

Church - fire risk assessment

Our fire risk assessment

Persons who have control over a church have a duty to take all reasonable precautions to prevent the outbreak of fire in the church and must ensure, as far as reasonably practicable the safety of all persons on the premises in the event of an outbreak of fire. Church authorities should therefore include a fire risk assessment as part of their precautions and risk assessment programme.

Ecclesiastical have developed this fire risk assessment template based on our own expertise. This assessment can only be used by churches whose normal activities are limited to what might be expected in a church building such as services and occasional public events such as concerts.

Churches with a wider range of activities such as night shelters, lettings and nurseries should consider appointing an independent consultant to help them carry out the Fire Risk Assessment.

How to use this Fire Risk Assessment

The assessment has the following sections which you will need to read and then complete:

Part 1 – Information about Our Church

Part 1 of the assessment is about collecting together all the information you need about your church so that you can perform the Fire Risk Assessment. It is broken down into various sections which are summarised below.

A Our Church Details

Basic information about our church location and the person responsible for the Fire Risk Assessment.

B General Information about our Church

Description of the church building and how it is used.

C Potential Fire Hazards at our Church

Details of fire hazards, sources of ignition and their elimination or control.

D Our Fire Protection Arrangements

Details of the current arrangements we have in place for fire protection.

E Our Fire Detection, Warning and Extinguisher Equipment

Details of the equipment we have in place and its testing and maintenance.

F Our Fire Safety Management

Information about our plans should a fire occur.

Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

Part 2 of the assessment is about the fire risks at our church and how we will go about fulfilling our obligations under the order.

Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety at Our Church

Part 3 of the assessment details the measures we have taken to offset the risk of fire at our church.

Continued overleaf

Part 4 – Our Action Plan to Reduce Fire Risk at Our Church

Part 4 details any gaps in our fire protection arrangements and outlines what we are going to do to address them.

Appendix 1

Examples to help you complete Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment.

Appendix 2

Examples to help you complete Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety at Our Church

Appendix 3 Fire Action Notice

A specimen notice that needs to be placed near all exit doors and in separate areas such as vestries which you will need to complete for your church.

Part 1 – Information about Our Church

A Our Church Details

Name of church:

Address:

Responsible person:

The Select Vestry of:

In the diocese of:

Date:

Suggested review date:

(This assessment should be reviewed at least annually unless there is a change that materially affects the fire risk such as a change in the method of heating or use of the building, when it should be reviewed immediately.)

Select Vestry member(s) responsible should sign here:

Print name(s):

Role(s):

B General Information about our Church

THE BUILDING:

Number of floors:

Floor area (approximate overall size in square metres):

(You will need to measure the building to calculate things like the number of fire extinguishers required and travel distances. See also 'Plan' below.)

Building description:

(Describe what the building comprises noting if there is one main undivided area and then separate parts which can be closed off from the main area which could prevent the spread of a fire, e.g. The main undivided area of the church comprises a lofty nave and chancel with north and south aisles and organ chamber. There are north and south porches and a vestry all of which can be closed off from the main part of the church by substantial oak doors. There is a tower at the west end of the church which is completely separated from the rest of the church and can only be accessed from an external door.)

Basic construction details:

(For example, The church is built of stone/brick with a slate/tile roof on a timber frame. The floor is of solid construction covered with tiles.)

Use of the church:

Note the use of the building and how often it is occupied, e.g. The church is used for services twice on a Sunday but otherwise the use is very limited. There is the occasional concert.

You should draw a plan of the church which can be used during the risk assessment process and then as a part of your fire safety arrangements documentation. This should be roughly to scale and should identify by name the main parts of the church and note all doors both internal, which separate different parts of the church, and external, which provide means of escape.

The plan can be used to note the location of fire extinguishers and other relevant information.

You can use a tape measure or rule to measure the building but an easy way is to pace along the outside walls and note down the distances. A good pace is about 1 metre.

There is a blank page at the back of this document for you to draw a plan of your church.

