



CREDITON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FIRE SAFETY POLICY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the way in which the Church Leadership aims to safely manage Crediton Congregational Church in line with good fire safety practice, to protect all those using the building(s). It is also to ensure that we comply with the legal obligations of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 that became effective in October 2006.

2. Responsibility

The responsibility for fire safety arrangements within the Church rests with the 'responsible person', nominated by the Leadership Team.

3. General Fire Safety planning

The Church premises have been equipped with a number of general features to improve fire safety:

- Emergency lighting along routes to fire exits
- Fire alarm and 'break glass' alarm call points
- Smoke detectors in areas where there is greater likelihood of a fire starting
- Adequate, well maintained fire safety equipment
- Appropriate signage including marked fire exits

The responsible person will oversee the maintenance of these systems and equipment in accordance with the required schedules.

The Leadership Team in liaison with the Church Administrator will ensure that a number of basic 'good housekeeping' procedures are followed:

- Waste bins will be emptied regularly.
- External bins will be housed in a suitable container and emptied weekly.
- All escape routes and fire exits will be kept clear and rooms kept tidy.
- Any flammable cleaning materials will be stored in a locked store.

The responsible person will also conduct specific processes and encourage a number of practices to minimize the risks of a fire starting and minimize the risk to individuals in the unlikely event of a fire. These will be based on an annual Risk Assessment by the responsible person. Any significant finding from these assessments will be reported to the Leadership Team and acted upon.

The responsible person will ensure that the annual review takes account of new legislation requirements and update the policy accordingly.

Those hiring/making use of the premises will also be provided with information on the action to take on discovering a fire and to support the safe evacuation of the building.



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4. Fire Risk Assessment

The responsible person will undertake the annual risk assessment using the process and format recommended by the Department of Communities & Local Government for Churches. This review will look at all aspects of fire safety and will enable them to identify any actions the Leadership Team need to take to improve safety.

The key aspects of the assessment are:

- i. Identify Hazards
- ii. Identify Location of People at Risk in Case of Fire
- iii. Identify the Risks and Decide Whether Existing Precautions are Adequate
- iv. Record Findings and Actions
- v. Review & Revise Policy if Required

5. Employees, Worship Leaders and Welcome team members

Employees, Worship Leaders and Welcome team members and regular volunteers will be given training and/or guidance to support the Leadership in the implementation of this Fire Safety Policy, including the following:

- i. Identification of the fire detection & alarm systems operating in the building
- ii. The action to be taken on discovery of a fire or hearing the alarm
- iii. The evacuation procedure, including procedure for directing members of the public, and other occupants – paying particular attention to those who are physically disabled and those with impaired sight & hearing – to the exits and off the premises
- iv. The arrangements for calling the Fire Brigade
- v. The location and purpose, and use, of fire fighting equipment
- vi. The location and accessibility of electrical and gas shut off valves
- vii. The detail, and location, of escape routes, especially those not in regular use, as well as the importance of keeping access to escape routes clear.
- viii. The method of opening all escape doors, including the use of any emergency fastenings
- ix. The location and importance of keeping fire doors closed in order to prevent the spread of fire, heat and smoke
- x. The importance of general fire precautions and good housekeeping

6. Fire Drills

Fire Drills will be conducted twice a year on both Sundays and on week-days.

7. Use of portable electrical appliances

All portable electrical appliances in the Church are tested annually to ensure they are safe to use. The use of untested personal electrical appliances in the Church is prohibited with prior authorisation from the Leadership Team.



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8. **Cooking**

Cooking must be restricted to the kitchen only, using the appliances provided. The use of portable gas stoves inside of the building is prohibited, use of them outside must obtain prior authorisation of the Leadership Team.

Important: Approval for cooking in the Fishtank area will only be granted on the strict condition that the upstairs balcony is not in use.

