

# UNITED PARISH OF BALLYNURE AND BALLYEASTON

## 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, hall, churchyard and other grounds/buildings.

We also know that, where we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

In particular, we know that if we are an employer having five or more employees, we are required to have a written health and safety policy. As such, we have drafted this policy to meet our duty under the **Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978**

### Health and Safety Statement

Our statement of general policy is:

- To ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, the health and safety of all staff, volunteers, parishioners, visitors, contractors and others who may visit the Parish and its associated buildings and grounds
- To provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, contractors, casual workers and volunteers
- To provide information, instruction, training and supervision for staff, casual workers and volunteers to ensure they are competent to perform their duties
- To prevent accidents and cases of work related ill-health and to provide adequate control of the health and safety (H&S) risks arising from our work activities
- To regularly review and revise our policy, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities
- To include Health and Safety on the agenda for all Vestry meetings
- To implement emergency procedures – including evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident
- To ensure the safe storage, handling and use of substances
- To engage and consult with our staff, contractors, casual workers and volunteers on matters affecting their health and safety

Signed   
(Chair - Select Vestry)

Date 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Signed Lorraine Ogilby  
(Secretary - Select Vestry)

Date 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Review Date 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025

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## **1 Responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for health and safety lies with the Incumbent and Select vestry to ensure arrangements are in place to comply with regulations and codes of practice.

The Select Vestry is accountable for this Policy and ensuring its provisions are implemented. Health and Safety will be on the agenda for all Select Vestry meetings.

### **Health and Safety Sub-Committee (HSSC)**

The Select vestry will create a Health and Safety Sub Committee (HSSC) who will be responsible for drafting and updating this Policy and its procedures. The HSSC will comprise at least one member of the Select Vestry and additional nominees as necessary. It will report to the Select Vestry on a regular basis.

All volunteers, contractors, parishioners, and premises users have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this Health and Safety policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church premises or business and must therefore:

- Comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures.
- Use protective clothing and equipment when required.
- Report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person.
- Report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible.
- Not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

## **2 Risk Assessments**

Risk Assessments of the church building, parish halls, other buildings and the surrounding areas will be undertaken by the HSSC, with the help of qualified experts where relevant.

A Fire Risk Assessment of the church building and Parish Halls will be undertaken by the HSSC, with the help of qualified experts where relevant.

Risk Assessments of plant, machinery, kitchen and substances will be undertaken by the HSSC, with the help of qualified experts where relevant.

The findings of risk assessments and any actions required will be reported to the Select Vestry for approval.

Those responsible will ensure actions required are taken and report back to the Select Vestry when implemented.

The risk assessments will be reviewed annually or more often if needs dictate.

Copies of completed Risk Assessments will be kept in the H & S file, with originals with each user group.

Risk Assessment documents and instructions will be issued by the HSSC for completion for all regular premises users (e.g. Children and Youth Workers, youth organisations, choir, etc) annually.

The Select Vestry will issue Risk Assessment documents and instructions to those booking Parish premises for outside events. Bookings will not be confirmed until return and approval of the assessment.

The Glebe Wardens will advise contractors of any risks pertaining to the work they are carrying out. Contractors must have their own H&S Policy and Risk Assessment in place.

### **3 Arrangements**

#### ***Consultations***

The HSSC will initiate consultations with staff and volunteers on matters concerning their H&S.

The HSSC will remind all premises users annually of their obligations to review and update their health and safety arrangements under this policy, which is available to them through the Select Vestry.

The HSSC will ensure that Risk Assessments have been provided for all parish activities and that the appropriate actions are taken resulting from these.

The HSSC will review the Risk Assessment arrangements on a regular basis.

#### ***Plant and Equipment***

The Glebe Wardens are responsible for:

- Identifying and listing all plant and equipment needing maintenance and for ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up implemented and recorded.
- Ensuring there is no unauthorised use of plant and equipment.
- Following the statutory guidelines in connection with electrical and gas equipment. Regularly inspecting plugs, cables and sockets to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads.
- Reporting any H&S problems arising with plant and equipment to the Select Vestry.
- Checking that new plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before purchase.
- Ensuring annual maintenance of Fire Extinguishers and other fire fighting and protective equipment is undertaken by an approved contractor and recorded.
- Ensuring that fire exits are checked for safe use on a regular basis.

