

St John The Evangelist, Redhill, Surrey

**Health and Safety Policy for Church, Community Centre and
Meadvale Hall**

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Document History

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Introduction

The community centre is a business and the law says that every business must have a policy for managing health and safety. This health and safety policy sets out the church's general approach to, and explains how as an employer it will manage, health and safety.

The law requires that, if the business has five or more employees, the policy must be written down. If the business has fewer than five employees the policy does not have to be written down but it is considered useful to do so. The policy, and any changes to it, must be shared with employees.

St John The Evangelist Church (the church) owns the church, the community centre adjacent to the church and Meadvale Hall and this policy and procedures are intended to apply to all three premises.

Policy Statement

The church recognises and accepts its health and safety duties for providing a safe and healthy working environment (as far as is reasonably practicable) for all its workers (paid or volunteer) and other visitors to its premises under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, other relevant legislation and common law duties of care.

Throughout this Statement, terms such as "staff", "workers", "employees", include both paid and volunteer workers.

It is the policy of the church to promote the health and safety of the committee members, volunteers, staff and of all visitors to the church's premises ("the Premises") and to that intent to:

- Take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all personnel on the premises;
- Provide adequate working conditions with proper facilities to safeguard the health and safety of personnel and to ensure that any work which is undertaken produces no unnecessary risk to health or safety;
- Encourage persons on the premises to co-operate with the church in all safety matter, in the identification of hazards which may exist and in the reporting of any condition which may appear dangerous or unsatisfactory;
- Ensure the provision and maintenance of plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe;
- Maintain safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- Provide sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable everyone to avoid hazards and contribute to their own safety and health;
- Provide specific information, instruction, training and supervision to personnel who have particular health and safety responsibilities (e.g. a person appointed as a Health and Safety Officer or Representative);

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- Make, as reasonably practicable, safe arrangements for protection against any risk to health and safety of the general public or other persons that may arise for the church's activities;
- Make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of employees and of persons not in the employment of the Groups/Organisation arising out of or in connection with the Groups/Organisation's activities;
- Make specific assessment of risks in respect of new or expectant mothers and young people under the age of eighteen;
- Provide information to other employers of any risks to which those employer's workers on the Groups/Organisation's premises may be exposed.

This policy statement and/or the procedures for its implementation may be altered at any time by the Parochial Church Council (PCC). The statement and the procedures may be reviewed regularly by the PCC or persons appointed by the PCC. A report on the review, with any other proposals for amendment to the statement of procedures, is to be made to the next following ordinary meeting of the PCC.

Statutory Duty of the Church

The church will comply with its duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its workers and of visitors to its premises and, in general, to:

- Make workplaces safe and without risks to health;
- Ensure plant and machinery are safe and that safe systems of work are set and followed;
- Ensure articles and substances are moved, stored and used safely;
- Give volunteers/ workers the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for their health and safety.

In particular, the church will:

- Assess the risks to health and safety of its volunteers/workers;
- Make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as necessary by this assessment;
- Record the significant findings of the risk assessment and the arrangements for health and safety measures;
- Draw up a health and safety policy statement; including the health and safety organisation and arrangements in force, and bring it to the attention of its workers;
- Appoint someone reasonably competent to assist with health and safety responsibilities;
- Set up emergency procedures;
- Provide adequate First Aid facilities;
- Make sure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements, e.g. for ventilation, temperature, lighting and for sanitary, washing and rest facilities;
- Make sure that work equipment is suitable for its intended use as far as health and safety is concerned, and that it is properly maintained and used;
- Prevent or adequately control exposure to substances that may damage health;

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- Take precautions against danger from flammable or explosive hazards, electrical equipment, noise or radiation;
- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations and, where they cannot be avoided, reduce the risk of injury;
- Provide health surveillance as appropriate;
- Provide free any protective clothing or equipment, where risks are not adequately controlled by other means;
- Ensure that appropriate safety signs are provided and maintained;
- Report certain injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the appropriate health and safety enforcing authority.

Statutory Duty of Workers

Employees also have legal duties, and the church confidently requests non-employed (voluntary) workers also to observe these.

They include the following:

- To take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and that of other persons who may be affected by what they do or do not do;
- To co-operate with the Group/Organisation on health and safety;
- To use work items provided by the Group/Organisation correctly, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with training or instructions;
- Not to interfere with or misuse anything provided for health, safety and welfare purposes;
- To report at the earliest opportunity injuries, accidents or dangerous occurrences at work, including those involving the public and participants in activities organised by the Group/Organisation;
- Health and Safety law applies not only to employees in the workplace, it also applies to organisations and people who occupy or use community buildings to which members of the public have access.

Policy for Visitors and Contractors

On arrival all visitors should be directed to the duty representative of the PCC or a representative of the user/hirer of the building. This person is to take responsibility for the visitor(s) and assist in their evacuation from the building during an emergency or arrange help in the event of an accident.

On arrival, all visitors, including contractors and/or their workers, must sign a record of the date and time of their arrival and, before leaving, should further record their time of departure.

