



# Keeping People Safe

CHURCH HEALTH & SAFETY TOOLKIT

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## ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID



### Accidents and first aid

If someone is taken ill or is injured at your church or church hall, it is important that immediate assistance is provided to them. First aid can save lives and may prevent minor injuries becoming major ones.

In many cases, you will need to make suitable arrangements to administer first aid; to preserve life or minimise the consequences of injury or illness until professional medical help can be obtained. It will also be needed to treat minor injuries, where these occur.

### Legal requirements

Generally, if someone is injured you may need to show that you have met your duty of care.

If you are an employer you must also comply with the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (First Aid) Regulations 2007. Broadly, these require employers to:

- Provide adequate and appropriate first aid equipment and facilities
- Provide a suitable number of qualified first aiders
- Appoint a person to take charge where first aiders are temporarily absent or the provision of first aiders is not necessary (due to the nature of the activities; the number of employees; and location)
- Inform employees (and volunteers in these circumstances) of the first aid provisions made – including the location of any equipment or facilities and the identity of the first aider(s) or appointed person(s).

Some accidents may need to be reported to the Enforcing Authority (e.g. the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), with certain records being kept. This is required under the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016. You will have to do this where:

- You are an **employer** – to report any work-related deaths, and certain work-related injuries, cases of disease, and certain near misses involving your employees wherever they are working
- You are in **control of premises** – to report any work-related deaths, certain injuries to members of the public and self-employed people on your premises, and dangerous occurrences that occur on your premises. Further information on what you need to do in these circumstances is provided at [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

# FIRST AID

### Hazards to look out for

The first aid arrangements you will need depend on the type of hazards people may come across in your church or church hall. These could include:

- Machinery and equipment that could cause injury when in use
- Chemicals or other dangerous substances used for cleaning, maintenance and gardening
- Higher-risk activities such as using ladders or other access equipment
- Large numbers of employees and volunteers (more than 25) or visitors
- Employees who travel a lot, work remotely, alone or 'out-of-hours'
- The remoteness of your church or church hall from emergency services
- Periods of absence which might mean that there may not be adequate first aid support
- Fundraising activities, concerts, services or other community activities (e.g. night shelters)\*.

\*Note: this list is not exhaustive

### Precautions you can take

Typical precautions include:

- Appointing a person(s) to take charge of first aid arrangements
- Providing a suitably stocked first aid box
- Providing an adequate number of first aiders
- Providing additional training for first aiders where there are special hazards
- Checking that employees and others know the precise location of first aid equipment and identities of nominated persons or first aiders
- Informing the emergency services of specific hazards etc. in advance (e.g. bell tower access)
- Issuing personal first aid kits
- Ensuring adequate first aid cover for annual leave or other absences (planned, unplanned or otherwise)\*.

\*Note: this list is not exhaustive

## Making a start

### Action

1. Check your first aid arrangements and facilities are adequate for your church and it's activities.

Identify any additional precautions that might be required.

2. General provisions include

### Guidance

If you are an employer, you will need to complete formal risk assessments. These should help you identify hazards or activities that may require you to provide different levels of first aid provision. The hazard list on the previous page might also help, but it is not exhaustive and there may be other things to consider reflecting your own particular circumstances.

It is also useful to see if there have been any accidents before. This may help you get an idea of the sort of hazards people have come into contact with previously.

If your church or church hall is small with low-level hazards (e.g. type found in offices and shops), you may only need to:

- Appoint a person to take charge of first aid arrangements
- Provide a suitably stocked first aid kit.

For larger churches, those running certain events or having other activities, you may need additional arrangements and facilities – possibly including trained first aiders.

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (First Aid) Regulations do not require employers to make first aid provision for non-employees (such as, the public). However, it is strongly recommended that they are included in any assessment of first aid needs and that provision is made for them.

General provisions include:

- A **first aid box** – properly sited, stocked and identifiable (i.e. a white cross on a green background). There is no mandatory list of items that need to be kept in it, this will depend on your particular circumstances but recommended contents of first aid kits which should be provided include;

- Individual wrapped disinfectant wipes
- Paramedic shears
- Sterile water if there is no clear running water
- Pocket face masks
- Crepe bandages
- Small and large water-based burns dressings

*Continued overleaf*

### Making a start

#### Guidance

- Individually wrapped sterile plasters (assorted sizes)
- Sterile eye pads
- Individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile
- Safety pins
- Large sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings
- Medium-sized sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings
- Disposable gloves.

