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.

5. **Duress Alarms:**

- a. All duress alarms in the building are connected to the alarm system for the building. The alarm system keypads display the area from which the alarm was activated. There is a keypad located at the magnetometer/X-ray screening station.
- b. Upon activation of a duress alarm, Court Security will immediately respond to the location of the alarm.
- c. If necessary, Court Security will abandon the magnetometer/X-ray screening station to respond to the duress alarm.

- d. Upon arriving at the location of the alarm, Court Security will assess the nature of the alarm and react accordingly.
- e. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Unusual Occurrence” report.

**E. Emergency Medical Response:**

- 1. In the event of a medical emergency, Court Security will immediately contact the E-911 Center and request dispatch of an ambulance.
- 2. Court Security will render first aid to the injured party pursuant to that officer’s qualifications.
- 3. Court Security will remain with the injured party until the ambulance personnel arrive on scene.
- 4. The Court Security Sergeant will complete a State “Aided” report.

**F. Crowd Control:**

- 1. All disturbances will be quelled as quickly as possible with the minimum amount of force necessary to bring the situation under control.
- 2. For the purpose of this policy, disturbance is defined as an overt act by a group of two or more people that disrupts the safety, security, or good order of the facility.
- 3. In the even of a disturbance, the following procedure shall be followed:
  - a. The Court Security Officer shall call for assistance using the portable radio.
  - b. The Court Security Officer should attempt to quell the disturbance.
  - c. The Court Security Sergeant will be advised of the situation and will assess the disturbance.
- 4. If the disturbance is under control, actions to be considered are:
  - a. Have the agitator been placed in custody or separated from the crowd?
  - b. Does anyone require medical treatment?
  - c. Does anyone need to be moved to different locations?

- d. Do court appearances need to be rescheduled?
  - e. Does any property of the courthouse need to be repaired/replaced after the disturbance?
  - f. Is an arrest warranted?
  - g. Have proper reports been completed?
5. If the disturbance is not under control, the following actions shall be taken:
- a. Court Security Sergeant shall order the “lock-down” of the facility. All movements and any ongoing proceedings shall cease.
  - b. The Court Security Sergeant will instruct the Court Security Officer at the magnetometer station to contact the E-911 Center requesting additional assistance from any law enforcement officer available. The E-911 Center shall also be requested to notify the Sheriff, Under Sheriff, and Chief Deputy of the situation.
  - c. As additional assistance arrives, the facility perimeter shall first be secured with remaining Court Security Officers assembled to organize defensive measures to contain the disturbance.
  - d. Should the officers assembled not be considered sufficient to effectively control the disturbance, additional personnel will be requested.
  - e. When forces are considered sufficient to regain control, everyone shall be briefed on how the plan will be accomplished.
  - f. Upon gaining control of the situation, all reports shall be completed, and appropriate arrests affected.

**G. Physical Security:**

- 1. Perimeter Security:
  - a. All doors to the facility are locked during non-business hours. During business hours, only the main entrance door is unlocked and is the location of the magnetometer/X-ray screening station, and is manned by Court Security during all business hours.
  - b. All windows into the building are locked at ALL times.



- c. An alarm system is set up on all doors, and motion sensors set up inside the doors.
- d. Video surveillance is maintained at the magnetometer/X-ray screening station during all business hours.

**2. Perimeter Lighting:**

- a. The perimeter of the building is equipped with exterior lighting on all 3 sides of the building (4<sup>th</sup> side of the building is attached to another building).

**3. Internal Restricted Area Security:**

- a. The areas within the building that are restricted are:
  - 1. Basement hallways, electrical room, elevator and elevator room, communications room (telephone, internet connections), District Attorney's office, and storage rooms.
  - 2. First floor court offices, back hallway, mail room, elevator, and storage rooms.
  - 3. Second floor back hallway, Court Reporter offices, Judges' chambers, Law Library, elevator, and storage rooms.
- b. **The areas within the building that are not restricted are:**
  - 1. First floor main entrance, lobby outside Supreme/County, Surrogates, and Family Court Offices, Family Courtroom, and Support Courtroom, and restrooms.
  - 2. Second floor Supreme and County Courtroom, Drug Court Coordinator's office, Custody and Visitation Mediation office, IDVI Coordinator's office, Grand Jury room.
  - 3. There are no public access areas in the basement.
- c. All restricted areas of the building are controlled either by locked doors at all access points to these restricted areas. One door, located near the magnetometer/X-ray screening station is operated by an electrical release lock, operated by Court Security at that station.

