



April 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Faith-Based Community:

The ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has temporarily altered our daily activities. People are rightly practicing social distancing to limit community spread, in line with the *President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America*.

Many houses of worship have also suspended or significantly reduced services to avoid mass gatherings. Although many people undoubtedly continue to practice their faith, including through remote services and prayer, most are inevitably eager to return to normalcy and join their fellow congregants in practicing their faiths. The American people are resilient, and we will achieve this goal soon.

When you begin efforts to reconstitute services and welcome congregants back into your houses of worship, please also review your security plans and ensure procedures are in place to protect your facilities and visitors. Although there are no imminent or credible threats at this time, there has been an increase in online hate speech intended to encourage violence or use the ongoing situation as an excuse to spread hatred.

Additionally, stressors caused by the pandemic may contribute to an individual's decision to commit an attack or influence their target of choice. Again, we have no information to suggest such attacks are imminent or even likely, instead we are looking to provide you with useful information for planning for restoration of normal operations, whenever that may be.

As I mentioned in my February 2019 letter to the Faith-Based Community, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to supporting your efforts to maintain safe and secure houses of worship and related facilities while sustaining an open and welcoming environment. In partnership with entities such as the DHS Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives and the Faith-Based Information Sharing and Analysis Organization, we provide resources that assist in securing physical and cyber infrastructure.

Through CISA's Hometown Security program (<https://www.cisa.gov/hometown-security>), a multitude of resources are available to support risk mitigation decision-making. These resources include training, tools, exercises, and other materials focused on a wide range of threats (e.g., bombing, active shooter, vehicle ramming, etc.) and other resources relating to behavioral indicator detection. Also, CISA has a nationwide presence with our field personnel, including Protective Security Advisors, that can help you enhance your security through assessments, exercises, training, and other efforts. To find out more about your regional CISA team, please contact CISAServiceDesk@cisa.dhs.gov.

Thank you again for everything you do to champion the American people's Constitutional First Amendment rights, as well as your leadership in keeping our houses of worship safe and secure. You have a committed partner in DHS who is steadfast in ensuring you have the resources to enhance your security programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Harrell".

Brian Harrell

Assistant Director for Infrastructure Security