

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

AVOCH PARISH CHURCH

Avoch Parish Church of Scotland Charity No.SC003921



Avoch Parish Church Health and Safety Policy

*Our Aim is to Worship the Lord our God, through obedience to his Word,
Prayer, fellowship in Christ and outreach into the community, thereby
extending His Kingdom on earth*

Churches are not exempt from health and safety legislation. Local Authority Environmental Health Officers are specifically charged with enforcing health and safety legislation in churches.

The Health and Safety Executive have advised that it is good practice for volunteers to be provided with the same level of health and safety training and protection as if they were employees. This means that churches should follow exactly the same regulations to ensure the health and safety of volunteers and other persons using the church as if they were employees.

Adhering to the following policy will help to ensure that we will have done all we can in order to satisfy the Environmental Health Officer should one call.

What does the law require?

The law only requires those who employ five or more people to have a written health and safety policy. This will not apply to the majority of churches. However, we are required to make adequate arrangements for health and safety, and the easiest way to do this is to set these out in writing.

For every hazardous activity we undertake, we should have a written procedure. Remember the Health and Safety Executive says that measures need only be matched to the levels of risk.

The law only requires written risk assessments where five or more people are employed, and then only the significant findings have to be recorded.

However, we need to ensure that our church is safe, and the easiest way to do this is to carry out systematic risk assessments of each part of the church and each activity.

Our Health and Safety Policy

Name of church AVOCH PARISH CHURCH

Address BRAEHEAD

AVOCH

Postcode IV9 8QL

Date November 2019

Review date November 2019

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.

The policy is in three sections:

Section A - General statement of policy

Section B - Organisation and responsibilities

Section C – Arrangements

To all voluntary helpers and contractors:

The success of this policy will depend on your co-operation. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for health and safety.

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, and Church Hall.

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 regularly and the appropriate changes made.

In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review, an item on health and safety will be on the agenda for all meetings of the Congregational Board and employees and voluntary workers will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health and safety matters.

Signed

Minister of the Charge

Date

Review date November 2019

B Organisation and responsibilities

Responsibility of the Minister of the Charge

Overall responsibility for health and safety is that of the Minister of the Charge the Reverend Doctor Wareen Beattie 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.

Responsibility of the Kirk Session

The responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary is with the Kirk Session.

Responsibility of the Congregational Board

The Congregational Board has general responsibility to ensure that the health and safety policy is implemented.

Responsibility of the Property Convener.

The Property Convener carries the responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the arrangements outlined in this policy:

The responsibility of the Property Convener shall be to:

- 1 be familiar with health and safety regulations as far as they concern church premises
- 2 be familiar with the health and safety policy and arrangements and ensure they are observed
- 3 ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place
- 4 ensure the church and hall are clean and tidy
- 5 ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personal where this is required.
- 6 ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained
- 7 ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained
- 8 ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are observed.

The Session Clerk will assist the Property Convenor in the execution of his duties

Responsibility of employees and voluntary workers

All 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.

Voluntary workers must therefore:

- 1 comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures
- 2 use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- 3 report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person

- 4 report all accidents, injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible
- 5 not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Responsible persons

The following are responsible for safety in particular areas:

These lists are not exhaustive.

1. By activity

Name/position

Accident book/Accident reporting	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Fire extinguishers	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Emergency evacuation	Peter McLoughlin Session Clerk
Portable electrical appliances	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Fixed electrical system	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Hazardous substances	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Condition of floors and stairs	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Light bulb changing	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Working at high levels	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Food preparation	Sheena McLeman Development Team Leader
Manual handling	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Display screen equipment	Bob Moore Elder
Building defects/glazing	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Child protection	Susan MacLeman Child Protection CoOrdinator
Personal safety	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Church Events	Lewie Patience Property Convenor and Peter McLoughlin Session Clerk
Bell ringing	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Contractors	Lewie Patience Property Convenor
Health and safety training	Lewie Patience Property Convenor and Peter McLoughlin Session Clerk

SECTION C IMPLEMENTATION

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.

Accidents and first aid

First aid boxes are located in: The Church Vestry and The Church Hall Kitchen

The accident books are located in: The Church Vestry and The Church Hall Kitchen

All accidents and incidents are entered in the accident book.

RIDDOR Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

These accidents will be reported by the responsible person.

