



# Health & Safety Policy

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St. --- Team Parish  
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## **Contents**

Introduction .....	2
Health & Safety Policy Scope.....	2
The Red File System.....	2
Health & Safety at St. Stephen’s .....	3
Risk Assessment .....	4
Fire Safety .....	4
Electrical Safety .....	5
First Aid.....	5
Personal Safety.....	6
Lone Working .....	6
During the Hours of Darkness .....	6
Dealing with Threats.....	7
Working At Height.....	7
Trips And Slips – Hazards Underfoot .....	8
Stairways (St. [REDACTED]’s and St. [REDACTED]s Only).....	8
Hazardous Substances .....	8
Asbestos.....	9
Glass .....	9
Plant and Machinery .....	9
Gas-powered heating plant (including LPG heaters).....	9
Portable Electrical Appliances .....	10
Ladders & Steps.....	10
Tools .....	10
Manual Handling.....	10
Emergency Procedures.....	11
Appointed Persons Responsible for Health & Safety.....	11
Timescale .....	11
PCC Resolution .....	11

## **Introduction**

This Policy sets out how the PCC intends to meet its responsibilities under the Health & Safety At Work, Etc. Act 1976 to ensure the safety of all staff, volunteers and visitors using its premises.

In this Policy the word “Employer” means the PCC and the word “Employee” means all staff and volunteers working in any of the four churches, whether or not they are paid for the work they do. The Policy is accompanied by Notes which give fuller information on all the aspects covered, and supported by the Red Files which hold the documentation which demonstrates each church’s compliance with the various Regulations.

In a nutshell, the PCC is required by law to take all reasonable measures to prevent accidents or ill-health arising from work activities taking place within its premises, to provide adequate training to ensure that employees can do their work safely, to provide certain information about health and safety and to ensure that both the procedures and the equipment necessary to deal with emergencies are in place. The PCC also has to protect members of the public from coming to harm within its premises.

Employees are responsible for ensuring their own health and safety and that of those around them. This means they must comply with health and safety guidance such as that set out in the Policy, participate in any training required, report anything which they feel is unsafe or any accidents which occur, and never interfere with or damage any equipment which is provided for health and safety purposes.

The Policy should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant and comprehensive, and formally adopted at each Annual General Meeting of the PCC.

## **Health & Safety Policy Scope**

The Health & Safety Policy is based upon Risk Assessments carried out at each of the four churches and covers the day-to-day activities of those churches such as services and meetings, cleaning and maintenance, tourist visits, church groups and activities conducted on the premises by third party organisations.

There may be occasions in the future when an event which is not covered, such as a firework display or a charity abseiling event, is proposed. If this happens then the event organisers must take professional health and safety advice and carry out a thorough Risk Assessment before proceeding.

Nothing in the Policy absolves third party organisations of their obligations under the Health & Safety At Work, Etc., Act 1974 (or any other legal obligations) and these organisations must ensure that they meet the legal requirements in respect of their own activities.

## **The Red File System**

Each Church is provided with a Red File in which to store documents which relate to Health and Safety and to general building management matters. This Red File – which also contains a CD-ROM packed with useful resources and links to sources of further information and guidance – should be stored in a safe place. The Red File is divided into numbered sections and indexed so it should be clear where to find relevant documents when required.

**Health & Safety at St. Stephen's**

<b>The Health &amp; Safety Poster is displayed:</b>	IN THE VESTRY
<b>The Fire Action Poster(s) is / are displayed:</b>	IN THE MAIN ENTRANCE LOBBY
<b>The First Aid Box is situated:</b>	IN THE KITCHEN, ON THE WALL TO THE IMMEDIATE RIGHT OF THE DOOR
<b>The Appointed Person responsible for First Aid is:</b>	[REDACTED] Telephone no [REDACTED]
<b>The First Aiders are:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>The Accident Book is located:</b>	IN THE PLANT ROOM
<b>A Copy of the in-force Certificate of Employer's Liability Insurance is displayed:</b>	IN THE VESTRY
<b>The Red File is located:</b>	IN THE PLANT ROOM
<b>The Person with Overall Responsibility for Health &amp; Safety at this Church is:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>This Policy is due for Review</b>	APRIL 2013 then every 12 months, or sooner if circumstances change.

**HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE PHONE NUMBER FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND ILL HEALTH AT WORK UNDER RIDDOR: 0845 300 9923.**

## **Risk Assessment**

Risk Assessments were carried out at each Church in late March / early April 2012, copies are stored in Section 01-03 of the Red File.

Risk Assessments are a legal requirement and they must be kept up-to-date. They must be reviewed annually.

A new Risk Assessment needs to be carried out whenever there is a substantial change such as the opening of a new building extension, the start of a new ministry area, the pregnancy of an employee or an increased number of disabled people using the facilities.

