

Health & Safety Policy 2025

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of *The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974* and the regulations made under it.

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Date of next review: January 2026

A: General Statement of Policy

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, casual labour and voluntary helpers, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We will also endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, contractors, visitors and others who may visit the church, church centre and other areas of the site.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed annually and the appropriate changes made.

B: Organisation and Responsibilities

1. Responsibility of the Vicar

Overall responsibility for health and safety is that of the Vicar, the Revd Jema Ball, who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy health and safety regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice. Specific responsibilities may be delegated to church personnel. As new projects emerge, the names of responsible persons will be notified and the list amended accordingly.

2. Responsibility of the Churchwarden/s

Responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary lies with the Churchwarden/s.

3. Responsibility of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC has general oversight of the Health and Safety policy.

4. Responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer

The Operations Manager (the Health and Safety Officer) carries the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the arrangements outlined in this policy.

The responsibility of the health and safety officer shall be to:

- a. be familiar with health and safety regulations as far as they concern church premises
- b. be familiar with the health and safety policy arrangements and ensure they are observed
- c. ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that safe systems of work are in place
- d. ensure the church and centre are clean and tidy



- e. ensure the grounds, including the ramp and car park, are maintained, including the safety of boundaries and trees
- f. ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required
- g. ensure that all equipment and tools are properly maintained and in good condition and that all operators have received the appropriate training
- h. ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained
- i. ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained
- j. ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed.

5. Responsibility of Employees and Voluntary Workers

All employees and voluntary workers 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 business or premises.

Employees and voluntary workers must therefore:

- a. comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures
- b. use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- c. report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person
- d. report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible
- e. not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

6. Responsible Persons

The following are responsible for safety on church premises during services and other organised activities:

- Service, group or activity leaders;
- Vicar;
- Churchwardens;
- clergy and staff

C: Arrangements (implementation of the policy)

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise as far as is reasonably practicable risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, visitors and contractors.

1. Accidents and First Aid

First aid boxes are located in the kitchen and at the back of the church near the font.



A list of trained/qualified first aiders is displayed in Church.

The Accident Book is located in the kitchen and the church servery.

All accidents and incidents are to be entered in the Accident Book.

In the event of a reportable accident (defined below), our insurers must be informed – the Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring this is done.

Outside organisations, hiring the Church and/or Church rooms are told in writing via our 'Policy for Hire of Premises', that in the event of an accident, details shall be reported to the Operations Manager as soon as possible, and an accident record completed in the Accident Book kept in the Kitchen.

Accident books and accident records are regularly reviewed.

1.1 Incidents that need reporting in order to comply with RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013)

The following information is a guide only. Further and more comprehensive information relating to reporting criteria is to be found on the HSE RIDDOR website.

This information relates to incidents that require reporting under RIDDOR. Please note though that all accidents, whether involving employees, volunteers or members of the public, should be recorded in the accident book. The completed forms should be returned to the office and filed in the accident folder. If the accident requires recording or reporting under RIDDOR, a copy should be made and filed in the RIDDOR file.

The following injuries, dangerous occurrences and diseases must be reported under RIDDOR:

Injuries (to volunteers or members of the public)

All accidents to volunteers and members of the public must be reported if:

- i. The accident was caused by our working practices or premises (for instance, someone tripping on a flat surface does not need reporting, but someone tripping on a loose step or raised flagstone may do) AND
- ii. The person was taken directly to hospital with an identified injury for treatment. This does not include people taken for tests or monitoring as a precaution.

Dangerous occurrences

Incidents with high potential to cause death or serious injury are listed on the HSE website.

Injuries to our employees and clergy

RIDDOR requires a report only when there has been:

- i. An accident which causes the injury
- ii. The accident was work related (i.e. caused by the way the work was carried out, work machinery or equipment or the condition of the workplace
- iii. The injury is of a type which is reportable (see below)

Reportable injuries (if occurring to employees or clergy)



- i. Death, with the exception of suicide, must be reported if it arises from a work-related accident, including an act of physical violence to a worker.
- ii. Injury requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- iii. Injury leads to the employee being off work or unable to perform their normal work duties for more than 7 days (not including the day of the accident).

