Fire Risk Assessment Template for Churches

Advisory Note

This note does not form part of the risk assessment

This template has been prepared specifically for places of worship being small (up to 60 persons) and medium (up to 300 persons) places of assembly. It aims to cover the most commonly found circumstances but is not exhaustive. For example, it does not cover buildings fitted with in-built fire-fighting facilities, such as sprinkler systems, fire hoses, dry risers, fire-fighting lifts/shafts, smoke ventilation units or air pressurization which will normally only be found in larger or more commercial buildings.

The template assumes that the building is only used as a place of worship, including normal ancillary community uses such as mid-week clubs, meetings and activities associated with the church. It also assumes that no residential accommodation is provided on the premises, including night shelters and similar accommodation.

It covers only the place of worship and ancillary rooms or halls used for similar activities. It does not extend to all buildings which may be on the same site, such as a manse, residential flat, workshop, storage facilities etc

Throughout the document, some basic advisory text is given in blue. The guidance is not exhaustive and more detailed guidance on many of the issues raised will be available in other documents, for example on the gov.uk website.

The last section of the template provides space for recording and summarising any significant finding found during the completion of the assessment to enable a plan of action to be made to eliminate or reduce risks or deficiencies which may have been identified.

The completed risk assessment should be retained for future reference and reviewed on a regular basis and a Fire Action Plan or Procedure should be drawn up and appended to the Fire Risk Assessment.

Ideally a simple plan of the building should also be attached, identifying room names, exits etc to assist the reading of the assessment by those not familiar with the property. If you do not have a plan of the building contact CGT who will be able to help.

A Room/Area checklist accompanies these notes. It is suggested that a copy is made for **each** room or area, including landings, corridors, entrance foyers etc. The checklist can then be used as an aide-memoire when walking around the building making notes and will be useful for future reference and reviews. It is not intended that the Room/Area checklist forms part of the completed or published Fire Risk Assessment.

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Room / Area Check List

Name of Room / Area:

Date:

Means of escape

- Final exits / room exits clear from obstruction
- Final exits / room exits clearly visible
- Escape routes / gangways free from obstruction
- Escape routes free from combustible materials
- Gangways mi 1.05m wide
- Loose seating linked together. Min 4, max 12
- No seats further than 7 seats from gangway
- Exit doors do not require use of key to open

Escape routes / corridors

- Travel distance to place of safety
- Corridors meet min width requirements
- Corridors free from obstructions to min width
- Corridors free from overhead obstructions
- Free from trip hazards

Combustible materials

- Matches, fuel, gas canisters
- Combustible materials stored
- Combustible materials near source of ignition
- Art and craft materials
- Display areas

Furniture and fittings

- Fire retardant upholstery to chairs etc
- Fire retardant curtains / blinds
- Fire retardant banners
- Fire retardant coverings to display boards

Potential sources of ignition

- Boilers / fires etc
- Naked flames / candles

Escape signage

- Final exits clearly signed
- Other exit routes clearly signed
- Panic bars signed “push to exit”
- Escape signage has emergency illumination

Other fire signage

- Fire doors signed “fire door keep shut”
- Fire doors to stores “fire door keep locked shut”
- Fire action notice displayed

Fire alarm & detection

- Audible fire alarm
- Visual fir alarm for those with hearing difficulties
- Automatic smoke/heat detector
- Manual call points, visible and accessible

Other fire risks

- Cooking facilities and equipment
- Art & craft equipment
- Broken light fittings
- Fixed electrical appliances
- Portable electrical equipment

Comments for this room or area:

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Fire Risk Assessment

Section 1
Assessment Details

1.1	Name of property	
1.2	Address of property Full address including postcode to be used by emergency services	
1.3	Agent/Client/Employer Name and address of the person or organisation commissioning the assessment	
1.4	Property Owner(s) Legal owners of the property and their contact details. Often a Trust, Diocese or church property office	
1.5	Assessor Name and contact details of the person or company undertaking the assessment	
1.6	Persons consulted or present and their position e.g. deacon, caretaker, church warden, property steward etc	

1.7 Date of assessment

1.8 Date of previous fire risk assessment

If none, or not known, state so

1.9 Suggested date for review

There is no statutory period at which a review should be undertaken, although there could be time periods imposed by building owners, trustees, insurers etc.

The review date needs to be brought forward if there is reason to suspect a significant change in circumstances, such as extensions or alterations to the property, change of use or nature of use, significant increase in occupancy, use or staffing, or change in ownership.