#### ***Safe Handling and Use of Substances***

The Vestry and staff are responsible for:

- Identifying all substances that need a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessment and undertaking the appropriate assessment on a regular basis. Templates are provided in the Health and Safety file.
- Placing on record that all actions identified in the assessments including the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are implemented (See Appendix 3). For all hazardous substances, e.g. cleaning products, the correct method of use will be determined by the manufacturer's product information.
- Ensuring that all relevant users of such substances are informed about the COSHH assessments as appropriate, and will ensure that, before they are purchased, any new substances can be safely used.
- Ensuring the Manual Handling Policy is adhered to (see Appendix 1).
- Ensuring the Working at Height Policy is adhered to (see Appendix 2).

#### ***Information, Instruction and Supervision***

The Select vestry is responsible for:

- Where the parish has 5 or more employees, ensuring display of the ***Health and Safety Law in Northern Ireland*** poster, the Parish Health & Safety Statement and issue any appropriate leaflets.
- Providing day-to-day H&S advice liaising with the HSSC and/or Glebe Wardens as required.

### ***Competency and Training***

The HSSC will provide Induction H & S Training for all employees.

The HSSC will identify & arrange necessary training & information in connection with the various procedures.

The Select Vestry will monitor training and keep necessary records.

### ***Accidents, First Aid and Work Related Ill Health***

The Select Vestry, assigned volunteers and church staff will ensure all floors, stairs, paths and steps are free from accident hazards.

Designated members of staff and/or key leaders will undertake First Aid training on a regular basis and appropriate manual handling, working at height and Personal Protective Equipment training and information.

First Aid kits will be provided for all church buildings with public/staff access.

The Select Vestry will maintain the accident book and record all accidents or work related ill health. All accidents and incidents will be reported to the Parish Panel. Serious accidents will be reported to the Environmental Health department of the Local Council.

The HSSC will appoint an appropriate person(s) to investigate any reportable accident or illness.

### ***Monitoring***

The HSSC will undertake a review of Health and Safety policy and procedures annually following the Easter Vestry, in anticipation of the beginning of the new Parish activities season in September.

The Select Vestry will ensure anyone entering Parish premises to carry out work, other than Parish staff or voluntary workers, is regarded as a contractor and must follow the guidelines outlined in this Policy.

The Select Vestry will ensure all regular checks required by this Policy are properly undertaken and recorded when necessary.

The Select Vestry will monitor cleaning arrangements to ensure the various risks outlined in the risk assessment are reduced or eliminated.

### ***Emergency Procedures***

The Select Vestry will ensure that all escape routes, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting and alarms are checked on a regular basis. A record of these checks will be maintained by the Select Vestry.

Parish Staff/Church Organisations/other regular premises users will complete an evacuation/fire drill every year. A reminder to this effect will be included in the annual communication to premises users requesting their organisation's Risk Assessment and advising them of their H&S responsibilities. They will be provided with a Risk Assessment pro forma accompanied by instructions for completion.

Safety procedures for evacuation for all organisations are included on Page 7 below.

The Church Wardens/Premises Users (enlisting assistance as necessary) will ensure exits and pathways are salted/cleared in the event of winter conditions affecting these procedures.

### ***Food Safety***

Select Vestry has delegated food safety on Parish premises to key staff and volunteers. Training in food hygiene is expected for kitchen supervisors who provide active supervision when the kitchen is in use. The kitchen is subject to inspection by the Local Council who can update advice to ensure standards are adequately maintained.

It is important that anyone preparing and handling food has a good knowledge of food safety and training may be required to ensure this is met. The kitchen facilities provided must also be able to meet the requirements of food legislation.

#### High Risk Foods

High risk foods are those on which micro-organisms grow easily. High risk foods include: ready to eat cooked meats and poultry, fish products, prepared salads, soft cheeses, sandwiches and fresh cream.

#### Purchasing and Transporting High Risk Foods

High risk foods must be transported, stored and displayed at a temperature of 8°C or below and preferably less than 5°C.

Check 'use by' dates of foods and do not accept foods past their 'use by' date.

Purchase chilled or frozen food and pack them together in a cool bag. Raw products should be packed in separate bags and not with ready to eat foods.