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) there is a statutory requirement to report certain types of accident, dangerous occurrences and disease to the enforcing authorities. Fatal accidents, major injuries and injuries which involve the injured person being absent from work for more than three days must be reported to the enforcing authorities. So must diseases and certain dangerous occurrences, as defined by the regulations.

There are three requirements for reporting, as follows:

- serious injuries or dangerous occurrences (as defined by the regulations) must be reported immediately. This must be followed by a report in writing within **ten days** on official form **F2508**
- accidents involving the injured person losing **more than three consecutive days** work (excluding the day of the accident but including any days which would not have been working days) but which do not fall into the above category, must be reported in writing within **ten days** on form **F2508**
- reportable diseases, as defined by the regulations, must be reported in writing to the enforcing authority on form **F2508A**. This will be required only if the employer receives a written diagnosis of the disease made by a doctor and the person concerned is involved with a work activity as specified in the regulations. Reportable diseases include certain poisonings, infections such as legionellosis and hepatitis, and other conditions such as certain musculo-skeletal disorders.

Accident reporting

The quickest and easiest way to do this is to call the Incident Contact Centre and speak to an ICC Operator who will complete a report form over the phone. You will be sent a copy for your records. The ICC Consultant will ask a few questions and take down appropriate details. Your report will be passed on to the relevant enforcing authority and you will be sent a copy of the information recorded which you can file - this meets the RIDDOR requirement to keep records of all reportable incidents.

You can also send reports by post or email.

www.riddor.gov.uk

Tel. 0845 300 9923

Fax. 0845 300 9924

Email: riddor@connaught.plc.uk

Incident Contact Centre, Caerphilly

Business Park, Caerphilly, CF83 3GG.

Recording

Full details of all accidents, disease and dangerous occurrences should be recorded using the Data Protection compliant HSE Accident Book. This is necessary for monitoring purposes and is also a requirement of RIDDOR, as well as the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979 and Social Security Administration Act 1992.

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:

- an assessment of the fire risks in the church and Church Hall and the risks to our neighbours. This is carried out as part of our general health and safety risk assessments
- a check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned
- 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
- to provide reasonable firefighting equipment
- a check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- 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.

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are kept in the following locations:-

Church Vestibule	Type of extinguisher	2 Foam
	and capacity	6 Kg.
Church Hall	Type of extinguisher	2 Foam
	and capacity	6 Kg
Church Hall Kitchen	Type of extinguisher	Fire Blanket

The extinguishers noted are checked every month by the responsible person to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged.

The extinguishers noted above are checked annually by CHUBB

All designated fire doors must be unlocked before the service/event commences and be clearly marked as fire exits using the 'Running Man' symbol

A check must be made that all doors can be opened

An announcement to leave the building will be made by the Minister
Persons will assemble in the Churchyard by the gate.

The emergency services will be contacted immediately by a nominated person using the mobile telephone located in the Church Vestry

Evacuation drills

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

If you discover a fire (no matter how small)

Immediately raise the alarm

Telephone the emergency services

Check the building for occupants

Attack the fire if possible and within your capability, using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk

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

Evacuate to the designated assembly point

Ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles

Electrical safety

A list of all our portable electrical appliances is maintained by the responsible person

Every quarter plugs, cables and sockets will be inspected by the responsible person to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any faults identified will be rectified.

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.

Every quarter a visual inspection will be carried out of the fixed electrical installation. Any defects will be reported to for action

Every five 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

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 Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill.

All voluntary workers must observe the following:

- (i) Visually check all electrical equipment before use
- (ii) Report all faults immediately to the responsible person
- (iii) Do not attempt to use or repair 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
- (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

Hazardous substances

The responsible person will maintain a list of all hazardous substances used in the church and hall.

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.

Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

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 all floors and stairs in the church and hall, who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

Lighting

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, an inspection will be made every week, to ensure that all lights in the church, hall and outside are working. faulty bulbs will be replaced following appropriate safety procedures.

Preparation of food

We ensure that we follow the appropriate regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs

We ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training

We ensure that the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored including storage at the correct temperatures

Before any preparation commences, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be washed down and disinfected

We ensure that all hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.

