

SECTION 7

KEEPING SAFE ON CHURCH PREMISES

Health and Safety

- Regular Inspections
- Safety Check List
- First Aid
 - a. Accident Book
 - b. Medications

Fire Safety

- Evacuating Premises

Risk Assessment

- Identifying and Assessing Risk
- Risk Assessment Flow Chart
- 5 Steps to Do a Risk Assessment

Health and Safety

For guidance on all general aspects of Health and Safety including:

- premises
- fire
- access to buildings
- first aid
- accidents

Follow the guidelines for churches and sample policies produced by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group

These can be downloaded from their website, *www.ecclesiastical.com*, or requested in hard copy by phoning 0845 777 3322, e-mailing *churches@eigmail.com*, or writing to Direct Faith Department, Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1JZ.

A report on Health and Safety must be made to the PCC at least annually. This must include a nil return even if there have been no incidents or accidents requiring reporting.

Regular inspections

It is strongly recommended that when churchwardens and others are undertaking annual health and safety and fire inspections of the premises, these inspections should also take account of health and safety issues which relate specifically to children and adults at risk and relevant points including risk assessments included in their reports to the PCC.

In particular:

- electric sockets must be covered in rooms where young children regularly meet
- hazardous pieces of equipment (e.g. kettles) are positioned out of reach of people at risk, especially small children, and with no trailing lead
- cleaning materials should be stored out of harm's way
- there are no obstructions in passageways

Activities specifically for children and adults at risk:

- Ensure the meeting place is warm, well lit and well ventilated, and kept clean and free of clutter
- Electric sockets must be covered if young children are present
- Toilets and hand basins must be easily available with hygienic drying facilities
- There must be enough space and equipment available for the intended activity
- If food is regularly prepared on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired
- Children's packed lunches must be kept refrigerated
- Drinks must always be available
- A register of attendance must be completed at every activity
- Groups must have access to a telephone in order to call for help if necessary
- Fire doors must be unlocked. Leaders should be aware of the fire procedures
- No smoking can be permitted by leaders when accompanying participants in the activities anywhere, on and off the premises
- Alcohol must not be used by those having children and adults at risk in their care or at a time that could affect their care
- Unaccompanied children and young people must not walk to or from the premises along dark or badly lit paths

- A first aid kit and accident book must be available on the premises. All accidents or incidents must be recorded in the accident book, as soon as possible after the accident or incident occurs, but in any case before the premises are vacated following the activity

How well do you know your building? Do a safety check!

Entrance

- Is it accessible to everyone?
- Does it need to be locked during the session?
- Who has the key during a session?
- Is there a security light? Where is it?
- Where do parents wait to collect their child?

Exits

- Where are the fire exits?
- Are the fire exits unlocked and clear of obstruction?

Fire

- Is there a fire alarm? If not, is there a signal?
- Where are the extinguishers? Do you know the difference between the different extinguishers for different types of fire? Do you know how to use an extinguisher?
- Where is the assembly point?

Hall

- How many people will the hall hold comfortably?
- Are there any danger areas? Eg radiators, low windows, stages, stairs, steps
- Can chairs and tables be stacked out of the way?

Kitchen

- How is the water heated ?
- How hot is the tap water?
- Are there any hazards appropriate to the age with which you are working?

Open Spaces

- Where are the boundaries?
- Are there any no go areas?
- Are there any major roads near?

First Aid

- It is always good practice to have a person with a First Aid qualification present.
- Do you know where the First Aid box is kept?
- Is it up to date?
- Is it regularly checked

- Do you know where to record any accident or illness?

If , after you have carried out the safety check, you have concerns about the building contact the appropriate person.

Each time you arrive – a visual risk assessment

CHECK then decide what action you need to take

- Are all the exits unobstructed?
- Are other people sharing the venue?
- Is it safe to play ball games or are there too many low windows?
- Is the hall / room big enough for the number of participants?
- Are there side rooms, is so how will the activities be monitored?
- Are there adequate toilet facilities
- Is the lighting good enough?
- Look around the rooms you will be using. Look for hazards left by previous users..

MOVING ITEMS SAFELY

When you are setting up the room for a session you may need to move things around.

Use this checklist before moving any furniture or equipment.

- Is there a trolley to move items with?
- Can I move the equipment comfortably without any strain?
- Is there anyone else around to help? Moving furniture and equipment or climbing into storage areas can be dangerous. Make sure there is someone there to help you.
- Make sure you can move things without hitting anyone else.

First Aid

Adults working with children, young people and adults at risk should be aware of basic first aid techniques. It is strongly recommended that at least one of the leaders in a children's or youth group or group for adults at risk has attended a recognized First Aid course, such as a one-day Emergency First Aid Training, and received a certificate. These are run by the St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross, and may be offered by your local authority.