#### Preparing foods

Store cooked/ready to eat foods above any raw foods - remember to move to a refrigeration unit as soon as possible.

Handle cooked/ready to eat food as little as possible, use tongs where appropriate.

Designate an area where only ready to eat foods are prepared. Raw food should never enter this area.

Ensure separate equipment e.g. chopping boards, knives and containers are available for preparation, handling or storage of raw and cooked/ready to eat foods.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect sinks after washing/preparing raw food or vegetables

#### Refrigeration

High risk foods must be held at or below 8°C in the refrigerator. (Preferable less than 5°C)

Chilled ready to eat foods can be kept at an ambient temperature for one 4 hour period only. At the end of this period the food must be disposed of or kept chilled below 8°C until used. If you intend to make use of this exemption you must be able to provide evidence that the time period has not been exceeded.

It is recommended that freezers operate at -18°C or below.

#### Cooking / Reheating

Thoroughly cook or reheat food to a core temperature at or above 75°C to kill food poisoning bacteria such as E. coli.

#### Hot holding

If you intend to hot hold food for more than 2 hours, e.g. vol-au-vents, soups, stews, gravy etc. they must be kept at or above 63°C.

#### Service

Ready to eat foods should be served as quickly as possible after removal from the refrigerator to prevent bacteria growth. Serve hot food as quickly as possible.

#### Cleaning

Ensure adequate supply of approved disinfectant/sanitising products for cleaning equipment and work surfaces. The disinfectant/sanitising products should meet the following standard BS EN 1276:2009, BS EN 1276:1997 or equivalent.

Recommend the use of any single use disposable cloths.

#### Personal Hygiene

Maintain a high degree of personal hygiene. This applies to 'every person' working in a food handling area whether or not they handle food.

Wash hands regularly, particularly after going to the toilet, after handling raw food, after handling rubbish, before starting work, on returning to work, after sneezing/coughing, after having a break (including smoke breaks), and after handling dirty packaging.

Ensure food handlers wear clean protective over clothing whilst handling unwrapped food. It is also recommended that staff with long hair wear a hair net.

Cover any spots, skin cuts and abrasions (on exposed areas such as hands or lower arms) with water proof dressings. Waterproof plasters should be provided in the First Aid Kit and preferably coloured blue.

Persons suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea must not work with food unless they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

# **UNITED PARISH OF BALLYNURE AND BALLYEASTON FIRE/EVACUATION SAFETY POLICY FOR EVENTS**

## **SAFETY MEASURES TO PUT IN PLACE BEFORE EVENTS**

**All Organisers (Staff and Volunteers) of Parish Hall/Church Events must have the safety measures described below in place and be fully briefed on the procedures following. In addition all users should familiarise themselves with the FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT before activities.**

**External organisations booking the Parish Hall/Church must complete the appropriate Booking Form, which includes confirmation that they will comply with the contents of the 3 pages of this procedure.**

### ***BEFORE THE EVENT:***

The event organizer must appoint an Evacuation Team (which may include the event organizer) with the following responsibilities:

1. A person(s) to check immediately prior to the event that all emergency exits are operating properly. The area outside the Parish Hall emergency exit must be kept 'car free'. In addition to check the location of fire fighting equipment, alarms and first aid equipment and ensure that the buildings are kept 'smoke free'.
2. A person to dial 999 in the event of an emergency and ensure the building has been evacuated (toilets/kitchen etc should be checked provided no personal risk is involved).
3. A person(s) (or more than one as required) to help anyone requiring assistance to make a safe and speedy exit.
4. An appropriate number of people (1 for each exit), wearing hi-vis waistcoats (if possible), to lead evacuees through the emergency exits and on to the appropriate designated area(s). Then ensure entrances to church grounds are kept clear for emergency services vehicles and to avoid accident
5. A person to tell those assembled about evacuation procedures (see following page).

