

New Church Legislation

SB 2065 - Volunteer Church Security Teams

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On June 15, 2017, Governor Abbott signed into law SB 2065. One of the provisions in SB2065 was a section, which eliminates the requirement that churches need to use either state certified law enforcement officers or state licensed security officers for church security.

Starting on September 1, 2017, churches can deploy a volunteer armed church security team without the need of any licenses or training. While some church leadership are celebrating this decision, church members and their leadership may want to take a hard look at some of the unintended consequences of this change in the law.

Due to the limits of this article, we will only be able to hit some of the issues that churches will need to address in deploying an un-licensed security team. These issues include, but not limited to the following:

- Screening of team members
- Training of team members
- Supervision of team members
- Corporate & personal liability of team members

Screening

The new law eliminates the requirement for individuals wanting to perform security to have any screening (background check/mental fitness) prior to being entrusted with the safety and security of the church property and members.

Training

A church is considered private property. The church can give permission to an individual to carry a weapon on their private property (without the

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members knowing) without any training requirements (i.e. Legal Authority, Use of Force, etc.) and even the requirement for that individual to have a License to Carry (LTC).

Supervision

The supervision for this private, volunteer security team will now fall under the responsibility of the church leaders. Some individual(s) will be required to maintain supervision of the various team members and will need to ensure any and all incidents are properly handled and recorded/reported to various entities (insurance companies, law enforcement, attorneys, etc.)

Liabilities (Corporate and Personal)

The liability issues facing a church and its leadership should be only made after receiving professional consultation from their legal advisors, insurance representatives and a church security consultant. Making a decision to take advantage of the changes in this law could put the church and its leadership in a position of both corporate and personally liability.

The authors of this article are the co-founders of Christian Defense & Safety Solutions, LLC, an East Texas based non-profit (501c) ministry whose main mission is to educate and train church communities seeking to educate, train, and defend their places of worship. For more information please go to <http://www.christiandefenseandsafety.com> or The Smith County Baptist Association.