1.10 Risk to life at these premises is considered as:

Trivial	
Tolerable	
Moderate	
Substantial	
Intolerable	

Refer to Section 10 for assessment based on BS8800

Section 2
Fire Safety Management, Training and Record Keeping

PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS

2.1	Who is the personal with overall responsibility for fire safety?			
2.2	Has an appropriate fire procedure or action plan been established and published?	Y	N	
2.3	Is a copy of the procedure or action plan appended to this document?	Y	N	N/A
2.4	Has a copy of the procedure or action plan been issued to all relevant church leaders, officers, staff, caretakers, administration persons etc.?	Y	N	N/A
2.5	Has a copy of the procedure or action plan been issued to group leaders of all activity groups e.g. youth groups, mid-week groups, craft groups etc who regularly use the building for their activities?	Y	N	N/A
2.6	Are there arrangements to ensure that a copy of the procedure or action plan is issued to any external groups who may use or hire the building, either on a regular basis or on a one-off basis?	Y	N	N/A
2.7	Have persons been nominated to assist with the evacuation of disabled persons, or others who may need assistance for all regular church services?	Y	N	N/A
2.8	Have persons been nominated to assist with the evacuation of disabled persons, or others who may need assistance for all other activities which may take place outside of normal service times, such as mid-week groups, evening events, or clubs etc?	Y	N	N/A
2.9	Comments			

POLICIES

		Y	N
2.10	Has the church made any policies in respect of fire related activities?		

If yes, outline details below

Such policies may include such matters as:

Prohibition of storage of flammable materials in certain locations.
No smoking or restricted smoking policies.
How any restricted occupancy levels are monitored or ensured.

2.11 Comments

TRAINING AND DRILLS

		Y	N
2.12	Are all staff and group leaders given instruction on fire matters on induction		
2.13	Are all staff and group leaders given refresher training at suitable intervals?		
2.14	Are fire drills carried out at suitable intervals?		

If yes state frequency of drills

2.15 Comments

RECORDS

2.16 Are records kept of the following activities?

	Y	N	N/A
Fire drills			
Fire training/instruction to staff and group leaders			
Fire alarm tests			
Escape lighting tests			
Fire fighting equipment maintenance			
Issue of fire procedure / action plan / policies to staff and group leaders			
Issue of fire procedure / action plan / policies to staff to external groups or those hiring the premises, either on a regular basis or a one-off basis			

2.17 Comments

Section 3
Property Details

3.1 Number of floors

Including lofts and basements

3.2 Approximate floor area

Floor area is measured inside external walls and includes the are occupied by internal walls, corridors, stores, staircases, cupboards etc

List each floor as a separate area in square metres

3.3 Floor areas of additional buildings

List floor areas of additional buildings, which may be detached e.g. youth hall, Sunday school hall etc, in square metres.

3.4 Total gross floor area

The sum of floor areas of all buildings in square metres.

3.5 Brief details of construction

Give outline details of the construction of the external walls, internal walls, ground and upper floors, roof etc

Give date of original construction and dates of extensions or substantial alterations

Construction details and materials may differ between the original building and any subsequent extensions.

3.6 Fire loss experience

Give details of any known fire related incidents, whether or not they were the subject of an insurance claim, including causes if known.

3.7 Any other relevant information

e.g. previous evidence or knowledge of attempted arson attacks, or attacks to nearby or surrounding buildings.

High fire risk of adjoining buildings e.g. paint or chemical stores, garages, fuel stations etc.

REGULAR OCCUPANCY

4.1	Approximate number of persons attending regular/normal church services Include numbers of church officers, stewards, choir members, those leading services and those attending concurrent events, such as Sunday School, crèche etc.	
4.2	Approximate maximum number of persons likely to attend special events. e.g. Christmas services, weddings, funerals, conferences, holiday clubs etc Include those taking part in events, such as bands, choirs, caterers, bell ringers etc.	
4.3	Approximate numbers of persons who may attend additional activities held at the church If may be useful to list each activity and numbers separately. e.g. weekly groups, children's or youth groups, coffee mornings, art/craft groups, rehearsals, keep fit, prayer meetings, bell ringers etc	
4.4	Comments and hazards observed	

EMPLOYEES

4.5 Approximate max number of employees who may be on the premises at any one time

e.g. ministers, youth workers, caretakers, cleaners, administration staff etc

4.6 Approximate max number of volunteer workers who may be on the premises at any one time

e.g. administration staff, cleaners, gardeners etc

4.7 Comments and hazards observed

RESTRICTIONS ON OCCUPANCY

4.8 Give details of restriction which are imposed on the maximum occupancy, either of the building as a whole or to particular parts of it.

e.g. rooms with an inward opening door are usually subject to a restricted occupancy of 60 persons under Building Regulations

e.g. upper floor served by only one staircase are usually subject to a restricted occupancy of 60persons to the whole of that floor under Building Regulations

e.g. the church may have their own self-imposed policies of restriction as part of their fire action plan.