The event organizer should also ensure:

Numbers attending events/services should not exceed the following:

- **Christ Church church** 100 persons(?)
- **Christ Church halls**
- **Christ Church mobile classroom**
- **Christ Church rectory**
- **St. John's church**
- **St. John's halls**

Hi-vis waistcoats can be obtained from:

- **Christ Church halls kitchen**
- **St. John's halls kitchen**



# PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF AN ALARM

1. As soon as a fire or evacuation emergency is discovered or suspected, a leader (or other person) should raise the alarm immediately by pressing the nearest Alarm Button. If there is no alarm button (such as the church building) then the person shout 'alarm, alarm' and the event leader will ask everyone to evacuate.
2. Those appointed for main fire exits should take steps immediately to calmly evacuate the Church / Halls via the appropriate exit(s) and lead evacuees to the appropriate assembly point(s)
3. An appointed person should ring 999 and, as the evacuation commences, provided there is no personal risk involved, check that all parts of the building have been evacuated and ensure all doors are closed.
4. All those evacuated should gather, and remain until advised otherwise, at the assembly points which are located at:
  - Christ Church: Church car park exit point
  - St. John's: Public path entrance to Ballyclare Primary, Doagh Rd.
5. At either point people should gather well away from areas at which emergency vehicles are likely to arrive.  
The persons in hi-vis waistcoats (if applicable) must ensure evacuees to the car park do not commence exiting by car so creating a traffic obstruction for emergency vehicles.
6. No one should return to the Church / Hall until permission is given from a member of the Emergency Services or Event Organiser

## **PROVIDED NO RISK IS INVOLVED**

### ***THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE APPLIED IN ALL ALARM SITUATIONS:***

- Attempts to extinguish fire should be made using the ***appropriate*** extinguishers.
- Electrical power should be switched off.
- First Aid kits should be taken to the evacuation point and First Aid given if necessary.
- Responsible persons should check no one remains in any of the buildings.

## **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED BY YOUTH/CHILDREN ORGANISATIONS IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

1. Leader(s) must appoint an Evacuation Team with the following responsibilities:
  - At least one person to assist any young person(s) or others with disability or mobility issues to make a safe and speedy exit.
  - A person for each exit to ensure evacuation via the emergency exits.
  - A person at each emergency exit to lead evacuees away from the exits to the appropriate designated area and ensure access to church grounds is kept clear and safe for emergency services vehicles.
  - A person to dial 999 and ensure the building has been evacuated. Toilets, kitchen etc should be checked provided no personal risk is involved and doors closed on leaving.
2. Teachers/Leaders should keep their roll books with them at all times.
3. Put in place arrangements for telling the young people about evacuation procedures.
4. Before activities commence a nominated person(s) must check that all emergency exits are accessible and operating properly.
5. Procedures should be rehearsed annually.

## **FIRE SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE EVENTS IN CHURCH AND PARISH HALLS**

- 1. IN THE EVENT OF AN ALARM PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE STEWARDS/LEADERS.**
- 2. EVACUATION WILL BE VIA THE EMERGENCY EXITS (INCLUDING MAIN EXITS). POINT THESE OUT AND THE GREEN SIGNS ABOVE THEM.**
- 3. THE FIRE/EMERGENCY ASSEMBLY POINT(S) IS LOCATED AT:**

**Christ Church:**

**Church car park exit point**

**St. John's:**

**Public path entrance to Ballyclare Secondary,  
Doagh Rd.**

- 4. IN THE CAR PARK PLEASE STAY AWAY FROM THE ENTRANCE. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE CARS.**
- 5. THE ENTRY POINTS MUST BE KEPT CLEAR AT ALL TIMES TO PERMIT EASY ACCESS FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES.**
- 6. REMAIN AT THE ASSEMBLY POINT UNTIL ADVISED OTHERWISE.**
- 7. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL THE 'ALL CLEAR' IS GIVEN.**

## CONTRACTOR MONITORING

The Select Vestry, in order to prevent/minimise the likelihood of an accident occurring as a direct cause of contractor actions will ensure:

- Contractors provide a copy of their Health and Safety Policy (where required by law) and provide evidence that they have appropriate public and employer's liability insurance in place.
- Cooperate with church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation. Where plant and machinery is brought on to church premises check the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure safe operation.
- Contractors are provided with instructions regarding the areas they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake.
- Staff and volunteers are required to bring to the attention of the Glebe Wardens any shortcomings/defects in the contractors operations.
- When contractors need to undertake 'Hot Works' they should undertake a written risk assessment of the proposed job. This risk assessment must be completed in advance and in full and must be submitted to the Glebe Wardens for approval before work commences. The contractor must ensure that all procedures and precautions mentioned in the assessment are carried out as described.
- Contractors must comply with all statutory regulations and the requirements of this policy.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR CHURCH WARDENS AND DESIGNATED LEADERS