Specific injuries include:

- Fractures, other than fingers, thumbs and toes
- Amputations
- Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- Any crush injury to head or torso causing damage to brain or internal organs
- Serious burns (including scalding) covering more than 10% of the body
- Burns causing significant damage to eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- Scalping requiring hospital treatment
- Loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- Any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness.

Diseases to our employees and clergy

Intended here are certain diagnosed reportable diseases and conditions caused by or made significantly worse by exposure to specific hazards in the workplace. These should be reported once we have been informed in writing by the employee. A supporting statement from their doctor is required. These conditions include:

- carpal tunnel syndrome
- severe cramp of the hand or forearm
- occupational dermatitis
- hand-arm vibration syndrome
- occupational asthma
- tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm
- any occupational cancer
- any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent.

Reporting should be done online within 15 days of incident in compliance with HSE regulations.

Records should be kept in the RIDDOR file of any reportable injury, any injury that requires the employee to be off work for more than 3 days (even though not reportable), disease or dangerous occurrence.

2. Fire Safety



Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In order to achieve this, we undertake the following:

- i. An assessment of the fire risks in the church and associated buildings and the risks to our neighbours. This is carried out either as a specific exercise or as part of our general health and safety risk assessments.
- ii. A check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned.
- iii. A check that people who may be in the building can get out safely including, if necessary, the provision of emergency lighting and fire exit signage.
- iv. To provide reasonable firefighting equipment.
- v. A check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire.
- vi. A regular check that our firefighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

Please also see Fire & Emergency Evacuation Plan on page 15.

2.1 Fire-fighting equipment

The extinguishers are checked monthly by Operations Manager or a person designated by them to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged.

The extinguishers are checked annually.

2.2 Fire alarm system

The fire alarm system is checked weekly by the Facilities Manager or a person designated by them. The system is serviced annually by the maintenance contractor.

2.3 Other fire protection equipment

The fire blanket in the kitchen is checked at the same time as the fire extinguishers.

2.4 Evacuation procedure

Please see our Fire & Emergency Evacuation Procedures – Appendix A

2.5 Evacuation drills

It is not currently considered practicable to enact evacuation drills during church services – the risks of incidents, due to our location on busy roads, makes it disproportionately dangerous to do so. In view of this, our evacuation procedures for the church are very detailed and those involved in running services need to be very familiar with them.

Training for service leadership teams, wardens, welcomers etc. is provided.

Fire evacuation drills in the church centre will be carried out annually. All employees and voluntary workers should ensure they are familiar with escape routes and ensure these are kept clear and unobstructed.



2.6 If you discover a fire (no matter how small)

- i. Immediately raise the alarm
- ii. Telephone the emergency services
- iii. Check the building for occupants
- iv. Attack the fire if possible and within your capability using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk
- v. If not possible to attack the fire or if you are unsure which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. The general rule is people before property.
- vi. Evacuate to the designated assembly point.
- vii. Ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles.

3. Electrical Safety

1. A list of all our portable electrical appliances is maintained by the office.
2. All users of electrical equipment should take responsibility for checking that the equipment they are using is in a safe condition – a quick, but thorough, visual check is all that is needed to identify most potential hazards. Any faulty items should no longer be used and should either be removed or labelled – ‘do not use’ – to avoid others using them. Any faults must be reported to the Operations Manager for action.
3. Every year all our portable electrical equipment will be tested by a competent person with an appropriate level of electrical knowledge and experience who has the correct equipment to complete the tests, knows how to use it and can correctly interpret the results. Any unsafe equipment will be safely disposed of.
4. Every 6 months a visual inspection will be carried out of the fixed electrical installation (consumer units, sockets, switches, exposed cables, cable trunking etc.) by the responsible person. Any defects will be reported to the Operations Manager for action.
5. Every 5 years, our fixed electrical system will be inspected and tested by a competent contractor who is a ‘Full Scope’ member of the NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT. Any necessary remedial work will be carried out.
6. At intervals of not more than 2½ years our lightning conductor system will be examined and tested by a competent specialist firm of lightning engineers.
7. It is our policy not to sell any second-hand electrical goods unless they have been inspected and tested by a suitably qualified person and a register of such equipment is maintained.
8. Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill.

