



Health and Safety Policy for Diss United Reformed Church, Mere Street, Diss , Norfolk IP22 4AD (May 2023)

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety at Diss URC is that of the Minister, the Elders: Robin Pagan, Gabrielle Pagan, the Church Leader: Jo Patel and the Community Worker: Ruth Bridges

The Eldership of this church is committed, so far as is reasonably practicable, to providing a safe and healthy environment for its staff, volunteers, church members, all involved in church activities and everyone using the premises.

Although churches do not generally present significant safety concerns, it is important that hazards are identified, risks assessed and action taken where necessary.

Health and Safety is about reducing the chance of someone being harmed. It is about eliminating risk where possible and where appropriate managing it. Awareness and training are paramount.

This policy outlines how this can be achieved and incorporates the requirements of the:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (and the regulations made under it.)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Food Safety Act 1990, and EU food hygiene law (as interpreted by the Food Standards Agency).

The policy will of course be most effective if all church members, staff, volunteers and other church attendees, and those who participate in church activities or use its premises, do the following:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or not do
- Cooperate with the church on health and safety
- Correctly use work items provided by the church (including personal protective equipment) in accordance with training and instructions
- Do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for health, safety or welfare.

This policy and procedures should be interpreted in the light of detailed advice and guidance from sources such as:

- the PLATO Property Handbook, produced by the United Reformed Church's network of Property, Legal and Trust Officer's, available at <http://www.urc.org.uk/plato-property-handbook1.html>
- the United Reformed Church's good practice guidance for safeguarding, available at <http://www.urc.org.uk/ministry/safeguarding-children.html>
- Congregational & General's Safer Places of Worship website, <http://www.spow.co.uk/start.php>
- Ecclesiastical Insurance Church health and safety policy with guidance notes, <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/churchguidance/churchhealthandsafety/index.asp>
- [x](#)
- Health & Safety Executive, <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

1. To prevent accidents and provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from church activities.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments will be completed for the church premises and church activities. Actions arising out of those assessments will be implemented. Risk assessments will be reviewed at least every year, or sooner if changes are made to church premises or church activities.

They will include:

- A general risk assessment for the Church completed by the church health and safety officer
- Specific risk assessments completed by employees for the church-led groups using the church for activities and events which they organise. These risk assessments, where appropriate, will take account of children's changing needs as they grow and develop, and will be mindful of needs resulting from physical and learning disabilities and factors that may make some children and adults more vulnerable than others.
- Specific risk assessments completed for each off-site activity. If transport is organised by the Church, then the risk assessment will include travel arrangements and measures will be taken to ensure: qualified and safe drivers; roadworthy vehicles' suitable insurance cover; and use of seat belts or appropriate car seats or booster cushions.

- External groups hiring the church premises for their own use, will complete their own risk assessments.

Group / activity leaders should carry out a quick visual inspection of the area being used for their meeting / event / activity before starting, note any concerns, take whatever immediate action is possible to reduce the risk of harm, and report any concerns to the Church Elders as soon as possible after the event.

Electrical issues

Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. All group leaders and volunteers must observe the following:

- Visually check all electrical equipment before use
- Report all faults found immediately to the responsible person.
- Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment
- Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods.
- Anyone bringing electrical equipment onto the premises and used are responsible for ensuring that the equipment is safe. Ideally it should be PAT tested.
- Flexible cables should be positioned and protected so that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage.

Manual handling

We will eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, as far as possible.

Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee, member or volunteer of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

- Provide a copy of their own health and safety policy (where required by law)
- Provide evidence that they have appropriate Public and Employers' Liability insurance in place.

- Where plant and machinery are brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation
- Contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with permission from the church. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors.
- All contractors will be given instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work, the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake, and any safety precautions they must take.

2. To provide adequate information and training to ensure employees and volunteers are competent in their role.

Staff and volunteers will be given necessary health and safety information and provided with appropriate training, including training in the fire evacuation plan.

Other building users (e.g. organisations letting the church premises) will be given necessary health & safety information, including a copy of this policy, fire risk assessment and evacuation plan and they will be reminded to do their own risk assessment of the premises.

3. To implement emergency procedures - evacuation in case of fire or other significant incident - to fulfil the obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Fire risk assessment reviewed annually (as part of the annual health & safety review).

Fire/Emergency exits clearly identified with the appropriate signage. Smoke detectors and fire fighting equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers) are in place, regularly tested and properly maintained by a competent technician.

4. To maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage / use of substances

Basic provision for employees, volunteers and persons letting the premises

Adequate heating and lighting, toilets, washing facilities and drinking water will be provided for the use of employees, volunteers and persons letting the premises.