- On arrival at Church/Parish Halls ensure driveways, paths & steps are clear of obstacles/spillages that could endanger users
- Ensure orderly entrance/exit of parishioners/attendees to/from the Church buildings.
- Ensure maintenance of order and general safety during services. Ensure that the appropriate H&S announcement is made by the Clergy/Wardens at the beginning of any event significantly different to normal. Direct and control orderly exit (to assembly points) of parishioner/attendees in the event of an emergency (e.g. fire) requiring the evacuation of the Church
- Ensure that any trailing cables/wires in the Church are either removed or suitably secured and covered, so as to minimise likelihood of trip incidents
- Attend to any parishioners/attendees taking ill - by providing/facilitating first aid as necessary and arranging formal medical assistance (999 if appropriate)
- Care to be taken when removing/replacing Communion Rail centrepiece.
- Lock and secure all external doors at end of last service or activity (ensuring all persons have left), and set intruder alarm if applicable.
- Be mindful of Lone Working issues and consider awaiting the arrival of a fellow Warden/Clergy before beginning duties that involve risk. See appendix 5 for the Lone Worker Policy.
- If frost is present – spread salt on all driveways, paths & steps – *NB - As this will invariably take a considerable amount of time Church Wardens are advised to check weather forecast the evening before to assess the possibility of salting being required.*
- In the event of a snowfall, steps must be taken to clear and salt Church and Parish Hall access driveways, paths and steps accordingly, using the shovels and brushes provided. Again it is recognised that this will be time-consuming and therefore Church Wardens should consider enlisting the immediate assistance of the Glebe Wardens, (and if necessary, any staff/Vestry members/parishioners who will be willing to help. – *NB - Care must be taken to avoid accidents etc during this operation.*

# UNITED PARISH OF BALLYNURE AND BALLYEASTON

## RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

### WELCOME TO YOUR GUIDELINES

Everyone involved in running parish organisations or using parish premises has a responsibility to ensure their activities comply with Health and Safety Legislation and the Parish Health and Safety Policy. Activities must be conducted in a safe manner without risk to the health or safety of members or participants. These guidelines aim to help you fulfil that role.

### PARISH HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Please read this Parish Health and Safety Policy Document as a guide to understanding your responsibilities.

### WHO'S IN CHARGE?

*A responsible person must be appointed to oversee the health and safety aspect of everything you do and everyone participating.* Responsibilities may then be delegated to helpers e.g. to take headcounts, check toilets, make safety announcements (you can print these from this Policy Document) etc.

### GETTING ORGANISED

The responsible person will need to spend some time getting organised. He/she will need to think through the activities and/or the event and what needs to be done to keep participants safe by eliminating risks. Although your activities may be based in one location **please** also think about safety and risks in other parts of the premises such as car parks and toilets likely to be used by your members. You should also think about the risks involved if you are organising activities away from Parish premises and check that adequate safety measures are in place. Sample completed risk assessments are available.

### KNOW THE CORRECT PROCEDURES

When thinking about your activities be sure you are familiar with the correct health and safety procedures. A summary of these is included in the Parish H & S Policy. They will need to be applied where

- an emergency evacuation is required.
- cooked food is being served.
- hazardous substances such as cleaning chemicals are being used.
- activities take place at a height e.g. hanging decorations.
- electrical equipment is being used.
- bulky or heavy items are being handled.
- transport has been organised to facilitate participant's arrivals and departures.

Where you identify activities not included above which are peculiar to your organisation/event you may need to determine your own procedures (*this might be relevant where your membership includes people with disabilities or where you are dealing with children and young people*).