All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

- i. Visually check all electrical equipment, including cables and plugs, before use.
- ii. Report all faults immediately to the responsible person.
- iii. Do not attempt to repair or use any faulty equipment.



- iv. No electrical equipment is to be brought onto the premises and used until it has been tested by the approved person and entered in the electrical equipment record. (This does not include personal devices).
- v. Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods.
- vi. Flexible cables should be positioned and protected so that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage.

4. Hazardous substances

Where possible, we have eliminated the use of hazardous substances. Where this is not possible, our safety arrangements are as follows:

For all hazardous substances, which include substances marked as 'harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, very toxic, flammable, highly flammable, extremely flammable, explosive, oxidising, or dangerous for the environment', data sheets or product information provided by the manufacturers are used to determine the correct method of use, protective clothing needed, method of storage, and action to take in the event of an accident.

Do not mix chemicals unless the manufacturer's instructions state this is permissible / required.

Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

5. Slips, trips and falls – condition of floors, steps and paths

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, an inspection will be made every quarter by the responsible person of:

- i. All floors and stairs in the church and church rooms
- ii. All paths and steps in the grounds. Particular note will be made of moss, algae and leaves on the path. Any defects will be reported to the Operations Manager or the Chair of the Fabric Committee, who will arrange for repairs, or remedial measures to be carried out.

6. Lighting

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, an inspection will be made every month by the responsible person to ensure that all lights in the church, centre and grounds are working. Any bulbs that require replacing will be reported to the Operations Manager who will ensure that the bulbs are replaced following appropriate safety procedures.

7. Working at height

We define working at height to mean working anywhere with a risk of falling, or where any sort of aid (e.g. stepladder) is required to enable the work to be carried out (e.g. changing a light bulb).

Only approved contractors and competent volunteers may work at a high level.



The following procedures must be followed:

- Persons should avoid working at height where possible.
- Only competent persons are to work at height – those who have been trained in the use of ladders or other equipment required in order to work at high levels.
- Persons may only work at height with the permission of the Operations Manager or Church Wardens.
- Persons must follow the flowchart below to minimise the risks as far as possible.
- Persons must risk-assess the activity and review risk assessment each time the procedure is carried out – including the legal requirements list.
- Persons must not work alone if above a single-height step ladder.
- Ladders must be checked for defects or unsuitable placement when moved or every seven days, whichever is sooner.
- Ladders must be inspected for safety every quarter.
- Hazards must be reported to the Operations Manager or Church Wardens.
- Equipment must be used in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

7.1 Working at height checklist (taken from the HSE website)

AVOID

Can you AVOID working at height in the first place? If NO, go to PREVENT.

Do as much work as possible from the ground.

Some practical examples include:

- i. Using extendable tools from ground level to remove the need to climb a ladder.
- ii. Installing cables at ground level.
- iii. Lowering a lighting mast to ground level.
- iv. Ground level assembly of end product.

PREVENT

Can you PREVENT a fall from occurring? If NO, go to *MINIMISE*.

Prevention can be achieved by ensuring an existing place of work is already safe, e.g. a non-fragile roof with a permanent perimeter guard rail or, by employing equipment to prevent people from falling.

Examples of collective protection in relation to an existing place of work: a concrete flat roof with existing edge protection; guarded mezzanine and floor, and plant or machinery fitted with fixed guard rails.

Examples of collective protection in relation to work equipment include: mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) such as scissor lifts, tower scaffolds, scaffolds.



An example of personal protection against falls using work equipment would be: using a work restraint (mobility restriction) system that prevents a worker getting into a fall position where possible.

MINIMISE

Can you MINIMISE the distance and / or consequences of a fall?

If the risk of a person falling remains, you must take sufficient measures to minimise the distance and / or consequences of a fall.

