

Forming a Courthouse Security Committee

The 85th Texas Legislature enacted the ~~more uniform and comprehensive legislation~~. The Act requires judges to establish a court security committee. This document outlines the purpose of the court security committee and offers recommendations to assist court security committees in improving the safety of the courthouse for judges, staff, and the public.

Who Should be on the Courthouse Security Committee?

Municipal Committee

The committee must include the presiding judge, or the presiding judge's designee, who serves as presiding officer of the committee; a representative of the law enforcement agency or other entity that provides the primary security for the court; a representative of the municipality; and any other person the committee determines necessary to assist the committee, such as a city council member or court administrator. [Government Code, Sec. ~~29.014~~ & ~~29.009, (b)-(d)~~]

County Committee

The committee must include the local administrative district judge, or the judge's designee, who serves as presiding officer of the committee; a representative of the sheriff's office; a representative of the county commissioners court; one judge of each type of court in the county other than a municipal court or a municipal court of record; a representative of any county attorney's office, district attorney's office, or criminal district attorney's office that serves in the applicable courts; and any other person the committee determines necessary to assist the committee, such as a court administrator. In multi-county districts, the establishment of multiple committees should be considered. [Government Code, Sec. ~~29.014~~ & ~~29.009, (b)-(d)~~]

What Does the Committee Need to Do?

Security committees are required to establish security policies and procedures for the courts. A committee may recommend to the governing body the uses of resources and expenditures of money for funds.

A committee may find the following activities helpful in their efforts to improve judicial and courthouse security.

- ① Designate committee member(s) responsible for conducting or overseeing a courthouse security assessment and an assessment of judges' personal security.
- ② Review assessment results and prioritize policy needs.
- ③ Support the implementation of no-cost policy changes.
- ④ Identify critical physical improvements.
- ⑤ Prioritize physical improvements based on identified needs and available resources.
- ⑥ Regularly review implementation of policy changes and physical improvements.
- ⑦ Provide an ongoing forum for the sharing of information among stakeholders, as appropriate, regarding judicial and courthouse security needs and issues.