### COMPLETE YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT

As it is likely your organization's activities/event will require members to use some or all of the procedures listed above, plus procedures peculiar to your organisation, you will need to undertake and write up a Risk Assessment using the following steps

- **Identifying possible hazards** – any object or situation that might cause harm
- **Asking who might be harmed** – your own people first but don't forget others who may be around
- **Assessing the level of risk** – decide whether the risk is already under control and if not what steps do you need to take
- **Sharing your findings** – make sure everyone involved understands the risk and the controls which apply
- **Reviewing as you go** – keep an eye during and after the activity that things go as planned and revise the controls if necessary

The conclusions from your Risk Assessment should be contained in the Risk Assessment document provided. Those that are common to all Parish users are already included but please add those peculiar to your unique activities or which may arise when you are away from Parish premises. The name(s) of the persons appointed to ensure the risks are properly dealt with should be entered in the column alongside.

## **1. MANUAL HANDLING**

Whenever an item is moved, carried, dragged, shifted or otherwise manipulated by the power of a person, this is 'Manual Handling'. There are various hazards involved when manually handling any item or object, and an assessment of the risk posed these hazards is a good starting point. This does not mean, however, that a lengthy paper-based Risk Assessment is needed in all cases. Use the below pointers as a guide – if you think that anything is above a low risk level, you should carry out a more detailed assessment and do not attempt to move the item(s).

### ***Manual Handling Hazards***

Poor manual handling technique can lead to back pains and other 'musculoskeletal disorders' affecting other areas of the body. These can lead to immediate (acute) or long-term (chronic) pain, discomfort or injury. Some objects are intrinsically harmful, such as hot items, chemicals or sharp objects, and the nature of the object to be moved also needs consideration.

A person is also at increased risk of other kinds of injury, such as those caused by tripping or slipping over, when you are carrying something. There is also the possibility of minor injuries such as cuts, bruises and scrapes due to the item being moved or the way in which it is being carried, moved or manipulated.

### ***Principles of Manual Handling Safety***

The general principles of manual handling are:

1. Avoid manual handling operations wherever possible. This might be by mechanising processes or designing ways in which manual handling is simply not needed.
2. Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling, assess the risks caused by the task, the object being carried, the person doing the task and the influence of the work environment on them.
3. As part of the risk assessment, put into place measures to reduce the risk.

### ***Manual Handling Risk Assessment***

#### **The load**

Think about the weight of the object. While some loads might be heavy and others light, think also about the size and shape of the load and the number to be carried or lifted. Consider also how stable the load is – it could be off balance or an object that slides about inside a box. Lastly, think about the properties of the load, including temperature and sharp objects.

#### **The individual**

Not all people are identical – some are able to carry a much heavier weight than others and there is no 'standard' maximum weight that a person is permitted to lift. The best approach is to discuss this with the person or people doing the carrying, bearing in mind that they might overestimate their strength and stamina.

#### **The environment**

In this part of the assessment, think about anything within the work environment that could cause harm. This might be due to low ceilings, low lighting levels, slippery, wet floors or damaged floor surfaces.

### **The task**

Look at how the task is performed. Many items will be moved from one place to another, and the route that this movement takes needs to be looked at to decide if there are any stages that could lead to an injury. This might be, for example, the movement of an item up stairs, through doors and manipulating it into position. Consider how the task as a whole – from start to finish through any route taken – could affect someone's safety.

## **2. WORKING AT HEIGHT**

There are many situations within Churches and Places of Worship where people working might be at risk from falling. This would typically include places where people could fall more than two metres, but falls from lower level can also cause significant injuries and are more likely to occur.

Some common examples of areas where people might be at risk of falling include towers, roofs, opened graves or basements. Whenever possible, access to these areas should be restricted and members of the public should not usually be admitted to these areas if the Risk Assessment deems this necessary.

In many Churches/halls lighting is at a high distance from the floor level. When accessing fittings to change lamps and bulbs, it might be necessary to use some form of scaffolding or access equipment other than a ladder. To make best use of this equipment when set up, change all lamps in the area and use long-life versions. Any scaffold or elevated working platform needs to be used and installed by a competent person.

Those people working at height might also be using tools and other equipment. These items could fall onto people below, and it would be usual to put up a barrier immediately below the works and tools should be fitted with a lanyard to limit the fall. Some tools and equipment can be fastened to prevent it falling, such as stage lighting equipment, which must always be fitted with a safety bond or safety chain.

### ***Ladders***

The use of ladders should be restricted to light tasks and those lasting no longer than 15 to 30 minutes. Before use, all ladders should be inspected and any defective ladder immediately removed and destroyed.

