

FIRE POLICY

ST.GEORGES AND OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISHES OF WORCESTER

INTRODUCTION

Fire is one of the most common workplace hazards.

The RR (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires responsible persons to carry out a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment focusing on the safety of all relevant persons.

In the event of a fire, a person must dial 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance lies with the Parish Priest.

OBJECTIVES

- that arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of the premises.
- that a risk assessment is completed to identify what preventative and protective arrangements are needed to safeguard those at risk
- that priority is given to measures to prevent fires starting and limit the likelihood of injury or damage.
- that all arrangements are carefully monitored and reviewed regularly.

A risk assessment can be thought of as a 'careful look' at operations, equipment and substances used.

As a minimum:

- a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and people can be warned.
- people in the premises can get out safely.
- reasonable fire - fighting equipment is provided and maintained.
- people in the premises know what to do if there is a fire.

APPLICATION

This applies to all church – owned premises.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A competent person should be nominated to carry out Fire Risk Assessments.

A competent person must be nominated to carry out regular checks and inspections of the premises.

A competent person must ensure that all actions, findings and recommendations are implemented.

The responsibility lies with the Parish Priest to ensure compliance.

PROCESS

The method used will comply with HSE guidelines – PLAN; DO; CHECK; ACT
www.hse.gov.uk/managing/plan-do-check-act.htm

GUIDANCE

Eliminate /Reduce

- Combustible materials and flammable liquids or gases. If elimination is not practicable consider reducing use of or quantity of.
- Sources of ignition.
 - smoking areas – proper receptacles must be provided for finished cigarettes
 - combustible materials must be prevented from coming into contact with sources of ignition.
 - contractors must be made aware of what controls are in place when using heat producing equipment (e.g. welding, blow lamps,) and when using combustibles/flammable liquids/substances during maintenance.
- Arson prevention
 - ensure the buildings are adequately secured with strong locks on doors, windows, skylights and grilles and laminated security glass in vulnerable places.
 - always store valuables out of sight in secure areas.
 - always store flammable liquids in secure fire proof cabinets.

- prevent the build-up of combustible materials adjacent to the buildings
- keep refuse bins and skip in secure places and locked.
- keep gates and fences in good repair.
- trim hedges and trees to enable the buildings to be seen from adjacent premises and the road.
- apply anti-climb paint to down pipes to prevent climbing.

Limit Likelihood of Injury or damage from fire

Fire detection and warning.

If a fire starts it is important for occupants to be warned as quickly as possible. Early discovery will aid evacuation.

- all premises should have arrangements for detection and giving warning of fire. In most cases fires are detected by people on the premises and nothing further is required.
- consider the premises when occupied and ask ' how long could a fire burn before it is discovered. In most cases well-used premises will discover a fire quickly from the smell of burning and smoke.
- smoke detectors linked to an alarm system may be necessary in unoccupied areas(e.g. basements, boiler rooms).
- domestic smoke alarms can be fitted in buildings with no electrically operated fire alarm. This type of detection will also be needed on escape routes where there is only one way out.
- automatic detection must be provided in all buildings with sleeping accommodation.
- once the fire has been discovered, either by people or automatic means, the next requirement is for everyone in the building to be warned.
- in small buildings, this warning can be in the form of shouting, a bell, a gong or a whistle. Such items should be available on exit routes where they can be safely operated and are clearly audible throughout the building.
- in larger buildings electrical alarms are required.

Means of escape

Normal ways in and out of a workplace will meet most of the escape needs, particularly if you are satisfied that any fire developing will be recognised quickly, the warning will be given and people know what to do.

Unusual/special events will be assessed on an as and when basis.

Unless a room is designed to accommodate more than 60 persons, one exit door is all that is required. This door must be kept unobstructed. A normal door is 750mm wide. For wheel chair users this increases to 800mm.

All doors designated as fire exits must be open whilst people are in the building or capable of being opened easily from the inside (e.g. push-bar, button).

Some doors may need to open in the direction of travel:

- doors being used by more than 60 persons
- doors at the base of staircases to avoid crushing.
- doors in areas of high risk (e.g. boiler rooms, plant rooms).