Examples of collective protection using work equipment to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall include: safety nets and soft landing systems, e.g. airbags, installed close to the level of work.

Examples of personal protection used to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall include: industrial rope access, e.g. working on a building façade, and a fall-arrest system using a high anchor point.

7.2 Using ladders and stepladders

For tasks of low risk and short duration, ladders and stepladders can be a sensible and practical option.

If your risk assessment determines it is correct to use a ladder, you should further MINIMISE the risk by making sure workers:

- Use the right type of ladder for the job.
- Are competent (you can provide adequate training / supervision to help).
- Use the equipment provided safely and follow a safe system of work.
- Are fully aware of the risks and measures to help control such risks.
- Follow HSE guidance on safe use of ladders and stepladders at <http://hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>.

8. Manual Handling – lifting, carrying and moving loads

Our policy is to 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, lifts and hoists as far as is possible. The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling. Only those persons who have received the appropriate training will be authorised to undertake manual handling tasks. Staff and churchwardens will stop people and issue advice when they see someone doing something unsafe.



9. Display Screen Equipment

Our policy is to assess the risks to all habitual users of computer workstations and to reduce these risks to the lowest level possible.

The following factors will be considered when carrying out risk assessments:

- Stability and legibility of the screen.
- Contrast and brightness of the screen.
- Tilt and swivel of the screen.
- Suitability of keyboards, desks and chairs in the work station environment.

Daily work routines will involve periods away from the screen. Where necessary, risk assessments will be carried out by the responsible person.

We recommend consulting the booklet: *Working with display screen equipment (DSE) – A Brief Guide* which is available from the HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>.

10. Hazardous Buildings / Glazing

Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are inspected every six months by the designated person.

Any defects noted are immediately reported to the Operations Manager and the procedures put in hand for repairs.

Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.

A check is made of all glazing in the building to ensure that all glass in windows below waist height and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height is of a safety material or is protected against breakage

10.1 Asbestos (Asbestos Containing Materials - ACMs)

10.1.1 Duties

St Mary's will comply with the Asbestos Management duties defined in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. It is the policy of St Mary's to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, no persons will be exposed to risks to their health due to exposure to any ACM containing materials that may be present in any of the properties it manages or occupies.

St Mary's aims to:

- i) ensure the prevention of exposure to risks associated with ACMs.
- ii) ensure that any ACMs that may be present in any of its buildings are maintained in a condition so as to prevent the possibility of any harm to health occurring.
- iii) promote awareness of the risks from ACM's through training and induction of relevant staff.
- iv) provide adequate resources to ensure the provision of appropriate information, and instructions.



- v) ensure a commitment to comply with all relevant asbestos legislation, Approved Codes of Practice, Health and Safety Executive Guidance Notes and to commit to the safe disposal of any asbestos waste in accordance with the appropriate legislation.
- vi) ensure that a representative proportion of properties built pre 2000 are subject to an Asbestos Management Survey Programme and an Asbestos Register (see Appendix B) for these buildings is prepared and maintained. This Register will undergo regular reviews and will be updated after any treatment and/or removal works have been undertaken.
- vii) ensure only UKAS accredited asbestos consultancies are used for asbestos surveying works, asbestos air testing and asbestos analysis work.
- viii) implement an effective asbestos management strategy in order that appropriate measures such as encapsulation, labelling, inspection, working with, or removal of, asbestos containing materials can be undertaken.
- ix) ensure that an appropriate system is installed, maintained and implemented for the management of all ACM's identified in the Register. Such a system is to be capable of recording the risk, the needs and priorities for treatment and/or removal.
- x) ensure that all Contractors and Sub Contractors engaged to carry out work on any of the Association's buildings are provided with adequate information on asbestos which may be disturbed by their works.
- xi) ensure that information regarding the presence of asbestos is contained in tender documentation as may be appropriate.
- xii) ensure Licensed Contractors and/or Sub Contractors carry out ALL Asbestos Licensable Works and Competent Contractors carry out ALL Asbestos Minor Works.
- xiii) ensure all Non-Licensed Contractors carrying out Asbestos Non Licensable Works are trained in safe working procedures and have appropriate insurance cover for the work being carried out.
- xiv) regularly review the Asbestos Management Policy and Procedures.