Regular inspection and maintenance of premises

Regular inspections of premises and grounds, to include:

- General cleanliness and tidiness (as a build-up of debris is a fire risk)
- Adequacy and proper functioning of lighting, heating and ventilation (especially checking that light bulbs working well in areas where there is no natural light)
- Ease of access and movement (particularly checking that doors and corridors are free from obstruction, especially any emergency exits and evacuation routes)
- General fabric of building. Any defects noted are immediately reported to the Elders and the procedures put in hand for repairs. Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to minimise the risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.

Regular inspection, testing and maintenance of equipment and machinery

Regular inspection, testing and maintenance of any equipment or machinery (eg ladders, electrical equipment and sockets, heating and cooking appliances etc). Prompt action should be taken to address any defects.

The Inspection, testing and maintenance regime will include:

- *An annual check of the gas boiler and any other gas equipment is maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor who is registered with the Gas Safe Register.*
- An annual test of any portable electrical equipment (PAT test) by a competent person
- A five-yearly inspection and test of the fixed electrical system by a competent contractor (who is NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT certified).

Any necessary work required for safety will be implemented immediately.

Storage and use of hazardous substances

- Where possible, the storage and use of hazardous substances will be avoided.
- Any hazardous substances used on the church premises will be noted and stored safely
- Chemicals should not be stored in unmarked containers and should not be mixed.
- Hiring groups are not to bring any hazardous substances onto the church site without permission from the Church Elders.

5. Food hygiene regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs will be followed.

Registration

We have a certificate for food hygiene for everything that happens in the church kitchen.

Training

We will ensure that all food handlers have received adequate instruction and are aware of good practice in food preparation, handling, storage, and disposal of waste.

Risk assessment

We will ensure that the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored including storage at the correct temperatures. Extra care will be taken when preparing and serving food for under-fives, expectant mums, people with serious medical conditions and the elderly.

Hygiene

Workers will follow good personal hygiene (eg hand-washing and hair-tying) and all surfaces coming into contact with food during preparation will be clean before use.

Outside organisations

We will ensure that all hirers who wish to provide food of any kind, are advised of the facilities and procedures.

6. Basic first-aid provision will be available during church activities

First aid kits

A First-aid kit is kept on the premises in the clearly marked cupboard in the kitchen.

The use of first-aid equipment is to be reported to the Elders and the contents replenished as soon as possible to keep it fully stocked.

Reporting accidents

Church staff, volunteers and leaders of other organisations using the church premises, should report incidents in the accident book which is kept on top of the fridge in the kitchen. The book and all reported accidents will be reviewed regularly and any risks/hazards that are identified will be dealt with promptly.

7. Serious accidents and ill health on the premises are reported under RIDDOR regulations

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations will be followed. Fatal accidents, major injuries and injuries which involve the injured person being absent from work for more than seven days must be reported to the enforcing authorities. So must diseases and certain dangerous occurrences, as defined by the regulations. These can be reported online at www.hse.gov.uk/riddor and records kept by the church.

There are three requirements for reporting, as follows:

- Serious injuries or dangerous occurrences (as defined by the regulations) must be reported immediately. This must be followed by a report in writing within ten days on official form F2508.
- Accidents involving the injured person losing more than seven consecutive days work (excluding the day of the accident but including any days which would not have been working days) but which do not fall into the above category, must be reported in writing within fifteen days on form F2508.
- Reportable diseases must be reported in writing on form F2508A. (This will be required only if the employer receives a written diagnosis of the disease made by a doctor and the person concerned is involved with a work activity as specified in the regulations. (Reportable diseases are defined by regulations but include certain poisonings, infections such as legionellosis and hepatitis, and other conditions such as certain musculo-skeletal disorders.)

See www.hse.gov.uk/riddor for further details about these regulations including detailed definitions of what must be reported.

8. Church Elders checklist of duties include:

Monthly:

Emergency exits and smoke alarms (visual and test buttons)

Fire extinguishers (Visual)

PAT (visual)

First aid box

Annual:

PAT testing

Fire extinguisher service

Building fire risk assessment

All hiring group's risk assessment

Kitchen and food preparation area

5 years:

Survey for any health & safety issues

Electrical wiring test and certificate

9. Review and monitoring of this policy

This policy will be reviewed, monitored and revised by the Elders' Meeting every 12 months (or sooner if church activities change significantly) and will be approved and adopted by the Church Meeting annually

Signed:

(David Ely
(Jo Patel)
(Ruth Bridges)

Date: May 2023

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan for Diss United Reformed Church, May 2023

In case of emergency, requiring the building to be evacuated immediately, inform the church/event/group leader who will implement this plan to clear the building.

All external exit doors have a key on a chain to allow instant access to leave the building. These doors must remain unlocked whilst people are in the building.