PEOPLE AT RISK:

Occupants:

Approximate average number attending a normal service:

Approximate maximum number attending special services and events such as weddings and at Christmas:

Approximate number of employees and/or volunteers in the church at any one time:

OCCUPANTS AT SPECIAL RISK FROM FIRE:

Give details of any persons with disabilities who attend the church who would need help in evacuating the building:

Give details of numbers of children who attend the church and whether they occupy a different part of the building during services such as a Sunday School in the vestry:

Give details of the number of persons who occupy remote parts of the building and when:

(For example, do bell ringers practice when there is no-one else in the church. Does the organist practice alone or does someone undertake maintenance in an enclosed boiler room?)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Previous fire losses:

Detail any fires or related incidents that anyone can remember even if it did not result in an insurance claim:

Other relevant information:

Note any other information which could have a bearing on the risk of fire such as the nature of any nearby or adjoining premises or evidence of arson:

C Potential Fire Hazards at our Church

Where the answer is NO then some action may be required in order to ensure that your fire safety arrangements are satisfactory. This needs to be noted in the Action Plan at the end of the assessment. If the situation does not apply, enter N/A.

Electrical

Is the fixed electrical system inspected and tested by a competent person at least every five years?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If YES, state the name of the competent person and the date of the last inspection

Are all portable electrical appliances including those belonging to outside bodies regularly tested? (PAT testing)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If YES, state the name of the tester and the date of the last test

Are any electrical items that fail the testing removed immediately from the church?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Is the use of trailing leads and multi-point adaptors restricted as far as possible and subject to control?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Heating

If portable electric heaters including electric fan heaters, and radiant 'bar' type fires are used are they included in the PAT testing programme and are they kept away from combustible materials?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

(Remember to check areas that you would not normally visit such as the ringing chamber or clergy vestry.)

If portable LPG (liquid petroleum gas) heaters are used are they fixed away from combustible materials and are the arrangements for the storage and replacement of spare cylinders satisfactory?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

If heating appliances burning coal or other solid fuel, e.g. wood pellets, are used, are arrangements in place to ensure fire cannot spread accidentally?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

Are gas boilers subject to an annual maintenance contract with an approved RGII registered contractor?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

Are oil-fired boilers subject to an annual maintenance contract with suitable qualified contractor?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

Are oil tanks suitably bunded or double skinned and fitted with a safety cut-off valve?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

Do you ensure that all heating appliances are kept clear of combustible materials?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Arson

Have you considered the risk of arson and malicious attacks?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Is the storage of combustible materials and flammables such as petrol for mowers kept to a minimum and in a secure place where the risk to people is minimised?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Have you removed or kept secure anything which could be used by an arsonist such as matches and candles?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Cooking

If you have a kitchen or servery in the church building are measures in place to prevent fire as a result of cooking?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

If kitchen equipment includes filters or ductwork are they cleaned regularly?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

If YES, state how often

Are suitable fire extinguishers and a fire blanket located in the cooking area?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Lightning

If the church has a lightning conductor is it inspected by a competent, specialist Lightning Engineer at recommended intervals?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

Combustible Materials

Has combustible material been removed from the church as far as possible?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(Examples of combustible material which can accumulate are hay and straw used in Christmas cribs, articles collected for jumble sales but never sold, waste paper collected for recycling and old Christmas trees.)

Are all exits and escape routes kept clear of combustible materials?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Contractors and Building Works

Are outside contractors subject to control when working in the church and are they required to use a 'hot work' permit system when necessary? A hot work permit can be obtained from the **Ecclesiastical website**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If volunteers undertake maintenance work in the church are suitable precautions taken such as the use of a 'hot work' permit system and the provision of suitable fire extinguishers close to the location of the work?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are both contractors and volunteers aware of safety arrangements including provision of fire extinguishers and escape routes during building works?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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D Our Fire Protection Arrangements

Means of Escape

Are there a suitable number of exits from the building?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(As a guide, it should be possible to evacuate the building in less than 2.5 minutes although this time may be extended for low-risk buildings such as churches. Guidance also indicates that one exit is sufficient for up to 60 persons but if the building can accommodate more than 60 persons there should be more than one exit. It will not normally be possible to increase the number or width of doors in a church, but remember that doors not normally in use such as external doors to vestries may be used.)

Do the exit doors open in the direction of escape?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are all exit doors unlocked when the church is in use?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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These are addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(It is possible that all of the doors in the church are inward opening and impossible to change as they are an integral part of the historic fabric.)

