



Tiptree United Reformed Church

Health & Safety Policy

Date: June 2025
Review Date: June 2027

This document is based on an outline supplied by Ecclesiastical Insurance Group plc as a service to its customers. It has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the regulations made under it.

The Policy is in three sections:

- A. General Statement of Policy
- B. Organisation and Responsibilities
- C. Arrangements

Note to all church personnel, voluntary helpers, hiring organisations and contractors

The success of this policy will depend upon your co-operation. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for health and safety.

SECTION A

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all users of our premises, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose. We will also endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all church officers, voluntary helpers and members of the congregation, (hereafter referred to as 'the church community') as well as contractors, visitors, hirers of our premises and any others who may come to the church, church hall and rooms and churchyard.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which we make to implement the policy are set out below.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it operates will be reviewed regularly and appropriate changes made. In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review, an item on health and safety will be on the agenda for each Annual General Meeting, and church personnel and hiring organisations will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on health and safety matters.

Signed: Minister

Date:.....

Signed: Health and Safety Officer

Date:.....

Next Review Date: June 2027

SECTION B

ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Responsibility of the Minister

Overall responsibility for health and safety is that of the Minister of Tiptree URC, who will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy Health and Safety Regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice.

2. Responsibility of the Serving Elders

The responsibility to ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out, reviewed and updated lies with the serving elders.

3. Responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer

The responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer is to:

- be familiar with Health and Safety Regulations insofar as they concern church premises
- be familiar with the Tiptree URC Health and Safety Policy and arrangements and ensure that they are observed
- ensure that a copy of the Tiptree URC Health and Safety Policy is displayed in an accessible place in the church premises and on the church website
- ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place
- ensure that arrangements are in place to keep the church premises clean and tidy
- ensure that arrangements are in place for the churchyard and gardens to be properly maintained, including the safety of monuments, tombstones and trees
- ensure that adequate access to and egress from church premises is maintained
- ensure that adequate fire fighting equipment is available and maintained
- ensure that food hygiene regulations and procedures are in place

5. Responsibility of the Bookings Secretary

The responsibility of the Bookings Secretary is to:

- ensure that all hirers of the church premises have access to and are familiar with the Tiptree URC Health and Safety Policy in advance of the hire period

6. Responsibility of the Church Community

The church community has a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this Health and Safety Policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or property. The church community must therefore:

- comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures
- use protective clothing and equipment when it is required
- report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to a church officer
- report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible
- not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety

Section C

ARRANGEMENTS

(Implementation of the Policy)

This section sets out the arrangements to minimise risks, as far as is reasonably practicable, to the health and safety of the church community, visitors and contractors and outlines actions to be taken in furtherance of health and safety.

Where these arrangements require specific inspection or audits, the completion of these shall be reported to the serving elders or to the church meeting as necessary and recorded under the heading of 'Health and Safety' in the elders' or church meeting minutes.

1. ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID

A first aid box and Accident Book is located in the church kitchen. All accidents, injuries, cases of serious illness, and dangerous occurrences shall be entered in the Accident Book and be reported to a church officer. For more significant incidents (ie. RIDDOR incidents - see below), an accident report form shall be completed and our insurers advised. Accident books and records shall be regularly reviewed.

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 - RIDDOR

Fatal accidents, major injuries and dangerous occurrences must be reported within 10 days by the Health and Safety Officer to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. The preferred method for doing this is by completing an online report. The relevant forms and guidance can be obtained from www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/. The following is a summary of the injuries or occurrences which must be reported (for further information, refer to the aforementioned website):

- the death of any person which arises from a work-related accident, including an act of physical violence to a worker.
- specified injuries to workers including fractures, burns, head injuries (for a full list see the HSE website)
- injuries to workers which result in their incapacitation for more than 7 days
- injuries to non-workers which result in them being taken directly to hospital for treatment

2. GENERAL FIRE SAFETY

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In order to achieve this, we undertake the following:

- an assessment of the fire risks in the church and associated buildings and the risks to our neighbours. This is carried out as a part of our general health and safety risk assessments
- a check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned
- a check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- a check that people who may be in the building can get out safely
- to provide emergency lighting and fire exit signs
- to provide reasonable fire-fighting equipment
- a regular check that our fire-fighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are kept in the following locations:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Type of extinguisher and capacity</i>
Hall (exterior door)	Foam
Kitchen	Fire blanket
Corridor	CO2
Lobby	Foam and CO2
Toilet area	Foam
Upper room	Foam and fire blanket
Church (ground floor)	Foam
Church (gallery)	Foam
Old vestry	Powder

The extinguishers noted above are checked every month by the responsible person to ensure that they are still in place and have not been discharged. They are checked annually and serviced by M&G Fire Protection (Essex) Ltd.

