

Safer places of Worship

How to get started

There are lots of different things that you can and should do to keep people safe. All churches, places of worship and associated activities are different, and what works best will not be the same for everyone.

This guide is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, we have given you a brief starting point to help your organisation, and to explain the most important parts of Health and Safety as it affects you. We have also given you some links for further information.

Please note this information reflects the current legal position in England and Wales. Whilst the position in Scotland and Northern Ireland is broadly similar, please ensure you take specific advice to make sure you comply.

Think about your employees. Do you know who they are? Be aware employees are not just paid workers. Volunteers count as employees, as do part-time workers, such as organists, cleaners, caretakers etc.

There are 10 key things which you must do:

1. Decide how you are going to manage health and safety in your organisation. If you have 5 or more employees you must write this down but if you don't it is still a good idea. This is your Health and Safety Policy.
2. Think about what might cause harm to people and how you can take precautions. This is your Risk Assessment.
3. If you employ anyone you need Employers Liability Compulsory insurance and you must display the certificate.
4. You must provide free health and safety training for your workers so they know what hazards and risks they may face and how to deal with them.
5. You must have competent advice to help you meet your health and safety duties. This can be workers from your business, external consultants/advisers or a combination of these.
6. You need to provide toilets, washing facilities and drinking water for all your employees, including those with disabilities. These are basic health, safety and welfare needs.
7. You must consult your employees on health and safety matters.
8. If you have employees you must display the health and safety law poster or provide them with a leaflet with the same information.
9. If you are an employer, self-employed or in control of work premises, by law you must report some work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences.
10. If you are a new organisation you may need to register either with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or your Local Authority.

For more information visit the Health and Safety Executive's 'top 10 things you must do' go to:
www.hse.gov.uk/smallbusinesses/must-do.htm

You can also contact the Health and safety Executive on :

For England and Wales

HSE's Infoline

Tel: 0845 345 0055

Fax: 02920 859260

Email: hse.infoline@natbrit.com

or write to:

HSE Information Services
Caerphilly
Business Park
Caerphilly CF83 3GG

For Scotland

Tel: 0845 345 0055

Web: www.hse.gov.uk/scotland

For Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9024 3249

Fax: 028 9023 5383

Email: hse.ni@detini.gov.uk

Web: www.hse.ni.gov.uk