Can exit doors be opened easily?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Is the travel distance acceptable where there is only a single escape route?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Is the travel distance acceptable where there are alternative means of escape?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(The travel distance is the furthest a person would have to travel from a point within the church in order to reach an exit door. For areas with seating in rows, such as is found in the majority of churches, guidance suggests the following travel distances:

Where there is only a single escape route, the maximum distance is 15 metres for a normal fire risk area and 18 metres for a lower fire risk area;

Where there is more than one escape route, the maximum distance is 32 metres for a normal fire risk area and 45 metres for a lower fire risk area.

In the case of vestries that have their own external door, travel distances will normally fall within these guidelines.

The main body of the church may be regarded as a lower fire risk area and in most cases the travel distances should be within the guidelines.

However, you do need to measure travel distances in order to answer this question. Where they exceed the guidelines it will need to be addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.)

Are escape routes suitably protected from fire and kept clear of obstructions at all times?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(In practice, unlike many other buildings, traditional churches have very few corridors so the 'escape route' is effectively the whole of the building. The porch is the most likely area to pose a risk of obstruction during an evacuation and must be kept clear of obstructions and combustibles such as free-standing noticeboards and displays.)

Are the means of escape suitable for persons with disabilities?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(Compliance with Equality legislation probably means that access to the church and therefore also egress is suitable for wheelchair users. If not, it will need to be addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.)

Is an Emergency Escape Lighting System installed?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If NO, detail your means of providing light in the event of a main lighting failure, e.g. hand lamps, torches etc

If YES, is it subject to regular testing?

Yes No N/A

If YES, state the intervals of testing and the date of the last full annual maintenance inspection

Are Fire Exit signs displayed?

Yes No

If NO, describe here the arrangements in place to direct people to exits

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Yes No

Are Fire Safety Signs and Notices displayed?

(Signs need to be displayed indicating the location of fire extinguishers and the types of fire for which they are suitable. Fire Action Notices need to be displayed indicating what to do in the event of a fire.)

E Our Fire Detection, Warning and Extinguisher Equipment

Is there a manually operated fire alarm such as a rotary gong or bell which is operated in the event of a fire?

Yes

No

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?

Yes

No

N/A

How often is it tested?

Is there an electric, manually operated fire alarm with 'break glass' panels to operate the alarm?

Yes

No

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?

Yes

No

N/A

If YES, is it subject to a maintenance contract?

Yes

No

N/A

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last maintenance visit

Is there a fire detection alarm system which incorporates smoke detectors that automatically activate the alarm in the event of a fire?

Yes

No

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?

Yes

No

N/A

If YES, is it subject to a maintenance contract?

Yes

No

N/A

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last maintenance visit

If none of the above are provided, then describe here the arrangements for giving warning of a fire

Are suitable and sufficient portable fire extinguishers in place?

Yes

No

If YES, are they subject to an annual maintenance contract?

Yes

No

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection visit

(Guidance indicates that there should be one 9-litre water extinguisher for around each 200 square metres of floor space with a minimum of two per floor. Note - a 6-litre hydro-spray or AFFF (Aqueous Film-Forming-Foam) extinguisher will have the same fire extinguishing capacity as 9 litres of water and is only two-thirds the weight making them much easier to lift and use.

In addition, 2 Kg Carbon Dioxide extinguishers should be provided to deal with fires involving electrical equipment. One certainly needs to be provided near the organ and one near the main electrical intake.

If there is a kitchen or servery, a 6-litre Wet Chemical or AFFF extinguisher should be provided together with a fire blanket to smother any clothing which may catch fire.

Note that Dry Powder extinguishers are not suitable for use in historic buildings as they can cause irreparable damage to the building and contents.)

F Our Fire Safety Management

General Arrangements

Is there a suitable Emergency Plan for the building?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(You need to have an Emergency Plan and, for most churches, Fire Action Notices together with written procedures to be followed by Stewards for larger services and events will satisfy this requirement.)

Can the Fire Service be summoned easily?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(You should have either a landline or ensure that there is someone with a mobile telephone in the church when it is occupied. In rural areas it may be necessary to check whether a signal is available, as often a signal cannot be obtained inside the building.)