4.9 Comments and hazards observed

PERSONS AT SPECIAL RISK FROM FIRE

4.10 Give details of any circumstances where small groups or individuals may occupy remote parts of the building in an isolated environment, perhaps away from the main activities, or when the main worship area or reception area are not in use.

e.g. minister or administration staff may work in a private office.

e.g. activity groups who may use an upper room when the remainder of the property is unoccupied.

e.g. counselling services in private, secure or isolated areas.

4.11 Give details of circumstances when elderly or disabled persons may attend the premises and would require assistance to evacuate the building

In addition to persons with mobility impairment/wheelchair users, this may include those with sight and hearing impairments, persons with learning difficulties etc.

If there are activities organised specifically for such persons, this would substantially increase numbers and the need for assistance in the event of emergency evacuation.

4.12 Give details of any other persons who may require an increased level of assistance in evacuating the building or may be unable to evacuate the building with immediate effect.

e.g. pregnant women, parents with young children, those impaired by drugs, alcohol, or medication. Those taking part in blood donor sessions etc.

4.13	Comments and hazards observed	

SLEEPING OCCUPANTS

4.14	Give details of any circumstances or locations where occupants may sleep on the premises e.g. caretakers or security staff NOTE: Normal Planning Consent and Building Regulations Approval for places of worship will not normally include for permission for using any part of the property for sleeping accommodation, unless specific consent has been granted. This will usually mean an enhanced fire alarm and detection system and means of escape over and above that required for a place of worship.	
4.15	Comments and hazards observed	

Section 5
Potential Fire Hazards

ELECTRICAL

		Y	N	N/A
5.1	Is the fixed electrical installation regularly tested by a competent person?			

If yes, give details of the competent person or company undertaking the test

Frequency of testing

Date of last test

		Y	N	N/A
5.2	Are portable electrical appliances tested regularly? (PAT tests)			

If yes, give details of the person or company undertaking the tests

Frequency of testing

Date of last testing

		Y	N	N/A
5.3	Does the church ensure that any portable appliances being brought into the building by other bodies, groups or visitors have been PAT tested?			
5.4	Have any appliances which have failed PAT tests been removed from the building?			

5.5 Comments and hazards observed

HEATING

		Y	N	N/A
5.6	If fixed electrical heaters are used, are they included in the regular testing of the electrical installations?			
5.7	If free-standing electrical heaters are used, are they included in the regular PAT tests?			
5.8	If independent LPG heaters are used, are they fixed away from any combustible materials?			
5.9	If independent LPG heaters are used, are the arrangements for safely storing replacement and used gas cylinders satisfactory?			

		Y	N	N/A
5.10	If solid fuel heating appliances are used, are the appliances and their flues at a satisfactory distance from any fixed or loose combustible materials?			

Flues will normally need to be an absolute minimum of 50mm clear of combustible materials.

The appliance itself is likely to require much greater separation from combustible materials and also the provision of a hearth to separate it from combustible floor structures and finishes. The manufacturer's installation instructions and Building Regulations should be referred to.

		Y	N	N/A
5.11	If natural gas heaters or boilers are used, are the appliances and their flues at a satisfactory distance from any fixed or loose combustible materials?			

Flues will normally need to be an absolute minimum of 50mm clear of combustible materials.

The appliance itself is likely to require much greater separation from combustible materials and also the provision of a hearth to separate it from combustible floor structures and finishes. The manufacturer's installation instructions and Building Regulations should be referred to.

		Y	N	N/A
5.12	If natural gas heaters or boilers are used, are they subject to regular inspection and maintenance by an approved Gas Safe registered person or company?			

If yes, give details of the person or company carrying out inspections

Frequency of inspections	Date of last inspection

5.13	If oil heaters or boilers are used, are they subject to regular inspection and maintenance by an approved OFTEC registered person or company?			

If yes, give details of the person or company carrying out inspections

Frequency of inspections	Date of last inspection

		Y	N	N/A
5.14	Are any oil tanks suitably bunded or double skinned and have a safety cut-off valve?			

5.15 Comments and hazards observed

POSITIONING OF HEATERS

		Y	N	N/A
5.16	Are all heating appliances and boilers clear of combustible materials, including loose materials and furniture?			