9. **Storage of combustible materials**

Combustible materials used in the Church must be stored safely away from sources of ignition, including, but not limited to, the following items:

- i. Matches and disposable lighters must be stored safely out of the reach of children.
- ii. Candles must be stored lying down in the cabinet provided, and kept away from sources of heat, including sunlight. All candles should be used within two years of purchase.
- iii. A limited supply of dry foods (biscuits, cereals, etc.) may be safely stored in the Fishtank, away from electrical appliances. The amount stored in this way should not exceed the typical amount required for the event or service it is intended for.
- iv. Cleaning materials must be stored securely in a lockable container.
- v. Cushions, upholstered chairs, and other soft furnishings must be stored away from sources of ignition, such as gas heaters.

Fire Safety Guidance for those using the Church

We want everyone who uses Crediton Congregational Church to be safe and confident in responding in the unlikely event of a fire on the premises. The premises have in-built smoke detectors that should activate automatically in the event of a fire. However, this is no substitute for common sense and vigilance on behalf of all users of the premises.

Please take a moment to read and understand the guidance given below which outlines your responsibility with regard to fire safety and tells you what to do in the event of a fire.

Smoking

Please note smoking is not permitted on any part of the Church premises including car parking areas.

Exit Routes

Please make yourself aware of the nearest fire exit and that your route to it is clear and unobstructed. And also please ensure everyone you are responsible for is aware of these arrangements at the start of each meeting/event.

Please be aware of anyone who is with you who will need special arrangements to exit the building such as a physically disabled as well as those with hearing and sight problems. Nominate appropriate individual(s) to help them exit the building using the designated route.



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EVACUATION PROCEDURE

On suspicion or discovery of a fire or on hearing the alarm

On discovery of a fire activate the fire alarm by pressing the nearest activation call point (these are red boxes placed around the building).

- Leave calmly and quickly through the nearest emergency exit.
- Do not stop to collect your possessions
- Parents should not re-enter the church to collect their children from the crèche or Fusion Room. Youth workers will escort all children to the assembly point.
- If it is safe to do so, close any open windows and shut any doors behind you (but DO NOT lock any doors)
- If smoke or toxic gas is present, keep low.
- Assemble in the car park in front of the Church
- Telephone the emergency services (there is a telephone in the Manse, alternatively the nearest public phone is outside Charlesworth-Nicholl Solicitors).

Emergency Exits

Main Church building

There are three emergency exits in the church:

- Main entrance - four fire exit doors*
- Disabled access entrance next to lower WC
- Disabled access entrance at foot of stairs leading to schoolroom

*All four main entrance doors must be unlocked when the church balcony is in use.

Church hall / schoolroom

- Church hall side entrance to Belle Court
- Church hall rear entrance to church garden

Manse

- The emergency exit is through the front entrance leading to the car park, and through the kitchen (foodbank) door to Belle Court.

Assembly Point

- The assembly point is in the front courtyard, adjacent to the main road.



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Fire Safety guidance for Third-Party Users

Introduction

Third-party hirers/users of the church premises are responsible for conducting their activities in a way safe from the risk of fire. There is a need to ensure such persons are aware of the fire precautions to be heeded and what to do if a fire occurs. This guidance has been prepared to assist third-party hirers/users, including regular users of the church buildings.

Requirements

All hirers must appoint a responsible person who is aware of the Fire Safety Regulations. This is a requirement for every booking.

The responsible person has legal duties with regards to the safety of people assisting or attending the event.

The responsible person should be aware of:

- The location of the fire extinguishers and fire blankets.
- How the evacuation of the building should be carried out.
- The arrangement for means of escape for disabled persons.
- Where people should assemble after they have left the premises in the event of a fire.
- Procedures for checking whether the premises have been evacuated.
- Identification of key escape routes and exits.
- Arrangements for fighting fire.
- How the Fire and Rescue Service will be called and procedure for meeting Fire and Rescue Service on their arrival.
- Exit doors that are required to be unlocked when church is in use.
- Escape routes, checking that routes are clear of obstruction.

During the event the responsible person should ensure that:

- Escape routes and exits do not become blocked.
- The no smoking policy in the building is adhered to.
- No naked flames are started (unless authorised e.g. candles)
- Where naked flames are present that combustible material is kept clear.
- The building does not become overcrowded.