Are persons nominated to assist in case of fire?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Is there a procedure to give persons with disabilities appropriate assistance in evacuating the building?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Training and Evacuation Drills

Are regular periodic evacuation drills carried out?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(Even if your normal congregation is small you should carry out a practice to ensure that everyone can leave the building safely in the required time of less than 2.5 minutes. This can easily be done at the end of a normal service and should be undertaken say annually.

An evacuation drill should also be carried out for those times when the church is full, say at weddings or at Christmas. On these occasions there may be people there who are not familiar with the building. You can simulate these situations by asking for the cooperation of the local school for example and use pupils to represent the maximum number who may be in the church. Having undertaken this exercise it does not necessarily need to be repeated every year.)

Is there fire safety training for persons nominated to assist in case of fire?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Record Keeping

Are records kept for tests of the emergency lighting system in a fire and general register or similar document?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------

Are records kept for tests of the fire alarm system in a fire and general register or similar document?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are records kept of evacuation drills in a fire and general register or similar document?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are records kept of fire safety training in a fire and general register or similar document?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

Once you have gathered all the information in Part 1 you can then complete the actual Fire Risk Assessment below.

Our Fire Risk Assessment

Having completed our fact finding we now feel confident that we are fully aware of the fire hazards present in our church and the risks to people using the building. We have noted the precautions that we already have in place and where we have noted any deficiencies these will be rectified as soon as practicable. These matters are set out in **Part 4 Our Action Plan. Part 3 Our Arrangements for Fire Safety in our Church** sets out how we will deal with fulfilling our obligations.

Our assessment of the fire risk has been based on the following factors (see Appendix 1 for some example descriptions):

Occupation – How your building is used by people.

Fire Detection – Information about any fire detection systems you have in place.

Escape – In the event of an emergency, how people will exit your church.

Fire Load – How easily the structure of your building could ignite and flames could spread in a fire.

Likelihood – In your experience what is the possibility of a fire at your church taking into account the history of the building and existing precautions.

Overall Fire Risk Assessment

Based on the factors set out in the Fire Risk Assessment above, the overall Fire Risk Assessment is as follows:

1. Potential consequences of fire:

Please tick one:

Slight harm: Outbreak of fire is unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant.

Moderate harm: Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.

Extreme harm: Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.

2. Likelihood of fire:

Please tick one:

Low: Unusually low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.

Medium: Normal fire hazards (e.g. potential ignition sources) for this type of occupancy, with fire hazards generally subject to appropriate controls (other than minor shortcomings).

High: Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards, such as to result in significant increase in the likelihood of fire.

Table

Based on the answers above you can now map the amount of risk in the table below.

Potential consequences of fire	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Likelihood of fire			
Low	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Medium	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
High	Moderate risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

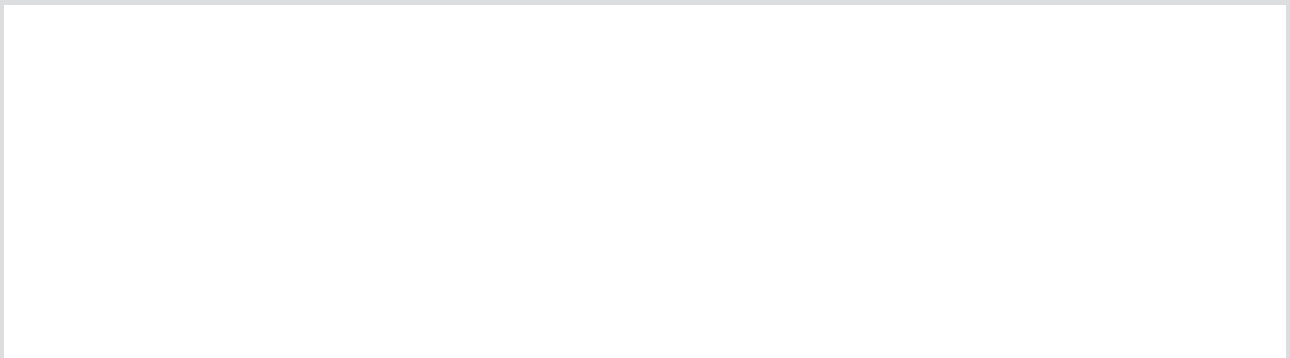
The overall assessment of the fire risk at our church and the risk to persons, based on the table above and the answers in 1 and 2, is:

Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety in our Church

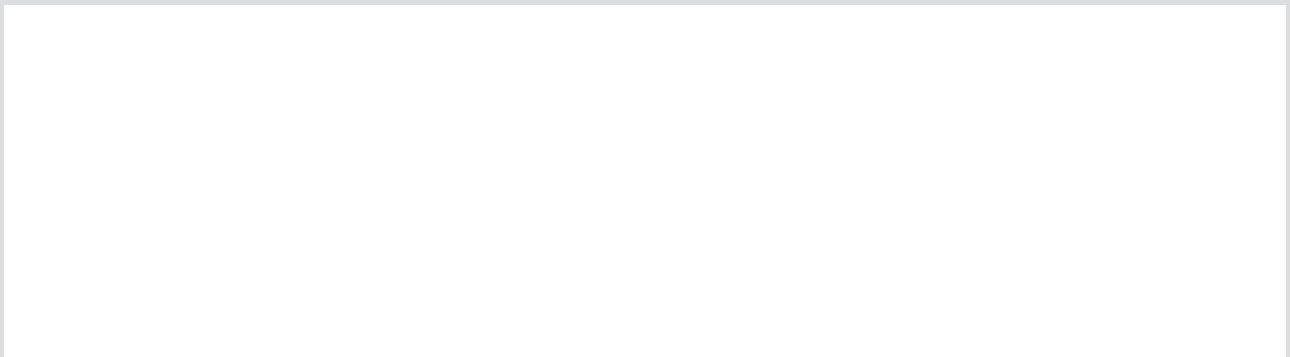
This section details the arrangements for fire safety in our church. For some examples of content for this section please see Appendix 2.

Our Arrangements for Fire Safety Management

Emergency Lighting



Manual Fire Alarm



Automatic Fire Detection System



Exit Doors

[Empty box for Exit Doors content]

.....
Major Services and Events

[Empty box for Major Services and Events content]

.....
Stewards and Training

[Empty box for Stewards and Training content]

.....
Record Keeping

[Empty box for Record Keeping content]

.....
Bell Ringers (where applicable)

Due to the various differing risk factors applicable to Tower areas, this section should be completed following discussions with the Tower Captain. The agreed controls should be inserted in this section.

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Part 4 – Our Action Plan to Reduce Fire Risk at Our Church