5.17 Comments and hazards observed

LIGHTNING PROTECTION

		Y	N	N/A
5.18	Is the property fitted with a lightening protection system?			
	If yes, is it inspected regularly by a specialist lightning engineer at regular intervals?			

If yes, give details of the person or company carrying out inspections

Frequency of inspections	Date of last inspection

5.19 Comments and hazards observed

COOKING

		Y	N	N/A
5.20	Does the property have a kitchen or food preparation area?			
	Are filters, extract fans, or ductwork cleaned on a regular basis?			

Frequency of cleaning	Date of last cleaning

		Y	N	N/A
	Is the area fitted with appropriate extinguishers and a fire blanket?			

5.21 Comments and hazards observed

FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS

		Y	N	N/A
5.22	Are all curtains, drapes, blinds, and banners fabricated with fire retardant materials?			

If not, give details

		Y	N	N/A
5.23	Are all chairs, benches and other soft furnishings fitted with fire-retardant fabrics?			

If not, give details

		Y	N	N/A
5.24	Are all display boards, notice boards etc covered with, or made from, fire retardant materials?			

If not, give details

5.25 Comments and hazards observed

LOOSE COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

		Y	N	N/A
5.26	Have all loose combustible materials been removed from the building where possible and practicable?			

5.27 If loose combustible materials remain in the building, give details of their locations, so that these may be monitored

Loose combustible materials may include art and craft items stored for use, decorations including Christmas decorations and flower-arranging decorations, materials set aside for recycling, play equipment, hymn books, literature and leaflets, stationary.

		Y	N	N/A
5.28	Are all escape routes and exits free from loose combustible materials?			

If not, give details

		Y	N	N/A
5.29	Are any remaining loose combustible materials adequately separated from potential sources of ignition?			

5.30 Comments and hazards observed

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF IGNITION

		Y	N
5.31	Are there any heaters or fires which have naked flames?		

		Y	N
5.32	Are naked flames used at special events?		

These may include candles for Christmas or remembrance services, candles for cakes etc

If yes, give details and any special measures which may be employed

Special measures may include a duty steward or allocated responsible person to supervise the use of naked flames or to be stationed in close proximity with necessary fire-fighting equipment.

		Y	N
5.33	Are there any other potential sources of ignition identified?		

If yes, give details and locations

SMOKING

		Y	N
5.34	Is smoking prohibited or restricted all or in parts of the building?		

If yes, give details of areas where smoking in prohibited

		Y	N
5.35	Does any smoking prohibition extend to the exterior or grounds of the premises?		
5.36	Have suitable arrangements been made, either inside the building or externally, for those who wish to smoke?		
5.37	Have suitable cigarette bins been provided for persons to extinguish and deposit cigarettes when entering non-smoking areas?		
5.38	Has there been any evidence or knowledge of occupants not complying with any non-smoking policies?		

If yes, gives details / locations

5.39 Comments and hazards observed

POTENTIAL ARSON

		Y	N	N/A
5.40	Are combustible or flammable materials which could be used in assisting an arson attempt kept in a secure and remote place?			

This may include fuel for lawn mowers, flammable paints, gas cylinders etc

If yes, give details of where such materials are to be stored

		Y	N	N/A
5.41	Are matches, firelighters, ignition units or similar fire lighting equipment kept in a secure location?			

Such goods may be necessary for churches with solid fuel burning appliances or where candles are used.

If yes, give details of where such materials are to be stored

Y	N	N/A

5.42 Are refuse bins or recycling storage which may assist arsonists located in close proximity to the building?

If yes, give details

Y	N	N/A

5.43 Are refuse and recycling storage areas secured against unauthorised access when the building in not occupied?

5.44 Comments and hazards observed

MANUAL SYSTEM

6.1 Is there a manually operated fire alarm, such as a bell or gong which is operated in case of fire? Y ☐ N ☐

If yes, give details of location and procedure for raising the alarm

6.2 Is the equipment tested on a regular basis? Y ☐ N ☐ N/A ☐

If yes, give details of the person or company carrying out the tests

Frequency of tests

Date of last test

6.3 Comments and hazards observed

MANUALLY ACTIVATED ELECTRIC SYSTEM

6.4 Is there an electric system, which is manually activated? Y ☐ N ☐

Typically this may comprise an electric sounding system which is manually operated, together with break glass call points.

If yes, give details and procedure for raising the alarm

		Y	N	N/A
6.5	Is the equipment tested on a regular basis?			