Manual handling - lifting, carrying and moving loads

Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably

practicable

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 quarter by the responsible person Any defects noted and 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

Child protection

The activities undertaken by youth groups require special attention. Details of the numbers and ages of the young people involved in each group and details of adult supervisors must be maintained. Parental consent forms should be obtained for trips away from the parish and any particular needs of individual children noted.

A statement upholding our procedures will be made at each annual church meeting and be suitably recorded.

A permanent record will be maintained of all accidents involving children.

Personal safety

Risk assessments need to be undertaken to assess the risks to persons working alone in the church, travelling to and from church, accepting persons into their homes and handling cash and other valuables.

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.

Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

1. have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same
2. produce evidence that they have appropriate Public and Employers' Liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained
3. comply with all the requirements of this health and safety policy and co-operate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation
4. where plant and machinery is brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation
5. contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct

employees with the express permission of the church officials. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors

Car Park

Safety of parking and manoeuvring is the responsibility of each driver and it is impossible for us to monitor that. There is adequate lighting at night from the street lights.

In icy conditions, when gritting is not enough, the Fabric Convener puts up two signs stating that the car park is closed.

Information and enforcement

Environmental Health Service Information:

Environmental Health Manager

Ross House

High Street

Dingwall IV15 9RY

Tel: 01349 868439

Fax: 01349 863510

Employment Medical Advisory Service Information:

(The Medical Advisory Service is a part of the Health and Safety Executive and is able to provide guidance on health matters.

Health and Safety Executive

Longman House 28 Longman Road Longman Industrial Estate

Inverness IV1 1SF

Fax only: 01463 713459

Email www.hse.gov.uk

How to carry out a risk assessment

Risk assessment is not difficult, but it does take time. It is sensible, therefore, to spread the load as far as is possible and for people to carry out risk assessments in their own particular area, where they best know about any hazards. For example, the organist should look at the organ loft and choir vestry, the tower captain the ringing chamber and belfry, and so on. The process should be overseen and co-ordinated by the person who has overall responsibility for health and safety.

Systematically look at each area of the church/hall or other building and note all of the hazards and risks, and any existing safety measures. Note also any person who may be specifically at risk. You must then note any additional safety measures or 'controls' which will reduce those risks as far as possible. As well as the interior of buildings, you must also look at the churchyard and other external areas.

In order to help you, a checklist is given overleaf of common hazards that you should look for in each area that is being assessed. The checklist is in the same order as the sections of the health and safety policy. If any of these hazards are present then record them and what you need to do about them. Look for any other hazards that may not be included in the checklist, such as specific activities or pieces of equipment that may cause harm.

If you wish, you can calculate a risk rating to help you prioritise any additional safety measures that may be required.

An example of a risk assessment is shown on page 25.

It is not necessary to do this calculation if you don't want to. Just leave the likelihood, severity and risk rating columns blank and note any existing safety measures and any additional ones that you decide to implement.

However, any risk which could result in a fatality must receive priority attention.

Risk assessment calculator

To calculate a risk rating, you need to grade both the likelihood and severity from 1 to 3. The grades are then multiplied together to give a risk rating.

Likelihood

The likelihood of something happening can be graded as:

- 1 = Low (seldom)
- 2 = Medium (frequently)
- 3 = High (certain or near certain)

Severity

The severity of injury if something does happen can be graded as:

- 1 = Low (minor cuts and bruises)
- 2 = Medium (serious injury or incapacitated for 3 days or more)

3 = High (fatality or a number of persons seriously injured)

Having assessed both likelihood and severity, a risk rating can be calculated by multiplying the likelihood with the severity. This will give a rating from 1 to 9.

Risk rating matrix

Likelihood

3	3	6	9
2	2	4	6
1	1	2	3
	1	2	3

Severity

The implementation of additional controls can then be prioritised as follows:

Risk Rating:

- 1-2 = low priority
- 3-4 = medium priority
- 6-9 = high priority

With low priority no action at all may be required.

With medium priority additional control measures may be necessary.

With high priority it may be necessary to stop the particular activity or restrict access to the area until action has been taken.