Action Plan

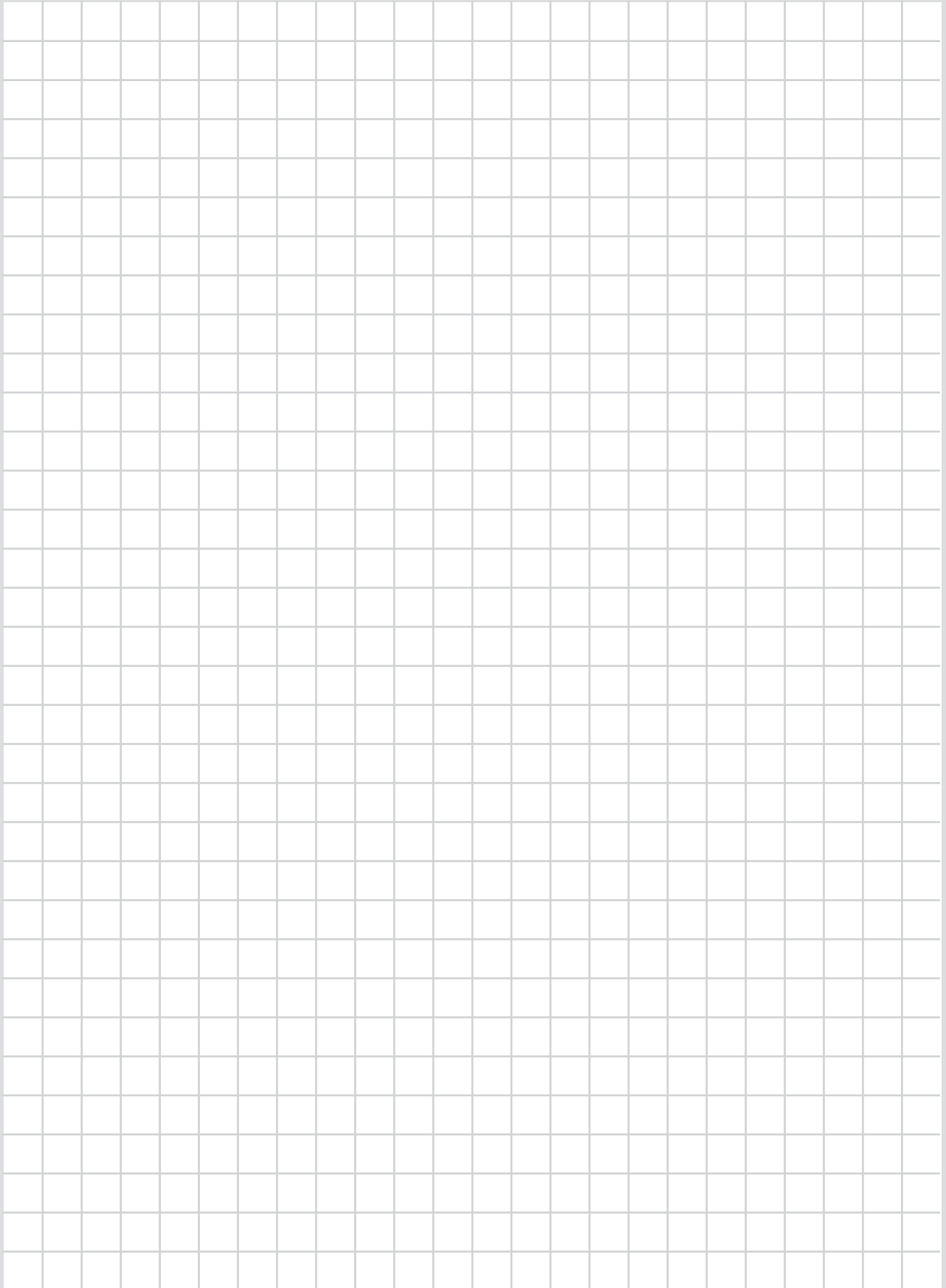
Schedule of actions to be taken as a result of our fact-finding exercise in order to maintain our risk as low and to meet our Fire Safety Management Plan.

Our church guidance notes can be found on our website, www.ecclesiastical.ie/church/

Action to be taken	Target completion date	Person responsible

Plan of the church

Please use this page to draw a plan of your church that identifies your evacuation arrangements.



Additional Notes

Appendix 1

Example descriptions for Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

When writing your Fire Risk Assessment you may find the following example wordings of assistance in describing the circumstance at your church.

Occupation

1. Our primary aim is to ensure the safety of people, not the property, so we have not concerned ourselves with protecting the building when it is unoccupied.
2. Our normal congregation is relatively small and know the building well, and could easily evacuate the building in the event of fire.
3. There are occasions when the church is full, but these occur on only a few occasions during the year when we have trained stewards in place to provide assistance.
4. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises and there are no hazardous activities.

Fire Detection

1. We do not have an automatic fire detection system but in view of the nature of the building we are confident that when the building is occupied (and we are only concerned with safety of people and not the protection of the building) a fire would be detected almost immediately by persons either smelling or seeing smoke and raising the alarm by shouting "Fire" in accordance with our Fire Action Notice.

Escape

1. The main body of the church is one large open area with no corridors or risk of congestion and the doors providing the principal means of escape to the open are clearly visible.
2. Areas such as vestries which are separated from the main body of the church are only occupied by a small number of people who know the building well.
3. Due to the lofty nature of the main body of the church there is a large open area where smoke can be contained thus increasing the potential time to allow for evacuation.

Fire Load

1. The fire load in the main body of the church is low and comprises in the main fixtures and fittings constructed from hardwoods which are difficult to ignite or sustain combustion.
2. Whilst candles are used in the main body of the church they are clearly visible, kept away from combustible materials and there is little risk of a fire either starting or developing undetected.
3. There are virtually no combustible linings that would aid the risk of fire spread.

Appendix 2

Example descriptions for Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety in our Church

When writing your fire safety arrangements the following examples may assist you to describe the circumstances at your church.

Likelihood

We have considered the possibility of a fire actually happening based on our experience at our church.

Emergency Lighting

We do not consider there is a need for a permanent emergency lighting system. Rechargeable torches are always available for use by stewards to assist in the evacuation of the church.