All ladders must be used carefully, following the manufacturer's guidance, especially making sure that weight limits are not exceeded. Domestic ladders are not suitable for use in Churches and Places of Worship. Ladders must be either "Class 1 Industrial" or conform to EN131.

Portable ladders must be correctly put up, ensuring that all feet are firmly on the floor. The floor surface must be even and free from hazards that could cause the ladder to slip or move. The top of the ladder must rest against a strong surface, not something like guttering or a window that could shatter or break, and should preferably be secured in place. If the top cannot be secured, the base should be (as an absolute minimum a person can steady the base of the ladder providing it does not extend very high and it is only for a short duration).

A good rule of thumb to remember is that for every four units the ladder is extended up, ensure that the base is out by one unit (for example, a four metre high ladder must be out by one metre at the base). The rungs of the ladder need to be horizontal, and this can be checked with a spirit level. Extending ladders are fitted with mechanisms to lock the sections together, and these must be fully engaged before using the ladder.

Those people using ladders must do so in a safe way. This includes gripping the ladder when ascending or descending, not using the ladder for extended periods of time and not using the upper three rungs (these are a hand hold). The person must not over-stretch, especially sideways (a belt buckle is a good indicator - this should remain inside the uprights) and both feet should remain on the same rung of the ladder.

**Stepladders** are often used for tasks such as changing lamps and general maintenance. Steps must always be used in the open position, with all locking mechanisms fully engaged. A second person should ideally hold the base of the steps, to provide stability and the ladder must be used the right way around, with the person facing the steps. The top rung(s) of many stepladders is not designed to be used other than as a shelf and the person using the steps must not straddle the upper hand rail.

### **Other access methods**

Tower scaffolding is common and quite cheap and when used correctly is much safer than using a ladder. However, scaffolding needs to be assembled and erected by competent and trained people.

Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs) are also useful, and in fact can be safer than a tower scaffold as the person does not need to leave the work platform to ascend or descend the ladder. Two common types of MEWP are the "Scissor Lift" and the "Cherry Picker". Articulated cherry pickers offer a great deal of flexibility, and scissor lifts are only useful when there is flat and even ground directly underneath the point where access is needed. Note that MEWPs are work platforms and not access lifts (people should not step out of the cage to access something at high level).

The design and installation of scaffolding must be completed by a competent person. The scaffolding must be appropriately designed for the safety of those at work on the platform and those below, such as including kick-boards to prevent items being accidentally knocked off the edge of the working platform. Access to scaffolding by the public, especially children, needs to be prevented and worksites need to be secured. If scaffolding is being used, this must be inspected every 7 days, and ideally tagged to show that it has been inspected. Any defects must be rectified by a competent scaffolder before people use the scaffolding again.

## **3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Equipment and clothing, such as safety glasses and gloves, that is designed to protect someone from harm is called Personal Protective Equipment (PPE for short). It often forms a barrier between the person and the object or substance that could cause harm.

Note that PPE does not include any clothing worn specifically for food hygiene reasons, or uniforms which are not designed to protect the worker.

### ***PPE Types:***

**High-visibility clothing** is useful when working near traffic routes, as drivers are more likely to see someone wearing high-visibility (or hi-vis) work-wear. Reflective strips improve visibility at night.

**Warm/waterproof clothing** can be worn to protect someone from the cold and rain

**Gloves** can protect against many hazards, from abrasions and sharp objects through to wet working and chemicals. Correct glove selection is important to ensure that the glove protects the hands and does not absorb harmful substances or introduce any other hazards (caused by reduced dexterity/sense of touch).

**Earplugs** can protect a person's hearing. The plugs are usually made of soft foam, which is rolled and inserted into the ear. These are adequate for occasional use but earmuffs are a better choice for more prolonged use. The correct selection of hearing protection depends on the noise that needs to be reduced as some work better than others at certain frequencies (pitches).

**Eye protection**, in the form of safety face shields, glasses and goggles, can protect the worker against items that might otherwise go into the eye or from harmful radiation (ultraviolet or visible light). When using

some chemicals, eye protection is also required. People who regularly work outside for long periods in sunny conditions should wear UV protective sunglasses.

**Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)** is used to protect the lungs, throat and other parts of the respiratory system. The simplest forms are nuisance dust masks, which are only suitable for non-toxic dusts. The RPE needs to fit the person correctly and this is checked in a process called 'fit testing'.