## **Fire Safety**

Risk Assessments were carried out during August 2011 (St. [REDACTED]'s) and March / April 2012 (St. [REDACTED]'s, St. [REDACTED]'s and St. [REDACTED]'s), copies are stored in Section 02-03 of the Red File.

Each church is to be provided with an audible means of raising the alarm in the case of a fire. At St. [REDACTED]'s this will be the existing Fire Alarm system, elsewhere Manual Rotary Bells are to be installed during May 2012.

Emergency lighting (where fitted) is to be tested once a month for correct operation and the results of the test recorded in the Red File. A full service of emergency lighting is to be carried out annually at each church where it is fitted.

Fire fighting equipment is to be stored and used appropriately. It is a criminal offence to tamper with fire safety equipment. Any discharge or use of a fire extinguisher should be noted and the extinguisher refilled without delay. Fire fighting equipment at each church is to be serviced annually. Fire extinguishers are NEVER to be used as door props.

Fire exit signage is to be upgraded to meet the latest standards during May 2012. Self-illuminating signage will be provided where no emergency lighting exists.

A poster outlining the actions to be taken in the event of a fire shall be displayed at each entrance to each church.

Where candles or naked lights are used these must be supervised at all times and never left unattended. Care must be taken to ensure that all such items are properly and completely extinguished before the building is closed.

The correct use of electrical appliances (see below) is a crucial element of fire safety and therefore the electrical safety guidelines are to be followed at all times by all building users.

The build-up of junk and clutter evident in some locations is not just a sign of poor housekeeping – it is a fire risk and therefore the premises should be kept tidy and free of clutter.

## **Electrical Safety**

Each church shall have a five-yearly electrical safety inspection carried out by a competent electrician. Any defects found in the course of this inspection shall be rectified within the timescales laid down on the EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report).

Each church shall have its Portable Appliances tested for electrical safety every two years and a sticker confirming the test result affixed to each appliance. Any appliance failing the test shall immediately be removed for repair or disposal. A register of portable appliances shall be maintained in Section 03 of the Red File.

No appliance which does not have an in-force PAT Test sticker shall be connected to the mains in any church at any time. The exceptions are laptop and mobile phone battery chargers for short-term supervised use and equipment which has been purchased brand new for the church not having first been used elsewhere.

Portable appliances should be visually checked before use for signs of any damage to the power lead (“flex”) or casing. If there is any, the appliance must not be used. Turn off immediately any appliance which smells of burning in use. Never allow vacuum cleaner bags to become overfull, this can cause the motor to overheat and catch fire.

“Block” type plug adaptors used to connect multiple plugs into one mains socket are DANGEROUS and are not to be used in the churches under any circumstances. “Lead” type four-way adaptors are permitted provided they are equipped with a Residual Current Device or some other means of fault protection. They must be presented for PAT Testing every two years and included in the Portable Appliance Register.

“Coil” type extension leads must be fully uncoiled before connecting to the mains. Under no circumstances must such a lead ever be used whilst coiled: this is a serious fire risk.

Extension leads and adaptors must not be connected together at any time or in any combination. This presents the risk of overloading the mains circuit and could potentially cause a fire.

All electrical appliances and switches must be turned OFF before the building is vacated (there are one or two obvious exceptions such as fridges and alarms) in order to minimise the risk of fire and to prevent the wastage of energy.

## **First Aid**

Each church shall nominate one Appointed Person who will be legally responsible for the administration of First Aid at that church. The Appointed Person may be assisted by additional First Aiders as deemed necessary.

The Appointed Person and any First Aiders shall be in possession of a valid HSE-accredited Emergency First Aid At Work certificate; the training course for this shall be provided at the PCC’s expense. The certificates will be kept in Section 4 of the Red File.

Each church shall be provided with a First Aid Kit which complies with BS8599-1. The Appointed Person is responsible for keeping an inventory of the contents and ensuring that they are replenished when necessary.

A poster shall be displayed giving details of the Appointed Person, any other First Aiders and the location of the First Aid Kit.

## **Personal Safety**

The PCC takes the personal safety of its employees very seriously. Three specific circumstances have been identified in which there may be a heightened degree of risk to personal safety: lone working, (un)locking premises during the hours of darkness and dealing with threats. If lone working or the locking / unlocking of premises during the hours of darkness can be avoided then they should be. Practically, however, this is not always possible, especially during the winter months when it is dark for up to 16 hours per day.

All personnel should therefore familiarise themselves with and follow the following guidance:

### **Lone Working**

If working alone in church cannot be avoided then following these tips will minimise any risks associated with lone working:

- Make sure somebody else knows where you are and what time you expect to finish.
- Lock yourself in. Keep the key with you in case you need to exit the building quickly!
- Keep your mobile phone charged up so you can ring out in the event of difficulty.
- Have someone ring you every couple of hours to check you are all right.
- Do not carry out any potentially dangerous activities, such as working at height, whilst you are working alone.