All premises used by children must have a First Aid kit. Its contents must be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group must designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.

Where First Aid is required, wherever possible, adults must ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Parents must always be informed when first aid has been administered.

If the injury appears to be serious, the emergency services must be called without delay.

If First Aid in an emergency needs to be administered by untrained staff, they must act reasonably and do the minimum necessary to preserve life and limit the consequences of injury until qualified assistance is obtained. There is a risk that a leader undertaking First Aid could face an allegation of negligence if an injury worsened, but this is a remote risk, provided the leader has acted reasonably in a genuine attempt to assist in an emergency.

Parents or carers must be contacted promptly in the event of an accident to a child or young person or adult at risk. In the case of a slight injury, the parent or carer should be told when the child or adult at risk is collected, or informed soon after the activity.

All accidents must be recorded in the accident book; more serious incidents will also need separate fuller reports by those involved and the group leader. Leaders must have available contact details for the Accident and Emergency Departments of the local hospital, and any other out of hours emergency services.

Accident book

Use an accident book which is supplied as such and meets the standards of the Health and Safety Executive.

Medication

No medicines may be given to children without the prior permission of the parents or carers. In circumstances where children or adults at risk need medication regularly, a health care plan must be established as soon as possible, in order to ensure the safety and protection both of the child or adult who may be at risk, and of the adults who are working with them. Details of this should be included in the registration form and, for children, on the parental consent form.

Depending upon the age and understanding of the child or adult, they should, where appropriate, be encouraged to self administer medication or treatment, including for example any ointment, or use of inhalers.

Fire safety

All concerned must know:

- what the sound of the fire alarm is like or whether there are flashing lights for those with hearing impairment
- where exits and emergency exits are located
- how to use any fire fighting equipment
- to take the register of people present with them
- where the assembly area is situated
- where the nearest telephone is
- the name and address of the premises
- who will meet the fire brigade when it arrives

A fire practice requiring evacuating the premises with children, young people and adults at risk must take place twice every year.

Evacuating premises

When evacuating premises in the event of a fire, or for a practice, when both children and their parents or carers are present but in different parts of the building, e.g. during Sunday worship with Sunday School, it is the responsibility of leaders with the children to ensure that they evacuate the premises safely. Parents must evacuate the premises directly, and not collect their children on their way.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Identifying and assessing risk

There is no such thing as a risk-free environment. But if we set up our activities so that the dangers and hazards that we are aware of can be avoided, we will be minimising the risk. In doing so we are also protecting our workers (paid and volunteers), and protecting the reputation of the church.

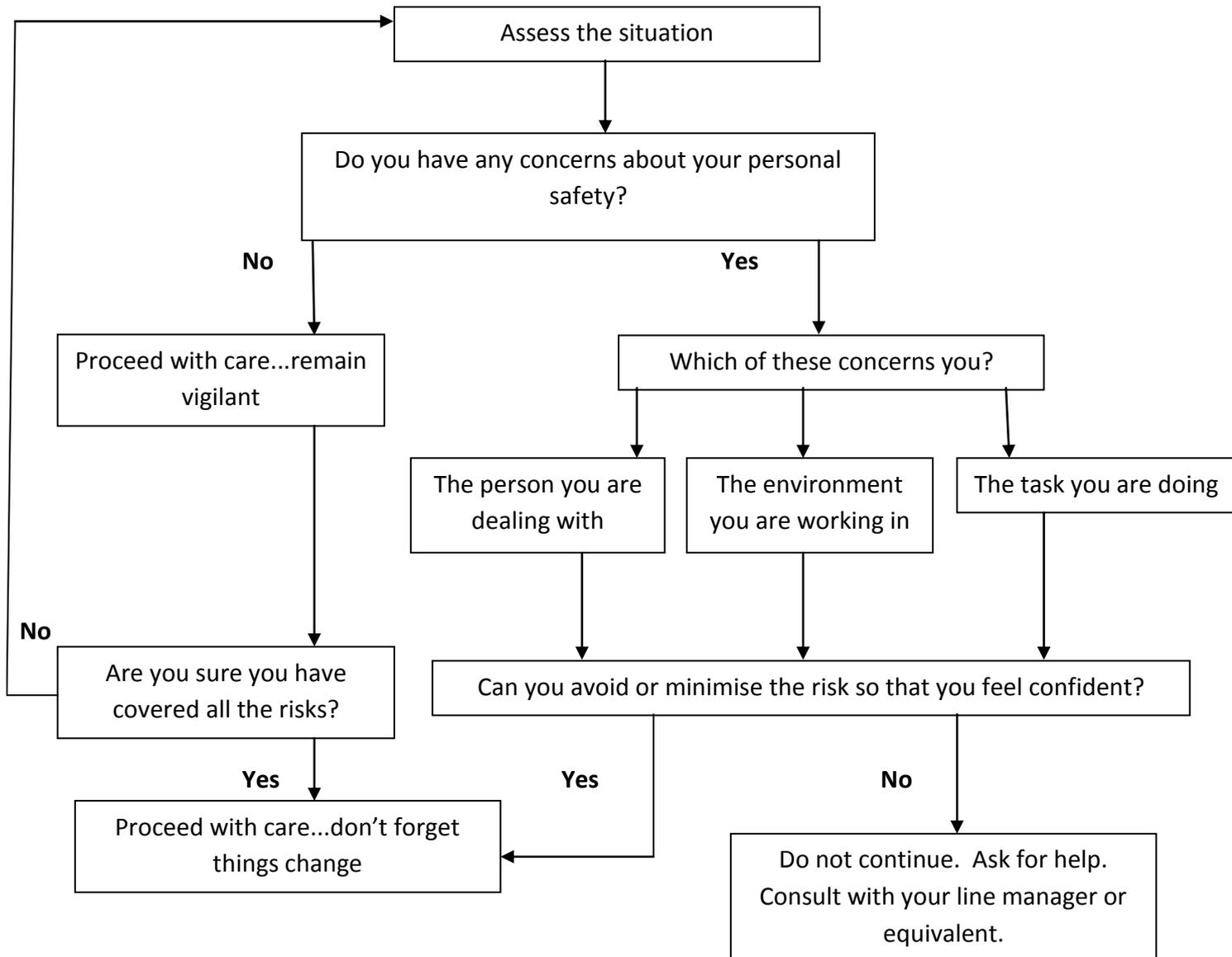
Risk assessments of new and existing activities must be made, in order to identify hazards and take action to minimize risk. The same approach must be taken if buildings are hired or let for church activities. Risk assessments must be made covering outside activities including travel arrangements. If specialized activities are to be undertaken, appropriate instructors must be engaged and their credentials confirmed. However, even when specialized instructors are involved, the parish or other church body retains the duty to supervise children. Risk assessments for individual workers are covered as part of Recruitment. A risk assessment is a documented process of considering what could be dangerous and possibly cause harm and how this risk could be minimized. By identifying the danger those responsible can look at what is already in place to prevent anyone coming to harm, and also look at what else could be done or put in place.