Manual Fire Alarm

In view of the nature of the building and its use as detailed above we consider that there is no need to provide any form of manual fire alarm system. In the event of a fire a warning will be given by shouting “Fire” and stewards will guide persons to a place of safety.

Automatic Fire Detection System

We consider that our arrangements are sufficient to provide for the safety of persons in the church when it is occupied and that there is not a need to provide any form of fire detection overnight when the building is unoccupied. We have therefore decided that there is no need to install any form of automatic fire detection system.

Exit Doors

We have decided that under normal circumstances, when numbers in the church are small, we do not need to make any changes to the direction in which doors open and that there is no need for permanent fire exit signs as occupants are familiar with the location and way in which the doors open. Stewards will assist persons with limited mobility as necessary and are trained accordingly.

Major Services and Events

We do consider, however, that signage and other measures are required for major services and events when the church might be occupied by persons other than our normal congregation. In these circumstances the following will be put in place:

1. All external exit doors will be unlocked.
2. All external exit doors will be deemed to be fire exit doors and will have the appropriate fire exit sign placed above them in accordance with The Safety, Health & Welfare At Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 Safety Signs At Places of Work (Amended)

3. Where a door is not visible from the main body of the church such as an external door from a vestry the appropriate sign will be displayed showing the route to the door.
4. Stewards will be allocated with at least one for each exit and will be responsible for a specific part of the church. The stewards will be required to lead persons from their allocated area to the designated assembly point.
5. Persons with disabilities who require assistance to evacuate such as wheelchair users will be located in a part of the church closest to a door with the appropriate access and egress. A steward will be allotted to them to assist with their evacuation.
6. Every steward will be given a torch. These will be kept recharged and ready for use.
7. At the start of the service or event an announcement will be made setting out the arrangements for evacuation.
8. A senior person will be nominated to make the announcement to evacuate if required and to follow the directions of the stewards.
9. Prior to the announcement each steward will ensure that doors are open and held back.
10. A safe place away from the building will be designated as an assembly point.

Stewards and Training

A list will be maintained of all those who are nominated to undertake fire warden duties. This will comprise:

1. Churchwardens
2. Sidespersons
3. Stewards

For normal services churchwardens and sidespersons will undertake day-to-day fire warden duties. For major services and events additional fire wardens will be nominated from the list of stewards.

All those with fire warden responsibilities will receive training in their duties at least annually. Training will include the following:

- How to raise the alarm and contact the fire service
- Location and use of fire extinguishers
- Location and use of rechargeable torches
- How to evacuate the church
- How to help with the evacuation of persons with disabilities
- The location of the Assembly Point
- The signage that is required for major services and events, where it is kept and how it is fixed in place
- A knowledge of the Fire Action Notice and where they should be located

Record Keeping

A Fire and General Register will be maintained noting the following:

- Dates of fire extinguisher inspection and maintenance visits
- Dates of boiler maintenance visits
- Dates of fixed electrical system inspections and tests
- Dates of portable appliance testing (PAT)
- Dates of lightning conductor system inspections and tests
- Dates of evacuation drills

Appendix 3

Fire Action Notice

The Fire Action Notice represents our Emergency Plan. Copies should be located near all exit doors and in all separate areas such as vestries.

FIRE ACTION NOTICE

In case of fire

- Raise the alarm by activating the fire alarm system or by shouting "FIRE! FIRE!"
- Evacuate the premises
- Tackle the fire, if safe to do so, without taking any risks
- Call the Fire Brigade by dialling 999

On hearing shouts of "Fire! Fire!":

- Leave the premises by the quickest route
- Ensure that any disabled persons are helped to safety
- Report to the assembly point at:



- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- Do not re-enter church until authorised to do so

Next steps

Once you have completed this checklist and taken any steps needed to mitigate any risks please make sure that a copy is kept in an accessible location. Please remember you should regularly review your Fire Risk Assessment. We recommend that you include fire safety as a regular item in the agenda for your Select Vestry meetings

Need to contact us?

For further risk advice or information call our Risk Management Team on **01 619 0300** (Monday to Friday 8am-6pm excluding bank holidays) We may monitor or record calls to improve our service.

Alternatively, you can visit www.ecclesiastical.ie/church

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