10.1.2 Risks

The presence of ACMs in itself does not constitute a danger. However, there is a potential risk to health if such material is disturbed and damaged. An isolated accidental exposure to asbestos fibres for a short duration is extremely unlikely to result in the development of asbestos related diseases. However, regular exposure – even at relatively low levels – can present a risk as 'cumulative exposure' develops over time. As well as people employed in the building trades, inadvertent exposure (and consequent risk) can occur in other groups of people e.g. installers of I.T. systems, burglar alarms, smoke detectors, etc.

10.1.3 Responsibilities

- a) Operational responsibility for managing asbestos risks rests with the PCC who will ensure that adequate resources are allocated and who will review the implementation of this policy and procedure at least once a year.

The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring that:



- An asbestos register is maintained and updated (See Appendix B)
- Ensure annual re-inspections are carried out by a competent person.
- Any damage caused is reported to the Buildings Committee and appropriate measures taken.
- Specialist asbestos contractors and consultants are accredited and licensed as required by legislation and carry out their work for St Mary's competently.

In addition the Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring that asbestos records are maintained so as to be accurate and accessible and made available as necessary to contractors.

b) St Mary's Staff and Volunteers have the following responsibilities:

- Not to disturb or commission others to disturb any part of the fabric of a building where ACM's are present without consultation with the operations manager e.g. drilling or fixing nails or screws or using drawing pins.
- To report immediately any materials or damage in their work area which they suspect to be an ACM to the duty holder or nominated responsible person.

IF IN DOUBT LEAVE IT ALONE AND REPORT IT

11. Lone Working and Personal Safety

Quite a lot of tasks in the life of church involve lone working, from setting up for a communion service, through cleaning the church building to pastoral visiting, and many others besides.

11.1 General Guidance

Many of the tasks we perform in our daily duties are quite safe, but risks are multiplied by working alone. It is therefore necessary to plan quite carefully. High among your priorities when assessing the risks must be how you would evacuate the area you are working in if an accident occurred (ensuring a safe level of lighting on your escape route is vital, for instance), and what you would do if rendered immobile by an accident. Having a working mobile phone, with a charged battery (and checking that it has a strong signal where you're working) is a great help.

If working alone, always inform a responsible person that you are doing so, what you are doing, and how long you expect to be. Inform them when you have finished and have left the area.

Some tasks, such as working at heights, may be considered too hazardous to be carried out alone.

Careful thought also needs to be given to the age, health and competence of those working alone. A task such as setting the communion table before a service (which involves carrying chalices, patterns, bread and jugs of wine up and down steps in and out of the vicar's vestry)

might be a low risk when carried out by someone young and reasonably fit and well but might be quite hazardous when carried out by someone with mobility issues, or whose sight isn't very good. Such a person might be able to carry out the task, but would probably require closer, more regular supervision.

If you are alone in the church building when nobody else is on site you should ensure that all the doors are locked.



12. Risk Assessments / Activities

Risk assessments will be carried out on all areas of the church premises and all activities that carry a significant risk at regular intervals by a competent person in order to meet our obligations under *The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*.

We require a risk assessment to be carried out for any one-off job or task not already covered by risk assessments for regular groups and activities. The risk assessment needs to be approved by the Operations Manager or one of the Church Wardens before any work is carried out.

13. Contractors

Anyone who enters church premises for the purpose of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor.

All contractors, including self-employed, must abide by the following constraints:

- i. Have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same.
- ii. Produce evidence that they have appropriate Public and Employers' Liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained.
- iii. Comply with all the requirements of this health and safety policy and co-operate with church officials in providing a safe place to work and a safe system of operation.
- iv. Where plant and machinery is brought onto the church premises by contractors, 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 the express permission of church officials. However, responsibility will remain solely that of the contractors.

All contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake. This 'permit to work' will also specify any safety precautions they must undertake.

14. Heating Systems

We will ensure that the gas heating system is suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made.

