

UPDATED JUNE 2023

SAFETY POLICIES - FIRST UU SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON

Introduction: Safety as an Aspect of Covenant

FUUSB's Safety Policies derive from Society members' covenantal relationship with one another, with the Society's neighbors and the surrounding community of Burlington. Implementing these policies demonstrates our commitment to Unitarian Universalist principles and to radical welcoming.¹

- a. Throughout these policies, our focus on safety is grounded in FUUSB's Congregational Covenant.² That Covenant will be referenced in membership programs, worship, faith development, as well as congregational meetings.
- b. Our Covenant with the Community includes a commitment to view the Meeting House and grounds as a community resource. Regular annual events (i.e. Christmas breakfast, 4th of July picnic) will be offered when possible.
 - i. In times of local, national or global crisis, FUUSB will strive to offer open access to the Sanctuary when appropriate and safe.
- c. Society programs will prioritize access for all.

The purpose of these policies is to guide FUUSB staff and lay leaders in creating and managing programs that guard the physical, psychological and spiritual safety of all: members and friends (adults, children & youth); neighbors, tenants, and visitors to Society buildings and grounds.

Building & Grounds Safety and Security³

- a. Philosophy
 - i. We strive to be a welcoming space that prioritizes both safety AND radical welcome in our buildings and on our grounds.
 - ii. We will provide safety training and support to staff and lay leaders.
 - iii. We will strive for openness and transparency, while respecting individuals' confidentiality, when communicating with FUUSB members

¹ "The policies and procedures we put in place allow us to be a better version of ourselves: open and affirming faith communities who hold each other in covenant and love. At the same time, these policies and procedures take the safety of our buildings, our people, and our communities seriously. At their best, our safety policies are an embodiment of our covenant with each other." - [from UUA.org](#) - need URL

² [Our Congregational Covenant - First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington \(uusociety.org\)](#)

³ <https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/building-security>

regarding significant safety concerns. Our goal is to improve safety throughout the Society by raising awareness.

d. Security Systems

- i. Effective security systems (entry alarms, security cameras, smoke alarms, entry codes, etc.) will be installed, maintained, and in use throughout FUUSB buildings at all times.
- ii. The Facilities Manager and Director of Operations will ensure that all building staff, security volunteers, and anyone with an entry code are trained in current security procedures.

e. Safety management: congregational events, interaction with public

- i. FUUSB staff will establish and maintain collaborative relationships with municipal offices and agencies such as the Howard Center Street Outreach Team, Church St. Marketplace, Burlington Police Department, etc.
- ii. Exterior doors will remain locked unless there is security staff present. Inside room doors will remain locked whenever the space is not in use.
- iii. Security Staff, whether paid or volunteer, will go through training. All events open to the public will have no fewer than two Security Staff on duty.
- iv. Snow & Ice Removal. A snow removal company will be hired to remove snow from the parking lots and sidewalks. Facilities and/or Security staff will strive to maintain snow and ice free sidewalks, steps, ramps, and parking lots to the best of their ability.
- v. Vandalism. All acts of vandalism will be reported to the Facilities Manager who will assess the damage and make referrals to the city graffiti task force, police, or insurance company as appropriate.

2. **Accessibility**

By valuing a spectrum of abilities, we only add to our collective richness and diversity. Universal Access is the philosophy that all resources should be designed for all people, regardless of ability, economic status, race, gender, ethnic background or sexual orientation. FUUSB will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of our physical meeting house, communications, and online presence including remote access to virtual worship services, events, and meetings as we strive to move towards Universal Access.