**Head protection** is designed to prevent injuries to the head, the most common being bump caps and hard hats. Bump caps are ideal for protecting against minor bumps and scrapes, and can be used when working in some spaces where there is a risk of head injury such as a bump to the head due to a low beam. However, when there is a risk that something might fall onto the head, hard hats would be chosen.

There are many different types of personal protective equipment available to suit many different tasks and requirements and the above is only an overview of the different uses of PPE that might commonly be encountered in a Church or Place of Worship setting. One type of PPE might be effective at reducing one risk, but might not be adequate at protecting against another so always check with the manufacturer if in doubt.

PPE has to be selected to be appropriate for the risks associated with the task so that it will be effective at controlling the risk. In doing so, consideration must be given to the user (because each person is different) and each item of PPE must be compatible with any other PPE that is being used.

All Personal Protective Equipment needs to be properly maintained and stored so that it remains effective and does not get damaged. Maintenance can include examination, testing, cleaning and with repair and replacement being made where required.

When it has been decided that PPE is an appropriate method to control the risk, it will be issued to those who need to use it, along with information, instruction and training about how to use it properly.

## 4. TRANSPORT GUIDANCE

**Note:** *When transporting under 18's the Safeguarding Trust policy on transport should be adhered to in addition to these points below.*

- When planning your journey take account of weather conditions.
- Don't use your mobile while driving.
- Don't overload.
- Be sure your Driving Licence and M.O.T are up to date.
- Tell your insurance company you will be carrying passengers.
- Be sure you are physically able to assist disabled or infirm passengers.

## 5. LONE WORKING

It is recognised that lone working is an everyday and essential practice for clergy, church workers and volunteers, and it is therefore important that the additional risks that arise from this are considered, in order that they can go about their daily work in relative safety. All workers and volunteers should avoid working alone if it is not necessary, and work with others where possible. However if this is not feasible they should be aware of the importance of personal safety, and take all reasonable precautions to safeguard themselves from harm, as they would in any other circumstances.

Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker, consideration should be given by the parish to undertake other arrangements to complete the task or activity, such as ensuring individuals work in pairs.



## **Working Alone in Church or at another Building**

Within this document, lone working refers to situations where individuals, in the course of their duties, work alone or are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance. In this regard, vestries should ensure that they:

- Undertake a risk assessment on building safety to determine if the church/building needs extra security. For example, spy holes, video doorbells, door chains or outside lighting can all help to safely identify callers.
- Assess the risks for 'cold calling' at rectory buildings for clergy and their families (particularly children) with consideration of extra security such as video doorbells, chains and lighting.
- Consider how lone workers will raise the alarm if necessary, and ensure they have a means of communicating with others in the event a problem arises.
- Agree a protocol for visitors to buildings; and decide whether or not to allow visitors in when only one person is there. This might also include a doorbell for buildings and whether to secure outside doors when lone working is taking place.

No worker should ever plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people. However, if they should find themselves in this situation, it is important that another adult is made aware immediately. The worker should also assess the risks involved in sending the child or young person home, against the risks and vulnerability of being alone with them.

## **Personal Safety**

Whilst the Vestry has a responsibility to ensure their lone workers' health, safety and welfare, there are also a number of things individuals can do to take reasonable care of themselves.

- Lone workers should never put themselves at risk. If a situation arises that they are unfamiliar with, or in which they feel unsafe, they should withdraw and seek further advice or assistance.
- Staff and volunteers should conduct their own risk assessment on the occasions when they are working alone, which will help them to decide how safe a situation is and what action should be taken to avoid danger.
- Lone workers should be aware of themselves, their behaviour and the signals they may be giving, and to think about their body language, tone of voice and the choice of words they use with others that could be taken as confrontational.
- Staff and volunteers who work alone also need to be aware of changes in the behaviour of the person they are with, especially if they seem to become more angry or threatening.
- If an incident occurs – even if it is considered a minor incident – the worker should make their Group Leader and or Safeguarding Representative know as soon as possible in order that the appropriate risk assessment and follow-up action can be taken.
- Staff and volunteers should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that they do not disclose their personal details, such as address and telephone number or their social networking profile, without good reason.