FIRE SAFETY

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Statutory Instrument 2005/1541
This Order, passed by the Government in 2005, came into force on 1ˢᵗ October 2006 and replaces all previous fire safety legislation. It applies to all non-domestic buildings and therefore chapels and ancillary halls are included.

Churches must therefore have a Fire Safety Policy. It will include a plan of the premises, list the fire marshals (who take charge in the event of a fire), state the assembly point(s) (where people should congregate in the event of evacuation), and state the procedures covering who does what (including dialling 999) and how the premises are to be evacuated. The Fire Safety Policy will also state who the "responsible person" is. This is the person who is ultimately responsible for Fire Safety and who has personal liability for the safety of everybody in the premises. Failure to meet the obligations imposed by this Order can lead to criminal prosecutions if injuries occur as a result of fire.

The first step in producing a Fire Safety Policy is to conduct a Fire Risk Assessment and the Government's guidelines suggest that there are five stages in conducting a Fire Risk Assessment - see Schedule One. We have provided a draft Model Fire Safety Policy as an example only – See Schedule Two. Churches will have to adopt their own as each one will be different depending on the plan of the site, how buildings are best evacuated – and so on.

A comprehensive booklet entitled *"Fire Safety Risk Assessment – small and medium places of assembly"* is available at a cost of £12 from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

To order, telephone: 0300 123 1124 or email: product@communities.gsi.gov.uk

We recommend this document which has been approved by Government Ministers and which has official status.

Another useful booklet, available free from the same website is, *"Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – A Short Guide to Making your Premises Safe From Fire"*

A step-by-step, easy to follow, Fire Safety Record Manual which enables users to record all relevant Fire Safety Information is available to purchase from:

Magenta Moon LLP, 12-14 Macon Court, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6EA
Tel: 01270 849 197
E-mail: enquiries@magentamoon.co.uk
Website: www.magentamoon.co.uk

We do not actually endorse this product as such, but some churches may find it useful.

Fire Safety Procedures continue on the following pages.

FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

1 Identify fire hazards

Identify:

Sources of ignition
Sources of fuel
Sources of oxygen

2 Identify people at risk

Identify:

People in and around the premises
People especially at risk

3 Evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk

Evaluate the risk of a fire occurring
Evaluate the risk to people from fire
Remove or reduce fire hazards
Remove or reduce the risks to people

- Detection and warning
- Fire-fighting
- Escape routes
- Lighting
- Signs and notices
- Maintenance

4 Record, plan, inform, instruct and train

Record significant finding and action taken
Prepare an emergency plan
Inform and instruct relevant people; co-operate and co-ordinate with others
Provide training

5 Review

Keep assessment under review
Revise where necessary

Remember to keep your fire risk assessment under review

Extracted from "Fire Safety Risk Assessment – small and medium places of assembly" (Crown Copyright) which provides a thorough explanation, diagrams and checklists in respect of each of the above stages.

DRAFT FIRE SAFETY POLICY

NOTE

This document is supplied to illustrate the kind of policy that needs to be in place and the type of issues that need to be addressed. The Officers of each church must write their own policy reflecting their own situation. This draft may be a useful guide but it is nothing more than that.

1.   Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the arrangements for fire risk management at xxxx Baptist Church to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

2.   Scope

This policy describes in detail the arrangements for fire risk management at xxx Baptist Church and identifies responsibilities for its implementation. It also identifies the protective and preventative control measures used to control risks associated with fire.

This policy applies to anyone using the church facilities or any other part of the site for whatever reason and particularly those with specific responsibilities for fire safety. The actions to be taken in the event of a fire are contained in Appendix 'A'

3.   Responsibilities

3.1   The Pastor and Deacons are responsible for:

Compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to:
- Take fire precautions as far as reasonably practicable to ensure the safety of members
- Take fire precautions as far as reasonably practicable to ensure the safety of non members including tradesman
- Implement the fire policy
- Review the policy annually

3.2   'Activity/Event ` Leaders are responsible for:

Assisting the church leadership to ensure fire safety by:
- Taking the responsibility of Duty Fire Warden for that activity or nominating a suitable representative
- Ensuring fire drills are carried out regularly, at least one every six months
- Carrying out regular inspections to ensure fire doors and escape routes are not obstructed
- Mitigating any additional risks as far as possible

3.3 The 'Fabric' Deacon is responsible for:

Assisting the church leadership to ensure fire safety by:
- Ensuring contractors and tradesman are familiar with the contents of the fire risk assessment
- Ensuring annual inspection of Portable fire extinguishers and six monthly inspection of detection equipment
- Mitigating any additional risks as far as possible

4. Procedure

Fire at the xxx Baptist Church and attendant risks to health and safety are an important factor in the organisation of the church. It is therefore recognised that the hazards that could affect fire safety be identified, addressed and the appropriate control measures devised and implemented, in compliance with current legislation, to reduce the likelihood of fire and its effects so far as is reasonably practicable.