**4. Interior Lighting, Halls, Stairways, Lobbies:**

- a. Lights in all public (to include all lobbies, hallways, and stairways) and restricted areas of the building are powered on during all business hours of the day to provide adequate lighting for safe travel throughout the building.
- b. Functionality of the lights is maintained by the Seneca County Maintenance Department and inspected on a regular basis.

5. **Auxiliary Lighting and Power:**

- a. In the event of a power outage, all areas of the building are equipped with battery-powered emergency lighting.
- b. The status of these emergency lights, and the status of the batteries operating them, is monitored by the Seneca County Maintenance Department on a monthly basis.

6. **Alarm Systems:**

- a. Fire Alarms:
  - 1. There are manually operated fire alarms located throughout the courthouse.
  - 2. There are smoke/heat detectors installed throughout the courthouse.
- b. Intrusion Alarms:
  - 1. All doors to the building are equipped with electronic alarms and motion sensors just inside the doors during non-business hours.
  - 2. Magnetically sealed door near the District Attorney's office in basement.
- c. Duress Alarms:
  - 1. Push button duress alarms are located in the Support Courtroom, Family Courtroom, and Supreme/County Courtroom.
  - 2. These alarms are tested, at minimum, annually.

7. **Key Control:**

- a. The doors throughout the facility are locked with different locks depending on what area of the building that door grants access to.

- b. Key access to those areas is restricted by the level of access keys issued to personnel have.
- c. The elevator is key-controlled.
- d. Issuance of keys is controlled by the Security Supervisor of the building (Chief Clerk-Supreme/County court).

**8. Circulation Patterns:**

- a. Judiciary:
  - 1. Judiciary entering the building can access the building through the back door by key, then take the elevator up to second floor to access the Judge's chambers.
  - 2. Visiting judges can enter through the back door by activating the intercom system and identifying themselves. Court Security, or other court personnel can then meet up with the Judge in the basement and bring him/her up in the elevator to the visiting Judge's chambers.
  - 3. The Judge can then access the court offices and courtrooms via the secured hallways throughout the building.
- b. Employees:
  - 1. Employees are issued keys to enter the building through the back door.
  - 2. Employees also have the option of presenting valid I.D. at the magnetometer/X-ray screening station to bypass the screening process and access the secured areas of the building through an electronically released locked door operated by Security.
  - 3. Employees are then free to move about the building through the restricted and/or public areas of the building.
- c. Public:
  - 1. The public can only enter the building through the main entrance of the building, and undergoing the screening process.
  - 2. Only exceptions to above, is in the case of a handicapped individual requiring the elevator. In this

case, the individual will be escorted by Court Security from the handicap entrance, to the elevator, and back to the public access area to which that person needs to go.

3. Public access will be limited to the lobbies and hallways outside the courtrooms, and to the courtrooms themselves.

d. Prisoners:

1. Prisoner access to the building will be limited to the same areas accessible by the public.
2. On rare occasions, prisoners may be allowed to be escorted through restricted areas due to jury trial considerations requested/ordered by the Judge.

**9. Evacuation Routes:**

- a. Evacuation routes will be established for all areas of the building.
- b. Physical layout maps that depict the primary and secondary evacuation routes from the area in which the map is posted, shall be posted prominently throughout the building.

**10. Fire Protection:**

- a. The fire alarms, smoke/heat detectors mentioned above are located throughout the building.
- b. Fire extinguishers are located on every floor and in several locations throughout the building.
- c. The fire extinguishers are clearly marked with placards and instructions written on the doors on how to access them.
- d. The Seneca County Maintenance Dept. monitors the condition of the fire extinguishers every month, to insure that they all meet applicable fire codes.

**11. Parking:**

- a. Judiciary and Employees have reserved parking in 2 locations:
  1. Behind the building, on the North side, along the railroad tracks, with easy access to the back door.

2. In front of the old Seneca County Correctional Facility,  
on South side
- b. For security purposes, the Judge's reserved parking space is the  
one located closest to the back door.
- c. Reserved parking on the south side of the old Seneca County  
Correctional Facility for inmate receiving.
- d. Public parking is available in the parking lot to the east of the  
old Seneca County Correctional Facility and in the VFW  
parking lot located to the northeast of the courthouse.  
Handicapped parking is available on the west side of the  
building near the District Attorney's office.

**H. Physical Security Survey:**

1. The Court Security Sergeant will conduct an on-site physical security  
survey annually.
2. This survey will be based on the standardized National Sheriffs'  
Association sample courthouse physical security survey document.
3. A copy of this survey shall be kept on file with the SCSO and changes  
and improvements as a result of the survey shall be documented and  
kept on file.