3. Physical access to FUUSB buildings will be barrier free to all persons; remote access to worship and other public programs will be available. Information on programs open to the public will be available through uusociety.org; information on programs for Society members and friends will be communicated via regular congregational communications.
 - a. One designated point person will act as FUUSB access coordinator who can be easily contacted and respond to access questions and requests. The point person's contact information will be made clear on all public-facing communications in print and online. Reasonable accommodations will be made to the best of our Society's ability.
 - b. Livestream access will be available for Sunday worship services in the sanctuary.
 - i. Sound amplification will be used for all services and programs in the sanctuary, and for group gatherings inside and outside, as-needed at discretion of staff.⁴
 - ii. Assistive listening devices will be consistently available in the sanctuary
 - c. Remote access will be available for group meetings and Faith Development offerings as determined by staff and lay leaders, and will include closed captioning. Staff and group leaders will make use of remote meeting options to increase access and conserve energy.
 - d. Accessible restrooms are available on the first floor and lower levels of the meeting house; lower level restrooms are also gender neutral.
 - e. FUUSB will encourage a fragrance-free environment and take consistent measures to consider food allergies.
 - f. FUUSB will take seriously the work of protecting the health and safety of vulnerable persons while engaged with congregational life, physically at the meeting house, at a FUUSB event, and while participating online.

4. Health & Safety

- a. The Society will offer training for First Aid, CPR, AED, Overdose Response to all staff whose job descriptions require it.

⁴note from Melissa Sallee on hearing assistance, services for visually impaired: I don't think FUUSB is ready to outline this further until there are access workshops to train staff how to present information more accessibly. Besides amplification devices, there aren't other practices currently in place such as "open captioning" and integrated visual descriptions.

- b. The Society will hold a Sunday morning Fire Drill at least once per year. Security Staff will be trained on responsibilities for alarms at other times.
- c. Active Shooter, other Violent Threats: Staff and key volunteers will be trained in specific response strategies no less than once a year.^{5 6}
- d. Weapons and illegal drugs, including but not limited to firearms and explosives, are not permitted at Society functions or on Society property at any time.
- e. The Society will communicate and urge compliance with public health protocols, including but not limited to pandemic/epidemic protocols and natural disasters.

5. Financial Safety

- a. Financial Safeguards are included in Board Policies section IV. Executive Limitations (ref. Sections D, E, F)
- b. [Financial Policies & Procedures](#) will be maintained by the Director of Operations & Finance, and reviewed annually by the Treasurer and Finance Team.
- c. Financial Controls / Procedures⁷

6. Children and Youth

- a. Faith Development programs for children and youth will employ preventative measures and delineate guidelines on appropriate behavior with children and youth in all Society functions.
- b. Training for Faith Development teachers, advisors and childcare staff will include information on child abuse protection, including child sexual abuse.^{8 9} Faith Development procedures will detail processes to respond to concerns or allegations about inappropriate behavior or abuse.
- c. Faith Development will collect and maintain information to accommodate youth and children's special health needs, i.e. allergies.
- d. [Children's Faith Development Safety Procedures](#), will be maintained by the Director of Faith Development.

⁵ Most active shooter situations are over within 2 - 5 minutes, which makes it difficult to pre-determine any exact protocol. The best response, according to FEMA, [Active Shooter Answer Key](#), is Run, Hide, Fight.

⁶ [Active Shooter and Lockdown Situations](#)

⁷ <https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/checklists/financial-controls>

⁸ <https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/safety-for-re>

⁹ <https://www.uua.org/safe/youth>

7. Responding to allegations of sexual and physical abuse¹⁰

The Society will maintain updated procedures on responding to concerns or reports of sexual or physical abuse - involving children and youth in Faith Development programs, and of any individual congregant. Concerns may be raised by anyone in the Society; credible allegations will be referred to the Response Team.¹¹

- a. 'Response Team' – includes Senior Minister, Dir of Operations & Finance, Director of Lifespan Faith Development, plus two other members appointed by the Board of Trustees.

8. Employee Misconduct

Misconduct by a minister or other staff member will not be tolerated at FUUSB. Specific violations will be detailed in the FUUSB Employee Handbook, and in the Letter of Agreement between the Society and its Minister(s).

¹⁰ [Sexually Safer Congregations](#)

¹¹ Detailed procedures for the Response Team will be reviewed and finalized with Rev. Karen G. Johnston in 2023-24 congregational year. Response Team processes to be linked here, but not included in these Policies in full.