Contractors working in the building should report any concerns relating to their own safety or suspected unsafe working practices to the duty representative of the PCC who will investigate and report to the church.

Risk Assessment

The church has a health and safety risk assessment document covering the church, community centre and Meadvale Hall which must be referred to. The risk assessment considers the following hazards:

- Trips
- Slips
- Falls From Height – Refer to Working at Height Procedure included in this document
- Fire
- Electricity
- Gas
- Lifting Equipment
- Work Equipment
- Manual Handling
- Bell Frames, Mechanisms and Ropes
- Food Preparation
- Asbestos
- Glazing
- Hazardous Substance
- Tower Tours
- Headstones, Tombs and Monuments
- Trees
- Car Park.

Procedures

General

For every activity where a hazard has been identified in the risk assessment precautions should follow the hierarchy of controls. The most effective control is Elimination whereby the hazard is removed. The next most effective is Substitution whereby a method of working is substituted by a less hazardous method. Next is Engineering Controls to isolate people from the hazard. Next is Administrative Controls to control the way people work. The least effective control is the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

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Working at Height

Reference must be made to Church Guidance Note Working at height and Church Guidance Note Ladders issued by Ecclesiastical Insurance copies of which should accompany this policy document and are available at <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/working-at-height.pdf>, dated April 2022, <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-working-at-height.pdf> dated October 2021 and at <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/ladder-safety-guidance.pdf> dated June 2022.

Specific duties relating to the prevention of falls are detailed in the Work at Height Regulations. As the church is an employer or has control of this work completed by others, the church needs to comply with them. In controlling this work, the church only needs to comply with the requirements to the extent of its control.

‘Work at height’ means any work in any place (including a place at or below ground level) from which a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury, and the duties extend to cover access to and from such a place (except by a staircase in a permanent workplace).

Where practicable, it is better to avoid working at height (e.g. completing the work from ground level using extendable tools).

Before during and after working at height the following must be carried out:

1. Implement precautions in accordance with the hierarchy of control
2. Inspect all access equipment including ladders and mobile towers and record the result of the inspection with the record signed and dated by those who carried it out
3. Provide adequate training and information for those required to work at height
4. Assign, and record the name of, a responsible person to manage the works.

Legal requirements for working at height

Broadly, the regulations require:

- The organising and planning of such work
- That persons are competent (or supervised by competent persons)
- Certain steps to be taken to avoid risk from work at height
- The correct selection and specification of work equipment
- The avoidance of risks from fragile surfaces, falling objects and dangerous areas
- The inspection of certain work equipment and of places of work at height.

Additional requirements might also apply in some circumstances (for example, where work equipment – such as a ladder – is used, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations would also apply).

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Other duties relating to the prevention of falls are set out in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations. The church needs to comply with these also. The term 'workplace' is very broad and could include a church.

Beyond this, you also need to meet your common law duty of care, ensuring that any work at height is completed safely so as not to cause injury to another because you have acted negligently.

Other notes regarding working at height

1. Avoid the need for work on or near fragile surfaces – including roof lights.
2. Ensure that no work at height is carried out when weather conditions make the work or access unsafe.
3. Ensure that employees and volunteers are provided with any necessary information, training or supervision if this is appropriate.
4. Make a note of any information or training that is provided, particularly in relation to the use of ladders and stepladders.

Legal requirements for ladders

For ladders, the Regulations require that:

- They are only used where a risk assessment shows that this is appropriate
- Surfaces supporting them are safe (i.e. stable, firm etc.)
- They are positioned to ensure their stability
- Portable ladders are prevented from slipping (by adequately tying-off the stiles at the upper end; using anti-slip or other stability devices etc.)
- They extend sufficiently above any landing place, unless there is provision for an adequate hand-hold
- Interlocking or extension ladders are only used if their sections can be prevented from moving relative to each other while in use
- Mobile ladders are prevented from moving before being stepped on
- Where a ladder (or run of ladders) extends a vertical distance of 9m or more above its base, then sufficient safe landing areas or rest platforms are provided at suitable intervals
- They are used in such a way as to ensure they provide a secure handhold/support at all times for users and that a safe handhold can be maintained when carrying a load.

Other additional requirements might also apply (e.g. where work equipment – such as a ladder – is used, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations would also apply) in some circumstances. The church must still make sure that any equipment (including any ladder) provided for use by others is safe.

Other notes regarding the use of ladders

1. Ladders or stepladders might be more practical if acceptable because of the low risk associated with the work and the short duration of their use or there are existing

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features in the church that cannot be altered. As a guide, 'short duration' means having to stay up the ladder for less than 30 minutes at a time.

2. Ladders must only be used where they will be level, stable and properly secured.

Fire

Reference must be made to the document Essential Information For All Users dated March 2020 which includes fire safety procedures for the community centre.

Attachments

1. Ecclesiastical Insurance document Working at height
2. Ecclesiastical Insurance document Ladders.