



Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

As a church, we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church and its premises.

We also know that, as an employer, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law, including a written health and safety policy. As such, we have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at work etc. Act 1974.

Our policy is to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregations, visitors or others who may use our premises. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Church Council accepts its overall responsibility for this health and safety policy. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will appoint a member of the Church Council or staff to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation. We will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals. We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays their part in its implementation.

Further detail about our church operations and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept in the church and made available to others on request.

This Health and Safety Policy applies to all church and church-sponsored activities. The **Soup Kitchen** and **Latchcourt clients** and **World Food Market traders** are required to have their own Health and Safety policies and to abide by them. The **Cold Weather Shelter (C4WS)**, though a church-sponsored activity, has its own Health and Safety policy which we follow for that program.



Organisation and Responsibilities

1. The member of the Church Council and/or staff with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is the Senior Minister (Rev. Jennifer Mills-Knutsen).

They will ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained.
- Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained.
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately.
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests.
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary.
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained.
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

2. The Business Manager (Monty Strikes) and the Associate Minister (Rev. Jared Jagers) have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy.

They will ensure that:

- All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities.
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments.
- Adequate information and training are provided for those that need it.
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible.
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger.
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy.
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

3. All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.

They will ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them.
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others.
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures.
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with.



- Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards.
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely.
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so.
- Report any accident.
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks.

General Arrangements

Risk Assessment

We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, implementing and necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

The Business Manager completes an annual risk assessment for general property matters and routine hazards. The Associate Pastor completes risk assessments for individual church activities, in accord with safeguarding procedures.

Information and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of first aid arrangements. We will provide relevant information for employees and volunteers.

Our first aid boxes can be found in the following locations:

1. Office Bookshelf
2. Outside Conference Room
3. Production Office
4. Reception Shelf Unit
5. Outside Soup Kitchen
6. Upper Vestibule
7. Creche Sink Area
8. Children's Worship Centre



They are checked monthly by receptionist staff to make sure that supplies are complete and within date.

The Business Manager is in charge of first aid arrangements. Our Business Manager and all receptionists are trained as first aid providers, available to respond to any incident in the building.

The Soup Kitchen, Cold Weather Shelter and Latchcourt clients follow their own First Aid protocols and training regimen, and they are responsible for their own First Aid needs. Church staff and supplies are available as additional support if needed.

Accident Reporting

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Our Accident Book is kept at the Reception Desk in a locked drawer to ensure data protection.

Monitoring

We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make.

Contractors

If we employ contractors, we make sure that they have their own health and safety policy and Public and Employers Liability insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents. Those that require a Risk Assessment Method Statement must provide this to the Business Manager in advance of beginning work.

Record Keeping

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept on file at the Reception Desk.

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will then implement and plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (for example, building contractors). We will keep records of the annual checks, assessments and plans we have made.



Building

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe in line with a quinquennial inspection. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable, bearing in mind that consultation with the Thames North Trust of the United Reformed Church may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

Candle Use

The use of candles is limited to the sanctuary, and only during times of worship.

We will purchase slow-burning candles from liturgical suppliers for regular use on the altar. Occasionally, tea lights, votives or pillar candles may be used, but these are limited to special services.

All candles are lit only for the duration of the worship service, and extinguished at the conclusion of the service and before the sanctuary is closed. Candles must be kept clear of all combustible materials including flammable decorations, foliage and electrical equipment.

The use of hand-held candles is strictly limited. We will use only candles made for this purpose and with proper slide-on card drip trays. At any service where hand-held candles are used, there will be a verbal announcement reminding the congregation that children should be properly supervised, of fire extinguisher and exit locations, and of caretaking to ensure that individuals do not stand too close together and, in particular, not too close behind one another as there is a risk of both clothing and hair being set alight.

Fire extinguishers are available throughout the sanctuary, and extra water buckets available when hand-held candles are used.

Construction Work

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliance is maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

Events

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.



Fire

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect they are no longer valid.

Hazardous Substances

Commercial cleaning products are only used by specialized personnel, and they are stored in a separate, locked chemical store room. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions, taking any necessary precautions that are specified.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that any oil or gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected as soon as possible and we will keep records of the checks made.

Lifting Equipment

We will ensure that our stair lift is properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person. We will keep records of the checks made.

Manual Handling

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as trolleys) or other precautions, including team lifting.

Oil and Gas Storage

Where we store large quantities of oil, we will take adequate precautions to ensure that oil cannot leak into the ground or any water course. This includes regular checks and proper maintenance. We require any propane tanks to be locked in an appropriate secure cage when not in use.

Preparation of Food

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, we use a clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste.



Slips and Trips and Falls

We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as handrails or lighting) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

Terrorism

We recognize that any gathering open to the public can be a target for terrorist action, and we aim to mitigate this risk to the best of our abilities. All doors remain locked during the week, and CCTV is in operation. Anytime the doors are open for a public event, special security is required, whether volunteer or paid, as governed by our Sanctuary Security Policy. We consult regularly with the anti-terrorist unit of the Metropolitan Police about any known threats against Places of Worship or the American community.

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Ladders and other equipment is checked before each use to ensure it remains in safe working condition.

Working Alone

We will identify circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety, as stated in our Lone Working Policy.

Working at Height

Where possible, we will try to avoid the need for work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

*This policy was adapted from a template provided at www.ecclesiastical.com/healthandsafety.