Depending on your circumstances, additional first aid equipment (e.g. a burns kit for the kitchen) may be appropriate. Tablets and medication should not be kept in the box.

Boxes should be checked periodically and re-stocked if necessary.

- An **appointed person** – this is a minimum requirement for most employers, even in a small, low-hazard churches where first aiders are not considered necessary. Those fulfilling the role need no first aid training, but they should not attempt to provide this unless they have been properly trained.

Their role is to:

- Look after any first aid equipment and facilities
- Call the emergency services when required
- Provide emergency cover where a first aider is absent due to unforeseen circumstances.

You don't need to make this appointment if you have an adequate number of appropriately trained first aiders.

- An adequate number of **first aiders** – this will be determined by your needs assessment. Usually, a first aider is someone who has been properly trained in first aid at work or emergency first aid at work. However, other first aid training may be appropriate to your particular circumstances.

Further guidance for employers on how to decide on the right numbers of first aiders to provide is detailed in the HSA Publication, Guide to Chapter 2 of Part 7 (First Aid) of the General Application Regulations 2007 available on the HSA Website: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

## Making a start

### Action

3. Ensure that employees and volunteers know what to do in the event of an accident.

Make a note of any information or training that is provided to individuals.

4. Record details of any accidents that do occur and any first aid assistance provided.

### Guidance

If you are an employer, you must tell your employees (and volunteers in these circumstances) about the first aid arrangements you have made. This will include the location of equipment, facilities and personnel who will provide assistance. One simple way of doing this is to display first aid notices. Another way is to provide this information for new staff and volunteers when they start. Whatever method is chosen, the information needs to be clear and easily understood by all.

If you provide first aiders, they will need to be trained to the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) First Aid Response FAR Training Standard by an FAR Approved Training Institute (ATI). As PHECC does not currently have a register of individual FAR instructors, you should establish from the instructor which ATI he/she is affiliated to. The trained First Aider must hold a valid certificate. These are usually valid for two years, but it is strongly recommended that first aiders undertake annual refresher training during any two year certification period. This will help them maintain their basic skills and keep up-to-date with any changes to first aid procedures.

It is sensible to make a note of any incident where first aiders attend. This should include:

- Date, time, place and circumstances of the accident
- Name and job of the injured or ill person
- Details of the injury/illness and first aid treatment given
- What happened to the person immediately afterwards (for example, went home, went to hospital)
- Name and signature of the first aider or person dealing with the accident.

Any first aid records will need to be kept in accordance with any data protection requirements.

*Continued overleaf*

### Making a start

#### Action

5. Document your arrangements and responsibilities for first aid and review these where you suspect that they are no longer valid.
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#### Guidance

Where you have reported injuries, ill health or a dangerous occurrence to the HSA you must keep suitable records. This could include a copy of the online reporting form.

For more serious accidents, you may want to investigate what happened in more detail. Try to do this as soon as possible as the information you collect may be useful in the defence of a claim. This could include witness statements (which are signed and dated); and include a note of the witness's telephone number and address;; photographs; sketches and drawings (showing any measurements where applicable); risk assessments; training records etc.

Please do not wait for a claim to be made. If you are aware of an incident which has resulted in personal injury for which you may be responsible, please tell us about it as soon as possible.

If you have prepared a Safety Statement, record these as part of it.

You can use our Church Safety Statement template if you haven't done this and need one to comply with health and safety law.

## Want to know more?

We have produced other useful resources to help you get started or simply check the adequacy of what you have already done. All are available at [www.ecclesiastical.ie/risk-management](http://www.ecclesiastical.ie/risk-management)

Further guidance and resources are also available at: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)

## Need to contact us?

If you would like to speak to someone about health and safety in churches you can

**Call our Risk Management Team on 01 619 0300**  
(Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 17.00 - excluding Bank Holidays)

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