Do not ignore the smoke alarms, there is no such thing as a false alarm, if the alarms sound, put this evacuation plan into immediate effect.

Do not take personal risks. Only use fire extinguishers if there is no danger or to enable a safe exit.

- **Fire extinguishers:** located in: The hallway beside the Lenton Room
The hall beside the side door exit
The sanctuary to both the left and right of the front exit doors
The kitchen to the right of the door (a powder extinguisher)
- **Fire blanket:** located in: The kitchen to the left of the door
- **Assembly point:** Outside the front of building on the opposite side of the road in front of Aldi

Fire and Evacuation Plan

Whatever activity is underway in the building the Group Leader must:

1. Assess the situation quickly, calmly & safely and alert everyone to the need for evacuation.
2. Point out signs for the emergency exits (front door, side door and back door)
3. Ensure people are helped out of the building, using the nearest **safe Fire Exit door to the opposite side of the road to the front of the building, outside Aldi.**
4. Get everyone safely to the assembly point **on the opposite side of the road to the front of the building, outside Aldi.**
5. The Group Leader should have taken a register/ have a list of the people present and this with them when vacating the premises to check that all are out of the building and at the assembly point.

6. If necessary the Group Leader or a delegated responsible person, who knows the building, should do a physical check inside, but **ONLY** if it is safe to do so.
7. The Group Leader should contact the Fire Brigade as soon as possible by dialling **999** on their mobile phone or by using a telephone in Aldi.
Church address: **Diss URC, Mere Street, Diss, Norfolk. IP22 4AD**
Three words: **Peachy, Uplifting, Last**
8. The Group Leader must then **Liaise** with the Fire Brigade on their arrival.

NO-ONE IS TO RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO BY THE FIRE BRIGADE.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT FOR DISS UNITED REFORMED CHURCH undertaken on 26.04.2023

1. FIRE HAZARDS

Have you found anything that could start a fire?

- There is a gas, 2 ring hob in the kitchen. This is kept turned off when not in use and nothing flammable is kept on or near it.
- The church occasionally uses candles which are dealt with by responsible adults, using safety matches and positioned safely, away from curtains. The Elders or Group Leader are responsible for checking the building and making sure all candles are extinguished when everyone leaves and the building is locked.
- Rubbish is properly disposed of and the bins are left for collection appropriately, so they are never over full.
- The garden waste bin is treated in the same way and any overflow garden waste is stored away from the building or taken off site and disposed of appropriately.
- The building is well maintained and checked regularly for any fire risks.
- There are no flammable liquids stored in the building except household cleaning fluids, in the correct containers under the kitchen sink.
- Smoking is not permitted on the church premises.

2. PEOPLE AT RISK

Who could be at risk if there was a fire or an emergency evacuation?

- People who are less mobile, using wheelchairs, walking frames and sticks, anyone who is sight or hearing impaired, who attend the Church services, the Café and other events being held in the building.
- Children may attend these activities, including babies in pushchairs

In the event of an evacuation

- The building does not require fire alarms, due to its size. Therefore, the evacuation alarm is raised by the sound of the smoke detectors or by people alerting others by sound or touch.
- The responsible adults present will provide help and stay calm, so that everyone can be guided out of the building as per the evacuation plan. This will be overseen by the Group Leader at the time and it is their responsibility to make sure all leaders and helpers know the evacuation plan.
- Wheelchair users should be guided calmly or helped by their carer to evacuate safely and completely away from the building to the assembly point and away from the fire exit routes, to avoid obstruction.
- Children should be carried by parents or carers and if possible, pushchairs should be left behind, so as not to create a bottleneck on the evacuation routes. Stored pushchairs must be away from exit doors and routes.
- Anyone who may be injured before or during a fire should be removed from the building safely, helped appropriately and cared for by a responsible adult until the emergency services arrive.

3. EVALUATE AND ACT

- A heat detector needs to be fitted in the kitchen.
- Torches should be provided in case of fire at night time to enable people to find the fire exits quickly and efficiently.

4. RECORD AND REVIEW

- If new electrical equipment is brought onto the site, it will be PAT tested as soon as possible and training in its use given to all users.
- The fire extinguishing equipment will be well maintained and serviced every year
- If there are any incidents at the premises, then a new risk assessment will be carried out by the Church Leader or the Community Worker, and the Group Leaders for those who use the building will be made aware.
- This risk assessment will be reviewed annually by the Church Elders and a report given to the Annual Church Meeting. However, this risk assessment can be updated at any time. For example, if the building is changed or how it is used, or if anyone in the building draws attention to a risk not already noted.

Signed:

(David Ely)
(Jo Patel)
(Ruth Bridges)

Date: May 2023