If yes, give details of the person or company carrying out the tests

Frequency of tests

Date of last test

6.6 Comments and hazards observed

AUTOMATIC DETECTION & ALARM SYSTEM

		Y	N
6.7	Is there a fully automatic fire detection and alarm system?		

Details of the grade of system will usually be found in the installer's instructions or on the certificates which accompany the installation. BS 5839-1 gives different grades of system for different levels of fire risk.

Type L systems are designed to protect life and will the type normally installed in church premises and is divided into the following categories:

- L1 Installed throughout the building. This would normally include voids, roof voids, stores etc
- L2 Installed in only parts of the building.
- L3 Installed to only give early enough warning to enable all occupants to escape safely before escape routes become impassable.
- L4 Installed only in those parts of the building which comprise escape routes comprising circulation areas, corridors, staircases etc.
- L5 Installed to satisfy only a specific fire safety objective, other than L1 to L4. e.g. to operate closing of doors, or shutters, opening of smoke vents etc

Type P systems are designed to protect property or the building only. They will usually be installed where there is no risk to life but there is risk to property e.g. storage areas for valuable goods or stock not usually occupied by people. Type P systems are sometimes a requirement of building or contents insurers if a type L system is not present. Type P is divided into the following categories:

- P1 Installed throughout the property.
- P2 Installed in only defined parts of the property

Type M systems are manually operated systems.

If yes, give details of the grade of system installed and, if only a partial system, give details of the areas served

		Y	N	N/A
6.8	Is the installation tested on a regular basis by a qualified and competent person or company on a regular basis?			

If yes, give details of the person or company carrying out the testing

Frequency of tests	Date of last test

		Y	N	N/A
6.9	Is the installation tested on a regular basis by the church?			

This will usually comprise weekly checks that the system is operational using various call points in rotation.

If yes, who is responsible for carrying out the tests?

		Y	N	N/A
6.10	Is the main alarm panel located in an area readily visible to staff and emergency services upon arrival at the property?			
6.11	Is there a plan displayed near the main alarm panel showing the layout of the building and the different zones for the alarm system?			

		Y	N	N/A
6.12	Is the installation connected to an external monitoring centre?			

Connection to a remote monitoring centre will allow emergency services to be summoned if there are no persons in the building to take such action. Connection to such a service is usually via a dedicated telephone line and will require the installation to be maintained at specific intervals.

If yes, give details

	Y	N	N/A
6.13 In addition to operating any audible alarm, does the installation also automatically control any other fire-related installations?			

This may include, fire shutters, kitchen hatches, door closers, smoke vents, shutters on air vents such as warm air heating etc.

If yes, give details

6.14 Comments and hazards observed

INNER ROOMS

		Y	N	N/A
6.15	Are there any inner rooms i.e. rooms which have no direct access to an escape route and which can only be vacated via another room (access room)?			
	If yes, are the access rooms fitted with automatic fire detection and alarm facilities?			

6.16 Comments and hazards observed

HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

	Y	N	N/A
6.17 Are there any situations where a person who has a hearing impairment could be located on their own and therefore unaware of any activation of the fire alarm system?			

This may typically include disabled toilet facilities, changing rooms, minister's office etc.

	Y	N	N/A
If yes, are other means of warning e.g. visual warning such as flashing lights, installed in these areas.			

If yes, give details

6.18 Comments and hazards observed

Section 7
Fire Fighting Equipment and Access

	Y	N	N/A
7.1 Is the property fitted with fire fighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, hoses, fire blankets etc?			

If yes, list details of types, sizes and locations

	Y	N	N/A
7.2 Are the items of equipment considered adequate and suitable for the purpose and environment in which they are located?			

WATER EXTINGUISHERS	Are for wood, paper, textile and solid material fires. Do not use on liquid, electrical or metal fires.
POWDER EXTINGUISHERS	Are for liquid and electrical fires.
FOAM EXTINGUISHERS	Are for liquid fires. Do not use on electrical or metal fires or on deep-fat fryers or chip pans.
CARBON DIOXIDE EXTINGUISHERS	Are for liquid and electrical fires. Do not use on metal fires.

Halon extinguishers are no longer permitted to be manufactured in the UK.

Note that whilst powder extinguishers can be used on electrical equipment they will almost certainly render the equipment useless. They are not suitable for use in confined spaces and can affect persons with breathing disabilities. They are not recommended for use in historic buildings as they can also cause permanent damage to historic fabric.

