

St Mary's Church, Fetcham.

Fire Response Guide for Hirers of the Church Hall

1 Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 puts the responsibility for fire safety onto the operators and users of public buildings. These regulations require a risk assessment based approach to fire safety. As the owners of the church hall St Mary's PCC has undertaken a risk assessment, which is annually reviewed, to ensure that the hall is a safe environment for the public to use. This document specifies the responsibilities of those hiring the church hall and the provided safety features. Please note that smoking is not permitted in any church buildings to minimise the risk of fire. Any fire incidents, however small, should be reported to St Mary's. It is strongly recommended that hall users have any electrical equipment they bring in to the hall electrically safety tested (PAT tested) to assure its safety.

2 Responsibilities

1. The hirer of the hall shall appoint a Senior Fire Marshal (SFM). This person shall be responsible for leading the fire response in the unlikely event that a fire occurred.
2. The hirer of the hall shall carry out a risk assessment to ensure that they understand the fire risks associated with their activity, that they have minimised those risks and that they have an emergency plan.

3 Hall Fire Safety Features

3.1 Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting is fitted, primarily over fire exits, in the entrance hall, main hall, toilets and kitchen.

3.2 Fire exits

Three designated fire exits are provided. These are marked with the green running man sign. The primary exits are the main entrance doors and the double doors next to the stage. The kitchen door is also available.

3.3 Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers and a fire blanket are provided to fight both electrical and non electrical fires. The signs associated with each extinguisher state the type of fire it is suitable for. Ensure the correct extinguisher is used for both effectiveness and operator safety reasons. Only CO₂ extinguishers or the fire blanket as appropriate should be used on electrical or kitchen related fires. Water extinguishers should only be used on materials such as wood, paper cloth etc. Remember to aim extinguishers at the base of a fire and sweep from side to side. A training manual is available on the church web site.

The fire extinguishers are located as follows:

- Main Hall: Water extinguisher next to stage double doors.
- Entrance hall: Water extinguisher next to main entrance double doors.
- Kitchen: CO₂ and fire blanket.
- Room to left of stage: CO₂
- Boiler room: Foam

If an extinguisher is used please notify your church hall hire contact so it can be replenished/replaced.

4 Risk Assessment Method

The new regulations recommend the following five step process in undertaking a risk assessment. It is offered here as a framework you can use when carrying out your own assessment. Remember, this risk assessment is only intended to ensure that you think through your use of the hall and that you know how you would respond to a fire. It does not need to be a formal written document.

- Identify hazards
- Identify people at risk
- Evaluate risk and act
- Record, plan and train
- Review

5 Check List

You should be able to answer the following questions after your assessment:

- Have you appointed a Senior Fire Marshal?
- Has the SFM nominated fire marshals to assist them?
- Have you identified the main fire risks in your use of the hall?
- Have you minimised the risk of fire from your particular hall use?
- Do you understand the evacuation needs of the people attending your event?
- How will you alert people to a fire?
- Do you know where the fire exits are?
- Do you know where the fire extinguishers are and how to use them?
- Who would fight any fire?
- How will you evacuate the building in a calm and safe manner?
- Do you know where to assemble in the event of building evacuation?
- How will you ensure everyone is out of the building?
- Who will call the fire brigade and how?
- How will you move cars away from the hall safely

6 Emergency plan

The following emergency plan is suggested:

Responsibilities:

1. The Senior Fire Marshal (SFM) in conjunction with nominated persons acting as fire marshals shall have the responsibility of responding to a fire incident and clearing the building in a safe manner to the assembly point.
2. Fire extinguisher operators (FEO). Someone willing to attempt to fight a fire using the equipment provided. A training manual is available on the church web site.

Assembly Point:

The fire assembly point shall be the Lych gate bicycle rack area. The hall car park should be avoided as a fire could cause a vehicle fuel tank to ignite.

Fire response plan:

1. On the raising of a fire alarm the SFM shall determine the nature of the risk and identify the appropriate response.
2. If evacuation is needed the SFM shall determine the safest exits to use. The hall users shall proceed to the assembly point helped as necessary by the nominated fire marshals and other users.
3. If possible cars parked next to the hall should be moved forward or out of the car park under fire marshal supervision, IF it is safe to do so without danger to any pedestrians or drivers, to minimise the risk of cars being ignited by the fire.
4. The fire brigade, if required, shall be called by someone instructed to do so by the SFM using a mobile phone or the landline in the adjacent Rectory. The SFM must have a mobile phone with them. The address to state to the fire brigade is "St Mary's Church, The Ridgeway, Fetcham. Surrey". State that the St Mary's church hall is on fire.
5. Fire fighting would be led by the SFM or their deputy using people instructed in the use of fire extinguishers (FEOs) if available. However the priority is to clear the building. No risks should be taken by FEOs. If a fire extinguisher or the fire blanket has been used then this fact shall be reported to the hall hire coordinator so it can be replenished or replaced.
6. The SFM shall check all rooms and be the last to leave the building.
7. On arrival of the fire brigade the SFM shall brief the senior fire officer and formally hand responsibility for the fire response to him.