A hazard is anything or anyone that could cause harm e.g. high stacks of chairs, uneven floors, unsafe electrical equipment, blocked fire exits, lack of fire escape signs, missing light bulbs, overfilled cupboards, high shelves, loose carpets, toxic paints, chemicals, horseplay, unknown workers (paid or volunteers), working in unsupervised situations, exposure to sun or cold weather conditions, lifts in cars, challenging behaviour, smoking and drinking.

A risk is the chance great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

Risk assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.



When to do a risk assessment

It is recommended that for all new and existing parish activities, whether single events or regular activities, where children and adults at risk may be included, risk assessments are carried out before the event starts or happens, and then reviewed at regular intervals and at least annually.

Risk assessments must be reported to the PCC at least annually.

The following guidance is based on that issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

Five Steps to Risk Assessment

There are five things you need to do to carry out the risk assessment:

Step 1 – Identify the hazards and dangers

Walk round the building or venue looking out for things or situations that could be reasonably expected to cause harm

Ask other people – including vulnerable people - about what they think could cause harm

Step 2 - Identify who might be at risk and might be harmed

- Children and young people
- Those with special needs

- Adults who may be vulnerable, including wheelchairs users; partially sighted and blind people; people who are hearing impaired; people who walk with a stick or a frame; learning disabled people; mentally ill people
- Visitors, parents, carers
- Leaders, organizers, paid and volunteer workers
- Members of the public

Step 3 - Identify the risks and what can be done to remove or reduce them

How likely is it that the hazard could cause harm - scale of 1 (low) to 3 (high)?

How severe is the potential harm - scale of 1 (low) to 3 (high)?

Use the risk assessment tool on the following page to assess whether existing precautions in place are sufficient

What else can be done to reduce the risk, control or remove the hazard or danger?

Use the risk assessment tool to work out the risk level - high, medium or low both before and after you have taken action to reduce the risk

Step 4 – What are your findings? What do you need to do?

Use the *Risk Assessment Form* to record your finding

Each hazard should be recorded, including an assessment of the risk, recorded as either high, medium or low

Any action taken should be recorded (next to the hazard), showing the date and the name of the person carrying out the remedial action

Once action has been taken, the level of risk that the hazard presents should be as low as possible, and no higher than medium

Date and sign your record

Step 5 - Revise and evaluate your risk assessment regularly – at least annually, and before new or one-off activities begin.

For further advice consult the Health and Safety Executive at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/>

An example of a Risk Assessment proforma may be found on the Ecclesiastical Insurance website:

<http://www.ecclesiastical.com>