For Class A fires (i.e. those involving solid materials such as wood, paper and textiles), government guidance is that one 9 litre water extinguisher should be provided for every 200m2 of floor area, with a minimum of two extinguishers for each floor level. For other types of fire risk, such as electrical or liquid fires, the appropriate types of extinguisher should be provided in the vicinity of the risk (e.g. typically carbon dioxide extinguishers place near to electrical distribution boards and other fixed electrical equipment).

FIRE BLANKETS	Should be located in each kitchen area. Suitable for dealing with small fire in containers, such as cooking oils or fats, and for fire involving clothing.

Fixed installations such as sprinkler systems, hoses and dry–riser installations are not common in church buildings and are not covered in this risk assessment document. They will also usually need specialist training.

		Y	N	N/A
7.3	Is the fire fighting equipment clearly visible and located where users can safely get to them without obstruction?			
7.4	Is the fire fighting equipment regularly checked for operational condition and serviced/replaced as necessary by a competent person or company?			

If yes, give details of the competent person or company undertaking the checks

Frequency of checks / inspection	Date of last check / inspection

7.5 Comments and deficiencies observed

FIRE FIGHTING ACCESS

		Y	N	N/A
7.6	Is there sufficient access and manoeuvring space around the building for to allow access for fire fighting appliances to within a reasonable distance of the building?			

For a typical pump appliance, a minimum clear width of 3.7m is usually required between kerbs and an absolute minimum clear width of 3.1m between gate posts. The minimum clear height is usually 3.7m.

For a typical pump appliance, the surface should provide a minimum carrying capacity of 2.5 tonnes. Unpaved surfaces, such as grassed areas, will usually be inappropriate unless suitably reinforced.

Appliances are not standard sizes. If in doubt discuss with your local fire and rescue service.

Larger appliances, such as high-reach appliances will not usually be required for small church premises.

For small church premises (less than 2000m2 floor area), current Building Regulations require access for a standard pumping appliance to gain access to 15% of the exterior of the building or to within 45m of any point of the external footprint.

		Y	N	N/A
7.7	Are regular checks made to ensure access routes for fire fighting appliances are kept free from obstruction?			

7.8 Comments and deficiencies observed

SEATING AND GANGWAYS

		Y	N
8.1	Are there adequate clear aisles or gangways within each room or worship area leading to exits from the room?		

Government guidance is that gangways should be an absolute minimum of 1.05m width between seating. Clear width is free from projections or obstructions, such as fire extinguishers, bookcases etc.

Note that a greater clear width may be required for disabled access purposes.

		Y	N
8.2	Is the seating arrangement and layout within each room satisfactory?		

Government guidance is that no seats should be more than seven seats from a gangway.

Government guidance is that if loose or temporary seating is installed it should be secured together in lengths of not less than four seats and not more than twelve.

8.3 Comments and hazards observed

INTERNAL ESCAPE ROUTES

The suitability of escape routes and final exits is a complex subject.

The number of escape routes, together with their required width and height, will depend upon the number of persons likely to use each route.

The physical construction of the escape route, such as partitions or walls enclosing the route and the fire rating of doors which open onto the route is also a material consideration as to whether they are satisfactory.

There are also restrictions on the acceptable travel distance to reach a place of safety, depending upon how many optional routes there may be (i.e. acceptable travel distances are less if there is only one escape route).

Detailed requirements for means of escape to new non-domestic buildings are given in Building Regulations Approved Document B Volume 2. Simplified guidance more specific to church premises can also be found in the Church Growth Trust Briefing Paper "Fire exits and escape routes in church buildings"

		Y	N	N/A
8.4	Is escape achieved within reasonable travel distance to reach a place of safety or to reach a final or storey exit?			

Refer to above notes.

		Y	N	N/A
8.5	Are all escape routes of adequate width?			

Refer to above notes.

		Y	N	N/A
8.6	Are all escape routes suitably protected from fire risks in areas through which they pass?			

Protection will include the structure and flanking walls surrounding the escape route, and the provision of fire-resisting doors. Glazing in doors or partitions and will need to be fire-resisting or at high level.

		Y	N	N/A
8.7	Are all escape routes free from trip hazards?			

Loose carpets, worn floor finishes, small changes in level, uneven floor ducts, worn matwells etc can all present trip hazards.

		Y	N	N/A
8.8	Are all escape routes free from overhead obstructions?			

Overhead obstructions can include shelves, wall cupboards, loudspeakers, decorations etc. Generally 2m clear headroom is required on escape routes.

		Y	N	N/A
8.9	Are all escape routes free from items which may cause a hazard?			

e.g. bins, fire extinguishers, heaters, umbrella stands, pushchair parking, tables etc.