Risk assessment checklist

Accidents and First aid

- Provision of first aid equipment
- Persons with first aid training
- Procedures to deal with accidents
- Transport arrangements to hospital
- Existing arrangements and assess what is needed

Fire safety

- Combustible materials, flammable liquids and accumulations of waste

Heaters, smoking and other sources of heat
Provision of fire exits, escape routes, signage and emergency lighting
Provision of fire detection equipment and firefighting equipment
Effect of a fire on our neighbours
Evacuation plans and training of stewards

Electrical safety

Condition of fixed electrical installation, including switches and sockets
Condition of portable electrical appliances, including leads and plugs
Use of unauthorised electrical appliances and temporary wiring
Mechanical damage to wiring
Frequency of inspections

Control of hazardous substances

Internal
Cleaning materials
Types, amounts, storage arrangements
Provision of personal protective equipment
External
Pesticides, herbicides, petrol
Types, amounts, storage arrangements
Provision of personal protective equipment

Plant and machinery

Internal
Condition and potential injury arising from font covers, sanctuary lamps, hanging
roods and crosses, canopies and other suspended items
Lifts, hoists and other lifting mechanisms
Ladders, scaffolds and staging, including storage and accessibility
Display screen and computer equipment
Bells, clock weights and chiming mechanisms
Any other equipment
External
Churchyard maintenance equipment
Lawnmowers, gangmowers, strimmers, etc.

Slips, trips and falls

Internal
Loose carpets, rugs, mats and other floor coverings
Loose and uneven tiles, stone paving and floorboards
Trailing leads and other obstructions
Worn, steep and uneven steps and stairs
Inadequate lighting, lack of handrails
External
Uneven and poorly maintained paths and steps, boiler room steps and access
Potholes, tree roots and unprotected drops
Areas designated as wildlife habitats
Poor drainage of paths and growth of algae
Inadequate lighting and lack of handrails

Lighting

Internal
Check adequacy of lighting
Pay particular attention to stairs, steps, crypts, basements

External

Paths, steps, drives, car parks,
boiler room steps and entrances

Falls from a height

Internal

Arrangements for light bulb changing
Use of unsecured ladders
Unprotected openings and walkways at high level

External

Clearing of gutters and valleys
Low parapets and balustrades

Food hygiene

Extent of food preparation
Nature of foods to be prepared and stored
Areas used for food preparation
Facilities for washing and preparation of foodstuffs
Facilities for storage of foodstuffs
Experience, training and competence of food handlers

Manual handling

Moving and lifting of furniture, staging, pianos and other equipment
Numbers required
Specialist equipment needed

Display screen equipment

List all computer equipment
Who uses it and for how long
Check seating, workstation, screen, software

Hazardous buildings/glazing

Loose stonework, falling masonry, pinnacles, slates, tiles, gutters,
Detail any glass in windows below waist height and in doors or beside doors below
shoulder height which is not of a safety material or protected against breakage
(narrow panes up to 250mm need not be included)
Arrange for a competent person to check for the presence of asbestos
Dangerous gravestones, tombs, monuments and railings in the churchyard

Child protection

Existing child protection procedures
Implementation of Presbytery guidelines

Personal safety

Risk of attack
Lone working, church sitting
Handling of cash
Means of raising an alarm, summoning assistance

Activities and other hazards

Services, concerts, events, exhibitions, etc.
Numbers attending
Age-related hazards (children/elderly)

Disability access/provision

Fetes, sponsored walks, fund-raising activities

Bungee jumping, abseiling, parachute jumps etc.

Note: These activities will require separate insurance arrangements by the provider of the facility

Look for and note any other hazard which could cause someone harm which are not included in the above checklist.

Improving safety -additional control measures

In most cases, it will be obvious what additional measures are necessary to reduce risk. For example, if there is a risk of falling down steps which are badly lit and do not have a handrail, the additional controls needed will be to improve the lighting and fit a handrail.

If you find any hazardous glazing, this will need to be replaced with safety glass, such as toughened or laminated, be covered with a safety film or have a barrier fitted.

If there are risks of falls from a height, you will need to consider the fitting of barriers or the use of safety lathways, eyebolts and the use of harnesses.

In many cases, however, safety can be improved by changing working methods. It does not always require alterations to the building. For example, there is a considerable risk of accident and injury if bells are left 'up' after ringing. This hazard can be removed simply by ringing bells 'down' after ringing.

Maintain a record of the work you have done to reduce or remove hazards.

Remember that most changes to the building, even if required for health and safety reasons, will still be subject to the usual procedures.¹