

Safer places of Worship

Arson

A high proportion of fires in places of worship are started maliciously by using materials that are already available at or near the scene. Some may start fires by introducing burning materials through windows or letter boxes, while others will break into the target building.

Maintain a high standard of vigilance at all times, and ensure security is suitable and adequate. Limit the fuel that may be available, Gas cylinders, flammable liquids and combustible materials that are easily ignited should be safely locked away. Matches and candles should be kept out of sight, preferably off-site.

Vandalism occurring in and around the place of worship, should be considered within the risk assessment. Consideration needs to be given to automatic fire detection devices, such as smoke detectors, which can be linked to a remote central station if the risk is deemed to be high.

ASSESSING THE RISK

Your place of worship may be a high risk, if:

- It is in an isolated position
- It is not in a good state of repair
- It is situated within an urban area
- It is left open during the day, even if not unattended
- It has a number of entry points, particularly if these are left open during the day
- It has suffered a small fire, break-in or malicious damage during the past 2 years
- There have been fires, break-ins graffiti or vandalism in other churches or areas in the locality over recent months
- There are articles of value on display
- The building is used by external groups
- If there is no designated official to oversee security
- There is no fire protection equipment



Use the links below for more information from the arson prevention bureau

Places of Worship – protecting your religious community-
http://www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk/viewDocument.aspx?Document_ID=499

Arson a major threat to places of worship ... and how to prevent it (8 pages)
<http://www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk/saveddocument/Churches.pdf>