		Y	N	N/A
8.10	Are all escape doors and final exit doors unobstructed and immediately openable without the use of a key?			

For guidance on ironmongery, including doors which may need to be normally locked for security, such as child protection measures, refer to the Church Growth Trust Briefing Paper "Fire exits and escape routes in church buildings"

8.11 Comments and hazards observed

EXTERNAL ESCAPE ROUTES

		Y	N	N/A
8.12	Are all external escape routes clear from obstruction, of adequate width and suitably paved?			

Check for obstructions to width and headroom, together with trip hazards as for internal escape routes.

		Y	N	N/A
8.13	Are any gates or barriers on external escape routes unobstructed and immediately openable without the use of a key?			

8.14 Comments and hazards observed

EXTERNAL STAIRCASES

		Y	N	N/A
8.15	Do any external staircases form part of the external escape routes?			

If yes, give details of the areas served

NOTE: External staircases are now no longer acceptable as means of escape from a building by members of the public and those not familiar with the building. They may still be acceptable to serve staff areas.

		Y	N	N/A
8.16	Are external staircases adequately protected from the weather?			

External staircases can become slippery due to moss, algae, snow or ice.

8.17 Comments and hazards observed

ASSEMBLY AREAS

		Y	N	N/A
8.18	Is there one or more designated assembly area at a safe distance from the building?			
	If yes, is the assembly area and the route to it adequately signed?			

8.19 Comments and hazards observed

MEANS OF ESCAPE FOR DISABLED PERSONS

		Y	N	N/A
8.20	Do any of the internal escape routes have any changes in levels, steps or staircases which would present problems for those with limited mobility, including wheelchair users?			

It should be assumed that no internal lifts, stairlifts, platform lifts etc can be used in case of emergency evacuation.

If yes, give details and locations

Y	N	N/A

8.21 Do any of the external escape routes or final exit doors have any changes in levels or steps which would present problems for those with limited mobility, including wheelchair users?

If yes, give details and locations

Y	N	N/A

8.22 Do all floors or areas which are served by staircases or steps have a refuge area at the head of the staircase or steps in a protected area in which a wheelchair user can be located to await further assistance, without restricting the required width of the escape route for other persons?

If yes, give details and locations

Y	N	N/A

8.23 Do all external escape routes which contain steps have a refuge area at the head of the steps in a protected area in which a wheelchair user can be located to await further assistance, without restricting the required width of the escape route for other persons?

If yes, give details and locations

		Y	N	N/A
8.24	Do all refuge areas have a intercom linked to reception, offices or other appropriate location from where a wheelchair user located in the refuge are can summon assistance?			

If yes, give details of the location of the alarm panel

		Y	N	N/A
8.25	Does the church have evacuation chairs or trolleys to assist			

If yes, give details of the location of the equipment

8.26 Comments and hazards observed

ESCAPE LIGHTING

		Y	N
8.27	Is a reasonable level of escape lighting provided internally?		
8.28	Is a reasonable level of escape lighting provided externally?		

		Y	N	N/A
8.29	In particular, is escape lighting provided in the following recommended locations?			
	Each internal escape route?			
	Intersections of corridors and changes in direction?			
	Each exit door (internally)?			
	Each final exit (internally)			
	Each final exit door (externally)?			
	Each external escape route?			

Each change in floor level or steps?			
Stairways, so that each flight receives adequate light?			
Any windowless accommodation?			
Toilet accommodation over 8m2?			
Halls and other areas greater than 60m2?			
Each escape sign? (unless individually internally illuminated)			
Each fire alarm call point?			
Each location for fire fighting equipment?			
Adjacent to equipment which may need to be shut down in emergency?			
Within lifts?			

		Y	N	N/A
8.30	Is the escape lighting system checked on a regular basis?			

Give details of responsible person and frequency of checks

Weekly check of indicator lights to ensure charging is taken place.
Monthly check to ensure illumination when power disconnected.
Six-monthly check to ensure illumination for at least 1 hour.
Annual check to ensure illumination for full duration of rated period (usually 3 hours).

8.31 Comments and deficiencies observed

Section 9
Fire Safety Signs and Notices

		Y	N	N/A
9.1	Is there a reasonable standard of fire safety signs and notices through the building?			

ESCAPE SIGNS

		Y	N	N/A
9.2	Are all signs illuminated if a power failure occurs?			

Illumination may be illumination within the sign (either permanently illuminated or just when power fails) or by external illumination from appropriately positioned escape lighting.

		Y	N	N/A
9.3	Are all escape signs clearly visible by building occupants at all times?			