4.1 Legislation

The church must comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Any changes to the legislation will be assessed to determine the implications of the changes and to prepare proposals to implement new requirements.

4.2 Fire Prevention

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 identifies the requirement for the church to complete Fire Safety Risk Assessments for ensuring that the fire risk to persons is acceptable. Any changes to the buildings, equipment or systems that may effect the assessments will be managed appropriately.

4.3 Fire Safety Risk Assessment

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that that the 'Responsible Person must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which relevant persons are exposed for the purpose of identifying the general fire precautions'.

The fire safety risk process at xxx Baptist Church is broken down as follows:
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment Introduction/Summary
- The Area Fire Safety Risk Assessments
- The Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan.

Irrespective of the level of Fire Risk Assessment being conducted the Risk Assessment process follows the HSE 'Five Steps' to Risk Assessment:

Step 1 - Identify the Hazard
Step 2 – Identify the people at risk
Step 3 – Evaluate the risk
Step 4 – Record the finding and actions required
Step 5 – Keep the assessment under review.

5   Review and Approval

The Pastor and Deacons will review the area assessments prior to final approval by the Pastor acting as principal employee. The Fire Risk Assessment will be reviewed annually by the Leadership unless significant changes occur within the review period in which case a review will be conducted at the conclusion of the changes to ensure the assessments remain current.

6   Control of Fire Risk

The risks to persons and buildings shall be controlled as follows:

6.1   The removal of sources of ignition where practicable.

6.2   The prevention of combustible waste accumulation and its disposal.

6.3   Emergency lighting, smoke/fire doors and emergency exits to be clearly and correctly marked and operate as intended.

6.4   The provision of fixed smoke and carbon monoxide detectors located at designated locations.

6.5   Promote awareness of the hazards and risks that may be encountered and control measures to be used.

6.6   The provision of training for activity/event leaders in both fire fighting techniques (where appropriate) and familiarisation with this policy. The activity/event leader will be the duty fire warden for that event/activity.

6.7   The provision of portable fire extinguishers of the correct type and capacity located at designated locations.

6.8   Receipt of a written risk assessment where an activity causes a significant increase to the fire risk.

6.9   Regular practice of the fire evacuation procedure (see Appendix A). It is recognised that to undertake such a practice during Sunday services would result in a greater risk to persons than the benefit received from the practice and therefore will be avoided.

6.10 Ensuring escape routes to be clearly and correctly marked and kept clear of obstructions. Where an escape route is not suitable for wheelchairs it will be the fire warden's responsibility to appoint assistance.

7   Duties of Fire Wardens:

7.1   It shall be the responsibility of the duty Warden to ensure the safe evacuation of all the assembled persons, to contact the emergency services and to ensure the remaining site is clear of persons. This will be controlled by areas as follows:

    7.1.1   Area/Tag 1- Assembly Point – This will act as prompt for the various tasks either to be assigned or undertaken directly.

7.1.2 Area/Tag 2 – Emergency Services – This tag will contain the address and postcode of the church.

7.1.3 Area/Tag 3 – Green hall and classroom clearance – It will be the recipient's job to ensure that the green hall and classrooms are clear.

7.1.4 Area/Tag 4 – Hall and toilet block – It will be the recipient's job to ensure that the hall and toilets are clear.

7.1.5 Area/Tag 5 – Church – It will be the recipient's job to ensure that the church, kitchen and disabled toilet is clear.

7.2 Prior to the commencement of an activity the fire warden will ensure that all fire exits are clear.

7.3 At the commencement of an activity the duty fire warden or the duty warden will collect the tags from a predetermined location and will keep them for that activity. Depending on the activity the tags may be left in their storage location but fire safety remains the duty fire warden's responsibility.

