

Trinity Church, Abingdon – Health and Safety Policy

Our policy is to ensure that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors, children, young people, vulnerable adults and others who may use the church premises.

As an employer, we must meet the requirements of health and safety law under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work. Act 1974. We will display Health and Safety Law posters in the church and Conduit Centre.

Trustees:

Have overall and final responsibility for health and safety. Trustees will:

- Ensure that adequate resources are made available for health and safety.
- Keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals, and at least annually, and after any significant incident, and monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where trustees believe it is no longer valid.
- Provide clear instructions and information and adequate training to ensure employees and volunteers are competent to do their work.
- Prevent accidents and work-related ill health by managing the health and safety risks and adopting and producing risk assessments where necessary.
- Ensure any accidents are investigated, recorded, reported, and remedied if necessary.
- Rectify reported hazards immediately.
- Keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church and Methodist Church Connexional guidance.
- Ensure that services, equipment, and machinery are maintained and inspected and tested by competent persons. Retain relevant health and safety documents and records.
- Engage and consult with employees and volunteers on implementing this policy.
- Ensure safe storage and use of substances.
- Maintain hygiene standards
- Carry out a fire safety risk assessment and rectify hazards.
- Ensure vehicles and drivers used to transport people to and from church are safe and legal. (The church has not offered Church organised lift sharing so as to avoid complications under both H&S and Safeguarding protocols. Individuals agreeing their own lift sharing instead.)
- Appoint Alastair Fear to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

Employees and Volunteers:

Each employee and volunteer must exercise personal responsibility for their safety and that of others. They will:

- Read this policy and understand personal responsibilities
- Complete tasks by taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others

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- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, and warn new people of known hazards
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely
- Report any accident
- Not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so
- Not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety
- Receive role-specific safety information, such as fire evacuation for stewards, food hygiene for catering coordinator, and safeguarding training as identified in the safeguarding policy.

A first aid box is in the Stewards Cupboard in the church and the Conduit Centre kitchen.

There is an Accident Book associated with each First Aid Box. Slips to be returned to the Administrator; all incidents will be reviewed. Accident records will be stored securely in line with GDPR, with personal details shared only where necessary.

The availability and location of a defibrillator will be reviewed annually and signposted to employees and volunteers.

A copy of this policy will be made available in church, the Conduit Centre, and on our website and given to Stewards and others on request.

Signed: Chair of Trustees Date
Policy due for renewal: September 2026

General Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks.

Competent Assistance

Where necessary, we will appoint someone competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations and record details of any appointment.

Risk Assessment

We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety laws. We will record our findings and implement any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect they are no longer valid.

A register of risk assessments will be maintained, with dates of review and responsible persons recorded.

Information and Training

We will promptly provide and record any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers.

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We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities, including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first-aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for employees and volunteers.

Our person in charge of first-aid arrangements is: Alastair Fear

Keep a list of trained first aiders among church members in the Stewards Cupboard and on the covered notice board in the Conduit Centre entrance area.

Accident Reporting

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of accidents to employees, volunteers, and public members under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

There is an Accident Book associated with each First Aid Box. Slips to be returned to the Administrator; all incidents will be reviewed.

Monitoring

We will make periodic checks to ensure our precautions remain effective and adequate.

We will also ensure that any lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make.

A Health & Safety Action Plan will be maintained and updated after the annual review in October, external audits, or significant incidents.

Contractors

If we employ contractors, we ensure they have their health & safety policy and public and Employers Liability Insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.

Contractors will be asked to register that they have seen the Site Rules.

Record Keeping

An electronic form of our Health and Safety Risk Assessments are kept by the trustee with specific responsibility for this policy and the administrator and can be printed whenever that is needed.

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Specific Arrangements

Church Buildings

Regularly inspect the fabric of our buildings to make sure it is safe. Repair defects as soon as is practicable. Take temporary measures to prevent danger until making permanent repairs, including glazing.