Fire alarm system

Procedures for checking the fire alarm system and reporting any malfunction are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer. The testing procedure is as follows:

Weekly

- Fire system test key and record book are held in a red folder in the kitchen drawer to the right hand side on entering the kitchen.
- Take the test key to the system box in the hall lobby and unlock.
- Insert the key into the red call point beneath the system box; the alarm will sound; remove key.
- Press 'Silence Alarm' button in system box and then press 'Reset' button.
- Follow this procedure at the call point opposite in the hall lobby, at the point by the fire exit door in the toilet area, and at the point by the door of the upper room.
- Check that all fire doors close.
- Record date, signature and any problems in the record book.

Monthly

Push button test display and check that all the main lights go on. Record.

Evacuation procedure

Procedures for stewarding and evacuation are as follows:

- All fire exits are clearly marked with the green 'Running Man' symbol and all designated fire doors should be unlocked before any event commences. The front and rear church doors should be unlocked (the key to the rear church door must be left in the lock at all times). The doors to the gallery should be unlocked. The small lounge should be unlocked.
- A check should be made that all doors can be opened.
- For large services and concerts where the congregation exceeds 100, trained stewards should be allocated to each door and have responsibility for persons in a specific part of the church.
- In the event of an emergency, an announcement to leave the building will be made by the senior church officer available and stewards will direct to the nearest exit.
- All persons should assemble in the rear of the rear car parking area.
- The emergency services should be contacted immediately by a nominated person (the church telephone is in the small lounge). If for any reason the fire service cannot be contacted by phone, or urgency demands, the senior church officer should break the glass of the nearest call point (two in the lobby, one in the toilet area and one on the landing outside the upper room. This will automatically alert the fire brigade.
- NB. The playgroup using the upper room has its own evacuation procedure, which is consistent with the above.

Evacuation drills

It is not considered practical to conduct general evacuation drills from the church premises. Such drills would not necessarily involve the majority of the church members and, since it is unacceptable to interrupt worship, would therefore be unrepresentative. The responsibility for following the procedures described herein lies with the senior church officer (in the case of church services) or the named person (in the case of external groups/organisations hiring the church premises).

NB. The playgroup using the upper room has its own fire drills which it operates six times per term.

If you discover a fire (no matter how small)

- immediately raise the alarm
- telephone the emergency services
- check the building for occupants
- attack the fire if possible and within your capability, using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk
- if it is not possible to attack the fire or if you are unsure which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. The general rule is 'people before property'
- evacuate to the designated assembly point
- ensure clear access to front and rear car parks for the emergency vehicles

3. ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND LIGHTING

There are few portable electrical appliances required in the church premises. The Health and Safety Officer shall be responsible for periodically checking these items and arranging for repair or replacement by an approved dealer. All portable appliances shall be switched off at sockets and their plugs removed when not in use.

The condition of the main electrical fixed system shall be ascertained by a competent approved contractor at intervals of not more than five years. Sockets and switches shall be periodically inspected by church officers and any damage made good. Any installer of temporary electrical equipment shall confirm that the equipment has been inspected and is safe. Extension cables shall be laid so as not to cause a tripping hazard.

All light bulbs that need replacement shall be replaced at the first opportunity. Care shall be taken to ensure that the circuit containing the bulb is switched off and the light fitting is not live.

4. GAS EQUIPMENT SAFETY

The church's gas boilers shall be serviced annually and as necessary by a competent CORGI approved contractor. Any necessary work required for safety shall be implemented immediately.

5. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Only normal domestic cleaning materials shall be used in the cleaning of the church premises. Such materials shall only be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. In an emergency the manufacturer's first aid directions shall be followed. No hazardous substances shall be used or stored without the express permission of the Health and Safety Officer.

6. GRASS CUTTING AND MAINTENANCE OF MACHINERY

All activity and equipment relating to the maintenance of the church gardens and graveyard are the responsibility of the contractor.

7. SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS (condition of floors, steps and paths)

To reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, periodic inspections shall be made by church officers of the premises floors (paying particular attention to carpeted areas) and external footpaths. Any repair or attention needed shall be noted and remedial action taken. Any trip and/or fall by any person shall be noted and the location inspected.