### **During the Hours of Darkness**

Locking the church at night after a meeting or service (or unlocking it before one) is a time of extra vulnerability and so it is recommended that, wherever possible, the person with the keys is accompanied to minimise the risk of assault.

The risk of assault can be reduced by following this simple advice:

- If arriving by car, park as close as possible to the door to minimise the distance walked to / from the door.
- Consider carrying a personal attack alarm or a whistle, or using a service such as Panic Guard which uses GPS to monitor your location and personal safety.
- Have the correct keys ready in advance so as to minimise time spent at the door.
- Make sure someone knows where you are and what you are doing.
- If you are worried about someone outside the building, stay inside and telephone for assistance.

Good lighting discourages those of dishonest intent from hanging round so external lights should always be well maintained and hiding places should be removed where possible (bushes or shrubs near entrance / exit doors for example) or made harder to access (chained-off or gated).

## Dealing with Threats

The risk of a personal threat is reduced by projecting an atmosphere of confidence: looking like you know what you're doing and where you are going, walking in an upright and purposeful manner, speaking clearly and confidently all make you seem less vulnerable and therefore to a potential attacker you become a less attractive target.

If you are threatened, shouting "FIRE!" loudly will both startle your assailant and be more likely to cause anybody nearby to come to your assistance than shouting "HELP!". A panic alarm or whistle is also useful as the assailant will not want attention drawing to his / her presence and will probably run away. Maintain eye contact with your assailant and remember to behave in a confident manner.

If the criminal is not deterred by the above and is demanding money or valuables then the best thing to do is hand them over – we value your life and your safety far more highly than our cash and trinkets. Hand them over slowly, making a mental note of any distinguishing features which will help the Police identify the attacker later on.

The PCC does not generally encourage the practice of self-defence techniques, however those who have been **properly trained** and are **competent** in such techniques may use them if they are attacked.

## Working At Height

Contrary to popular belief "at height" does not mean "above six feet" or "above two metres" – it means anywhere from which a fall would be liable to cause injury or death.

Working at height should be avoided at all times unless there is genuinely no alternative.

Extensible poles should be used for high-level cleaning tasks.

Replacement of high-level light bulbs shall be carried out as a Planned Preventative Maintenance task by a specialist electrical contractor whose staff are equipped with safe equipment for working at height and are trained in its use.

Each church shall be provided with properly-constructed steps for use where there is a requirement to reach objects down from high shelves, etc. Standing on chairs or tables is extremely unsafe and is forbidden in all circumstances.

Each church shall be provided with a stepladder which complies fully with BS EN131 and is rated for a Static Vertical Load of 150kg or more. No other stepladder shall be used. Anyone using a stepladder should first ensure that they are aware of the HSE guidance for safe use – if in doubt do not use the stepladder.

If the steps or stepladder appear to be damaged or defective in any way then they must not be used.

Leaning over the balcony at St. Bride's to clean the ledges (or for any other reason) carries the risk of death and is therefore forbidden.

Where external contractors are working at height in our churches we need to satisfy ourselves that they are using the proper equipment and are competent to do so, and we must comply with any instructions they give us in respect of access to the work area, etc.



## **Trips And Slips – Hazards Underfoot**

Trips and slips can cause terrible injuries. A moment's thought and a little attention to detail can prevent the vast majority of these injuries from occurring.

Loose rugs, mats and carpet strips should be fixed to the floor or removed altogether.

Trailing cables should be routed away from pedestrian areas where possible. If it is not, then the cables should be confined to lightly-trafficked areas. Permanent cables should be fixed to the floor with cable protectors. Temporary cables should be marked with high-visibility tape.

Rubbish should be disposed-of promptly and no build-up of clutter should be allowed.

Spillages must be cleaned up immediately. A "Caution Wet Floor" sign shall be used to warn people away from the area until the floor is properly dry.

External pathways and steps where ponding occurs shall be jetted regularly to prevent the build-up of algae.

## **Stairways (St. Michael's and St. Bride's Only)**

Stairways must be kept free of clutter and rubbish at all times as these are trip hazards and could impede the evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency.

Step edgings shall be marked in a contrasting colour to provide visibility to the partially-sighted and to aid visibility for everyone in the case of an evacuation.

Stairway lighting should be even, cover the whole stairway and be switchable from both the top and the bottom. Where this is not the case, extra care should be taken by everyone using the stairway.

## **Hazardous Substances**

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) appliances are not to be operated, nor are the cylinders to be changed, by anyone who has not read and understood the safety precautions provided in St. Dunstan's Red File.