Church Grounds

Keep the boundary walls and gates in good repair. Get trees inspected by a competent person and carry out any necessary work to make them safe.

Construction Work

When planning maintenance, refurbishment or restoration work for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request), and spectacles (where needed).

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliances are maintained to prevent danger. Do not use defective equipment until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

Events

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services, and fundraising events, we will identify any necessary additional precautions and implement these. Each large or unusual event organised by the church will have a documented event-specific risk assessment. Examples might be fairs and services such as the Christingle with candles and many children but not Private Parties.

Dogs (other than assistance dogs) are not normally permitted inside church premises. Stewards and group leaders may exercise discretion in particular circumstances.

Fire

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take action in the event of a fire. We will record our findings and implement any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect they are no longer valid.

One of a small team will do a monthly fire alarm check and record the results and email other team members and the Administrator.

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Also implement a new check of smoke detectors in church to ensure the batteries are working.

Fire drills will be carried out annually in the Conduit Centre with employees and volunteers. Emergency evacuation plans will be displayed in prominent locations.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that the 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.

Hazardous Substances

We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products and petrol. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of following the manufacturers' instructions and taking any necessary specified precautions. COSHH safety data sheets will be retained for any substance used on site that carries a hazard warning symbol.

Manual Handling

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will use lifting aids (such as trolleys) or other precautions, including team lifting.

Preparation of Food

We will ensure that when we prepare food, we use a clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination and provide handwashing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste.

The church provides foods served during coffee mornings, voluntary outreach events and Holy Communion and is not registered as a food business. The Church is aware of the needs of those with allergies and intolerances and will take reasonable precautions to ensure people's safety. It will endeavour to offer allergen-free options when practical, such as gluten-free bread at communion. When staff are trained in safe handling practices, including cross-contamination prevention, they may provide a gluten-free option at other functions. However, guests with allergies and intolerances can always bring their own food. Those doing the catering will be aware of these arrangements and advice. The health and safety policy is available on our website and in the kitchen area.

Slips and Trips

We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as handrails or lighting or marking) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather. One of a small team will do a walk round to identify slip

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and trip hazards on a monthly rota and send an email with the results. They should also check for splintered flooring in the Conduit Centre.

Working at Height

We will try to avoid the need to work at height where possible. We will plan any job to identify suitable precautions where this is not practicable. We will make sure that these are implemented, including providing any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Somebody will regularly check some equipment (such as ladders) to ensure safety. We will keep records of any checks we make.

Working Alone

We will identify circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety. The lone working procedure will be followed.

Role of the Health and Safety Officer

The health and safety officer will:

- Carry out an annual self-audit on Health and Safety throughout the premises. Also, do regular checks of the site to identify hazards.
- Create and manage an action plan based on the annual self-audit, external insurance audits, and ongoing incidents, accidents, and identified hazards.
- Be the first point of contact for health and safety issues.
- Liaise with the property committee (and others) to minimise all identified risks.
- Provide an annual Health and Safety report to trustees and report on Health and Safety at Trustee meetings.
- Ensure the completion and regular review of necessary risk assessments for all equipment, operations, and arrangements.
- Ensure additional policies are in place for arrangements that need them, e.g. Lone Working.
- Ensure a fire risk assessment is in place with fire alarm checks carried out. Ensure stewards are aware of the fire evacuation procedure in the church, and fire drills are carried out for employees and volunteers in the Conduit Centre.
- Liaise with the Insurance Officer to ensure that all necessary routine safety inspections (gas, electric, lightning conductors, fire alarms & extinguishers) are carried out and recommendations implemented.
- Conduct an annual review with all employees and volunteers to discuss training in H&S.

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Ensure new employees and volunteers are given appropriate H&S induction and training.

- Liaise with the Circuit Property Officer where required, and ensure Methodist Insurance is notified promptly of any claims or incidents.