

In addition to the local task forces, the NCATF has an operations team in Washington staffed by special agents of the ATF and the FBI and prosecutors on detail from the United States Attorney's Offices around the nation and from the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division. The director of this operations team is a senior experienced prosecutor. This team works with the local task forces to investigate incidents as well as prosecute cases and analyze potential connections among incidents. Due to the high priority of these matters, many federal cases are prosecuted jointly by an NCATF prosecutor and an Assistant United States Attorney.

The expertise of the FBI in conducting civil rights investigations and the expertise of ATF in conducting arson investigations, particularly in making cause and origin determinations, has proven highly beneficial to the success of the NCATF.

The NCATF has taken the following steps in carrying out its responsibilities:

- **Investigative Protocol.** The NCATF has established a protocol for its investigations and prosecutions. This protocol sets forth procedures for immediately exchanging information among task force agencies, developing an investigative plan for each incident, and ensuring that investigators pursue all lines of inquiry, including whether the crime was motivated by race or religion, and whether any given incident is connected to any other.
- **Unified Database.** The NCATF has created a database of statistical information about ongoing investigations. The ATF and FBI databases and computer systems are also used in Task Force operations to track and analyze evidence about attacks on houses of worship and to generate investigative leads.
- **Training.** In late summer and early fall, the NCATF conducted training among its constituent agencies. ATF experts trained FBI agents and Department of Justice prosecutors in arson investigations. Civil Rights Division prosecutors and FBI experts trained ATF agents in civil rights investigations and prosecutions.
- **Tip Line.** The NCATF established a toll-free tip line for citizens to report information on church arsons. That toll free number is 1-888 -ATF-FIRE. To date, NCATF has received more than 1200 calls through that service. The ATF and FBI also are offering rewards for information in a number of arson cases.
- **Threat Assessment Guide.** The NCATF updated and distributed a Church Threat Assessment Guide containing valuable information on the steps that may be taken to prevent fires at houses of worship and the steps to follow after an incident has occurred. Working with FEMA, the Task Force has distributed over 300,000 of these booklets.