Ensure correct positioning and not obscured by drapes, curtains, black out blinds etc.

		Y	N	N/A
9.4	Do all escape signs comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Sign and Signals) Regulations 1996?			

Signs complying with these regulations must be in pictogram form (e.g. running man with arrow direction sign). Older style signs which have text only or arrows only are not acceptable.

Any text should be in upper and lower case, not upper case only, to assist those with learning or reading difficulties.

Escape signs should be fixed 2m to 2.5m above doorways, not to the doors themselves as these will not be visible when the door is opened or is left open. Escape signs fitted to walls should be 1.7m to 2.0 above floor level.

All signs should be of the same style and design throughout the building.

		Y	N	N/A
9.5	Are all external escape routes fitted with escape signage?			

		Y	N	N/A
9.6	Are external assembly points signed, together with the route to them from all final exits?			

9.7 Comments and deficiencies observed

OTHER FIRE SAFETY SIGNAGE

		Y	N	N/A
9.8	Are all doors fitted with push bar fitted with signage to say “push bar to open”?			

		Y	N	N/A
9.9	Are all final exit doors fitted with external signs saying “fire escape – keep clear” where they are liable to become obstructed?			

		Y	N	N/A
9.10	Are all internal fire doors fitted with door closers and signage to say “fire door – keep shut”?			

		Y	N	N/A
9.11	Are all internal fire doors which serve stores, cupboards and ducts, which are not fitted with door closers, fitted with signage to say “fire door – keep locked shut”?			

		Y	N	N/A
9.12	Are fire action notices displayed in appropriate places which give details of the procedure in the event of fire, including how to summon emergency services and where fire assembly points are located?			

Fire action signs should be located on escape routes, ideally next to each break glass point, or where staff frequently assemble (e.g. canteen, staff rooms, reception area).

If the premises are expected to accommodate persons whose first language is not English, consideration should be given to providing signs in additional appropriate languages.

9.13 Comments and deficiencies observed

Section 10
Risk Level Estimation

Having regard to the information in Sections 1 to 9, the fire procedure or action plan adopted by the church and the policies adopted by the church the assessment in relation to the potential consequences of a fire and the likelihood of a fire are as follows:

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF FIRE

TICK ONE

SLIGHTLY HARMFUL ☐
Outbreak of fire is unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant

MODERATELY HARMFUL ☐
Outbreak of fire could result in injury or serious injury of one or more occupants, but is unlikely to cause death or involve multiples of people

EXTREMELY HARMFUL ☐
Outbreak of fire could have significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants

LIKELIHOOD OF FIRE

TICK ONE

LOW ☐
Low likelihood of outbreak of fire.
Negligible potential sources of ignition

MEDIUM ☐
Medium risk of outbreak of fire.
Normal fire hazards and normal potential sources of ignition, generally subject to appropriate controls

HIGH ☐
High risk of outbreak of fire
Lack of appropriate controls applied to one or more potential sources of ignition

Potential consequences	Slightly Harmful	Moderately Harmful	Extremely Harmful
Risk of fire			
Low	Trivial Risk	Tolerable Risk	Moderate Risk
Medium	Tolerable Risk	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk
High	Moderate Risk	Substantial Risk	Intolerable Risk

Having regard to the potential consequences of fire and likelihood of fire, using the table above the overall risk to health and safety can be indicated as:

TICK ONE

Trivial ☐

Tolerable ☐

Moderate ☐

Substantial ☐

Intolerable ☐

The previous table is based upon a general health and safety risk level estimator contained in BS 8800: 2004 Guide to occupational health and safety management systems.

The risk-based control plan below is based on one advocated by BS 8800.
An acceptable risk-based control plan should involve effort and urgency which is proportional to the risk concerned.

RISK LEVEL	SUGGESTED ACTION AND TIMESCALE
TRIVIAL	No action required and no detailed records need be kept.
TOLERABLE	No major additional controls are required. However, there may be a need for consideration of improvements that involve minor or limited cost.
MODERATE	It is essential that efforts are made to reduce the risk. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period. Where moderate risk is associated with extremely harmful consequences, further assessment may be required to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the priority for improving control measures.
SUBSTANTIAL	Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. If the building is unoccupied, it should not be occupied until the risk has been reduced. If the building is occupied, urgent action should be taken.
INTOLERABLE	The Building (or relevant area) should not be occupied until the risk is reduced.

Section 11
Significant Findings and Action

Finding	Proposal to remove/reduce risk / action to be taken	Target date	Person responsible