Escape routes should be short enough to enable people in the building to get to the nearest place of safety in 2/3 minutes.

Escape routes should be adequately lit. If the route depends on artificial lighting, some form of emergency lighting may be necessary – this could be in the form of a torch.

A place of safety is usually outside the building at a designated fire assembly point.

Fire escape signage

All fire signs must comply with BS5499 inc. pictograms, arrows and supplementary texts.

Signs are used on designated fire doors and escape routes, especially if they are not obvious or an addition to those normally used.

Premises used by the public or people not totally familiar with the building may need additional signage.

Fire Action Posters must be displayed giving basic fire safety and evacuation information. These posters must be displayed on exit routes and in employee and kitchen areas.

Fire - fighting equipment

The type of equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, fire blankets), location of equipment and numbers required in a building should be identified by a competent person.

All equipment should be renewed/replaced after use.

Employees/volunteers should not attempt to fight fires unless specific instruction and practical training has been provided.

Evacuation of Less Able persons from buildings

It may be necessary to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate less able persons.

Personal emergency evacuation plans are required for all known less able persons. (PEEP).

The majority of less able persons prefer to be left to their own devices and will use the standard evacuation instructions.

If a PEEP is considered necessary:

- the same rules of courtesy and respect apply.
- disability should not be seen as a health and safety problem.
- see the person – not the disability. Needs and preferences vary widely between individuals.
- less able persons should be involved in all aspects of the fire evacuation procedure.

- do not assume. Ask when determining what assistance is required.
- under current legislation, it is the building owners responsibility to evacuate less able persons safely. The fire and rescue service should not be relied upon to facilitate the PEEP.

Training and Drills

Planning for an emergency and training

All premises should have an emergency plan in case of a fire starting.

This plan should include the action to be taken by employees/volunteers in the event of a fire, the evacuation procedure and arrangements for calling the fire and rescue service.

The plan should be suitable and sufficient. Notices giving the clear and concise instructions to be followed should be prominently displayed.

All employees/volunteers must be instructed in the action to be taken in the event of a fire at induction. This induction should be revisited from time to time to ensure continued understanding of the procedures.

Employees/Volunteers must know the following:

- how to raise the alarm in case of fire.
- how to call the fire and rescue service.
- the location and use of all fire routes.
- the location of the assembly point.
- type and location of fire-fighting equipment – only to be used if instructed and fully trained.
- Any special actions required of them with regard to other employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors or hirers.

Fire Drills

Drills are held to test the effectiveness of the evacuation plan and the ability of employees/volunteers to react correctly in the event of an evacuation situation.

A fire drill must be held at least annually.

A fire drill must not be announced beforehand.

Remember to advise the fire and rescue service and/or the security company if the fire alarm is linked to their call centre.

A record must be kept of all such drills together with findings, recommendations and remedial actions taken.

Maintenance and testing of fire safety equipment

It is important that equipment is fit for purpose and is properly maintained and tested.

Fire detection systems, warning systems, emergency lighting and all equipment provided to assist with fighting fire should be regularly checked and maintained by competent people.

As a guide

Weekly:

- Maintain means of escape. Check all routes and exit doors are not blocked or obstructed. Check exit doors open properly. Check fire doors are not propped open and that they close properly.
- Check location of all equipment and visibly check that it is in working order.
- Test the red fire point break glass boxes to ensure they are working – one box per week.

Monthly:

- Test all domestic smoke alarms in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.
- Test emergency lighting/generator. Ensure lights illuminate when power is switched off.

Half Yearly:

- Repeat the monthly check of the emergency lighting/generator but leave on for at least an hour.

Annually:

- Maintain the means of giving warning and detecting fires. Usually a service contract.
- Replace batteries in domestic smoke alarms in accordance with manufacturers instructions.
- Maintain means of fighting fires. Usually a service contract.
- Repeat monthly check of emergency lighting/generator but leave on for at least 3 hours.

Full records of all testing should be kept in the Parish Health and Safety file.

Ref. Doc. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-your-premises-safe-from-fire>