7.4 Should a fire or a fire drill be called during the event the duty fire warden distributes the tags and depending on the nature of the event will nominate person/persons to clear the three areas and report to the assembly point. The fire warden will have the option of either distributing the tags prior to an evacuation or at the assembly point depending on circumstances and available supervision at that time. However the safety of the assembled persons remains top priority.

7.5 At the assembly point the fire warden will ensure that the emergency services are contacted by nominating and giving tag 2 to an individual who will then phone for assistance, (the church's details are on tag 2). It is advised that unless the duty fire warden has access to a mobile phone he/she remains at the assembly point to co-ordinate activities and keep control.

7.6 The fire warden will conduct a role call or try to determine if anyone is missing. Should person/persons be missing having conducted a head count and cleared the site it may be necessary to re-search the areas. However at no time should anyone re-enter an area where a fire is known to be.

7.7 On arrival of the emergency services the fire warden will act as liaison and provide details as required.

7.8 The fire warden may wish to consider attempting to extinguish a fire using available help, **BUT** unless there is clear evidence that the fire is localised and easily extinguishable no attempt must be made to tackle it.

Where activities overlap the ongoing activity leader retains the responsibility until finishing time. On the conclusion of the last activity/activities the tags are returned to their location.

8   Additional Duties of the Church Secretary

8.1   The Church Secretary or nominated deputy will undertake the responsibility of the duty fire warden for services on Sundays.

8.2   Prior to the start of a service the Secretary will collect the tags and hold tag 1. He will then distribute tag 2 and the three area clearing tags to deacons, in the first instance, or suitable members of the congregation should none be available.

8.3   Should a fire or a fire drill be called during the service the fire wardens duties will be executed in the normal manner.

Evacuation Procedure

On discovering a fire:

All persons

1.   Raise alarm – Use rotary Gong in church foyer or by shouting 'Fire'

2.   Evacuate Site – All persons will evacuate the site using the nearest fire exit and assembly on the lawn adjacent to the Manse.

Duty Fire Warden:

On the alarm being raised the duty warden will:

1.   'Round up' as many of the group as possible before making their way to the assembly point.

2.   Appoint person/persons to clear green hall and classrooms (Tag 3)

3.   Appoint person/persons to clear hall and toilet block (Tag 4)

4.   Appoint person/persons to clear church, kitchen and disabled toilet (Tag 5)

Note:
The duty fire warden may nominate persons to clear the three areas either prior to reaching the assembly point or on arrival at the assembly point depending on the event and local conditions at the time of the alarm.

5.   Appoint person/persons to contact Emergency services giving them tag 2

6.   On arrival at the assembly point carry out a head count to determine if persons are missing and receive the three area clear reports.

7.   Await arrival of Emergency Services and direct to fire or carry out tasks as directed.

Evacuation Procedure for Sunday Services

All persons

1. Raise alarm – Use rotary Gong in church foyer or by shouting 'Fire'

2. Evacuate Site – All persons will evacuate the site using the nearest fire exit and assemble on the lawn adjacent to the Manse.

Duty Fire Warden/ Church Secretary:

1. On the alarm being raised the duty warden will:

2. Make his way promptly to the lectern and request that the congregation make their way to the assembly point via the nearest fire exit and stay there. He will then assess whether specific individuals require assistance and request that nearby able- bodied persons escort them to the assembly point. In that time the appointed person responsible for the church will ensure that the rear fire escape is open and then proceed to give assistance where required before clearing the kitchen and toilet and making his way to the assembly point.

3. Proceed to the assembly point.

4. Appoint person/persons to contact Emergency services giving them tag 2

5. On arrival at the assembly point carry out a head count to determine if persons are missing and receive the three area clear reports.

6. Await arrival of Emergency Services and direct to fire or carryout tasks as directed.

Tags

Tag 1

Co-ordination at Assembly point

1 Role Call
2 Contact Emergency Services (Tag 2)
3 Clear Green Hall & Classrooms (Tag 3)
4 Clear Hall and Toilets (Tag 4)
5 Clear Church (Tag 5)
6 Await Emergency Services

Tag 1 Reverse

Pre Activity Check

Check Fire exits are clear and unlocked.

Tag 2

Phone Emergency Service

Tag 3

Area 1

Check

Green Hall and Classrooms

Clear

Tag 4

Area 2

Check

Hall and Toilet block

Clear

Tag 5

Area 3

Check

Church, Kitchen and Disabled Toilets

Clear