Pigeon droppings and feathers are potentially harmful to health and should be cleaned up as they are discovered using hot water containing disinfectant. The water should then be disposed of via a grid or sink not used for food preparation. Good hygiene practices should be followed at all times by those who may have been in contact with pigeon feathers or droppings.

Household-type cleaning products, bleach, air fresheners etc., which display black-on-orange hazard symbols are potentially hazardous to health. All precautions and directions detailed on the label must be followed. The substance must be stored securely, in its original container, and kept out of the reach of children. It is best to buy and use environmentally-friendly products which do not contain hazardous substances where possible.

## **Asbestos**

The PCC will ensure that an up-to-date survey of asbestos-containing materials (ACM) is obtained and kept on file for each church (with the exception of St. [REDACTED]'s<sup>1</sup>). Such surveys shall be carried out by properly-qualified surveyors.

Any suspected ACM discovered in the survey must be brought to the attention of any contractors carrying out work in the building.

ACM in a poor or damaged condition will be removed and taken for secure by a specially-licensed contractor. **UNDER NO ACCOUNT MUST UNQUALIFIED PERSONS ATTEMPT TO REMOVE OR DISPOSE OF ASBESTOS** or any material suspected to contain it.

## **Glass**

Large unmarked glazing panels, windows at or below shoulder height and the glazed panels in doors are hazardous; extra precautions should be taken where these exist. In particular, those responsible for children on the premises should take extra care to ensure they are under control near glazed areas. It is particularly important that any trip or slip hazards are removed and that work at height is avoided where there is a risk of falling through a window or glass panel. Care should also be taken when carrying anything near to large glazed areas, particularly the partitions at St. [REDACTED]'s.

Doors containing glazed panels should always be opened by the handle, NEVER by pushing on the glass.

Protecting the original 1889 leaded glass in certain doors at St. [REDACTED]'s with polycarbonate sheeting is being considered provided it can be done in a manner consistent with the historic nature of the building.

## **Plant and Machinery**

All plant and equipment used in the churches must be properly maintained and checked at regular intervals to minimise the risk of injury or death caused by the malfunction or breakdown.

### **Gas-powered heating plant (including LPG heaters)**

All gas appliances should be serviced annually by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer and the service record retained and kept in the Red File (Section 10).

Regulators and hoses within LPG appliances must be replaced upon reaching the age of ten years or sooner if any damage or deterioration becomes apparent.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Stephen's was built after the use of asbestos in new buildings was outlawed.

## **Portable Electrical Appliances**

Following the Electrical Safety advice (page 5) when using portable electrical appliances minimises the risk of fire or electric shock.

## **Ladders & Steps**

All ladders shall be inspected annually for safety by a Competent Person.

Each church is to be provided with a BS EN131-compliant stepladder and an approved set of safety steps. The stepladders are only to be used by those who have read and understood the HSE leaflet *INDG405 – Top tips for Ladder and Stepladder Safety*. The steps are to be used instead of standing on chairs or tables (prohibited on safety grounds).

## **Tools**

Tools for minor maintenance / repair work or for gardening should only be used by those who have been trained in their correct use.

## **Manual Handling**

Incorrect manual handling technique is the cause of thousands of injuries every year. These could all be prevented with a little care.

Heavy loads should be assessed before moving to ascertain whether they really need to be moved - the best way to prevent an injury from a manual handling operation is to prevent the operation from happening in the first place.

If the load must be moved, consideration should be given to breaking it down into smaller, lighter loads if this is possible. A stack of six chairs might be much more safely moved as two loads of three chairs or three loads of two chairs.

If a heavy item has to be moved then care must be taken to move it safely. Help should be sought where any item weighs more than the safe limit (for a fit, healthy man this is 25kg; for a fit, healthy woman 16kg) and the lift should be carried out as a team enterprise. The lift should be planned in advance and the route through which the object is being carried should be cleared of obstructions and trip hazards. Lift using the leg muscles, not the back muscles.

The above is only a summary of the manual handling guidelines. It is recommended that everyone who might be involved in manual handling at any point – even if it is just moving a few chairs occasionally – reads HSE leaflet *INDG143 Getting to grips with Manual Handling* and understands its contents before carrying out the operation.

## **Emergency Procedures**

All churches are to have Emergency Evacuation & Fire Procedures written down and stored for reference in Section 2 of the Red File. All Wardens, Sidespersons and Officers should familiarise themselves with these.

The Procedures are to take account of all eventualities and include provision for the swift and safe evacuation of the disabled.

## **Appointed Person Responsible for Health & Safety**

Mr. [REDACTED], telephone [REDACTED], email [REDACTED].

## **Timescale**

All Churches within the St. [REDACTED] team are to comply with this Health and Safety Policy in full (or as far as is reasonably practicable) by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012.

## **PCC Resolution**

This Health and Safety Policy was adopted by resolution of the [REDACTED] PCC at the meeting on Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012.