8. WORKING AT HIGH LEVELS

A-frame steps may be used to the height of approximately 2m without the need for a second person to be present. The use of ladders shall require a second person to be in attendance. A-frame steps and ladders shall be positioned such that they are stable and not liable to slip. Where feasible, ladders shall be secured.

9. PREPARATION OF FOOD

Our food safety management procedures are drawn from the Food Hygiene Regulations 2006 as follows:

- we ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training
- we ensure that the appropriate assessment of risks is carried out for the foods to be prepared and stored, including storage at the correct temperatures
- before any preparation commences, all surfaces coming into contact with food are washed down and disinfected
- foodstuffs are only prepared in the church hall kitchen or the church kitchenette.
- we ensure that all hirers who wish to provide foodstuffs are advised of the facilities and procedures.
- the person currently qualified to oversee matters relating to safe food handling is Karen Scott, whose certificate is displayed in the church kitchen

10. MANUAL HANDLING (lifting, carrying and moving loads)

Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable. Any requirement to lift or move heavy or awkwardly shaped objects shall require the assistance of additional persons or suitable equipment.

11. HAZARDOUS BUILDINGS AND GLAZING

Our policy is to ensure that buildings are safe and without risk to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. As a listed building, the church premises are subject to a quinquennial inspection by a surveyor who makes recommendations with regard to any necessary remedial work and the timescale for it to be carried out. The last inspection was in July 2015, the recommendations of which were all duly addressed.

Between quinquennial inspections, the serving elders shall monitor the fabric of the church premises and take appropriate action where any deterioration in condition is suspected.

Periodic checks shall be made by the elders (calling on expert advice if required) of all glazing in the buildings to ensure that any glass in windows or doors is safe. Where necessary, temporary measures shall be taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.

12. LONE OCCUPANCY OF CHURCH PREMISES

A lone worker is defined as a person working in an environment where there is no other person present who can be relied upon to respond effectively in an emergency situation, or to provide assistance or supervision to the work in hand. This may include:

- church office holders
- church members
- youth worker
- cleaners
- tradesmen
- members of hiring organisations

Where lone working is necessary and cannot reasonably be avoided, an adequate risk assessment should be undertaken. A specific activity risk assessment should be undertaken where the work is considered to be of an unusual nature, or of high risk. The risk assessment should consider:

- whether the person involved is physically fit and sufficiently trained or experienced to be able to work alone in safety
- the hazards and nature of the work involved, and any materials used
- any safety equipment required
- the training of persons in the procedures to be followed and equipment or communication systems required.
- whether there are any hazards associated with risk of violence / attack
- whether adequate communications are in place so that a person who is injured or becomes ill can summon assistance
- whether the person working alone would be missed if they did not return home within a reasonable time
- whether there is safe entry and exit
- the duration of the work being carried out

Anyone working on their own in the church premises should observe the following precautions:

- except during official opening times, when fewer than three persons are in the premises, lock yourself in and do not answer the door to anyone seeking entry. Anyone with authorised entry will have their own keys
- ensure that someone knows you are on the premises
- carry a mobile phone at all times so that help can be summoned when required
- remain alert to environmental hazards viz. chemical/electrical, fire, slips, trips and falls, ladders/working at height
- during the hours of darkness, visit the premises by car and park as near as possible to the church doors, carry a torch with a strong beam, and always consider taking someone with you.

13. ACTIVITIES WHICH MAY NEED SPECIAL PROCEDURES

For all concerts, recitals, candlelit services, fetes and any similar function, relevant church officers and other organisers shall consider any risks likely to occur and make a plan to eliminate or reduce such risks.

14. CHURCHYARD SAFETY

Gravestones and monuments shall be inspected periodically by relevant church officers for stability and any instability reported. When instability does occur, remedial action shall be taken in consultation with the serving elders and recorded. Trees and shrubs shall be assessed annually by the serving elders in liaison with the contractor, and any arboreal work needed carried out.

15. RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risks, as they are identified, shall be assessed by church officers and the Health and Safety Officer in accordance with the principles laid down in this policy. The results of such reviews and action taken or recommended, shall be recorded under the heading of Health and Safety in the minutes of the elders' or church meeting.

16. CONTRACTORS

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

- have their own Health and Safety Policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy.
- produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employer's liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained.
- comply with all the requirements of this Health and Safety Policy and co-operate with the church officers in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation.
- where plant and machinery is brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation.
- contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the church officers. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors.
- all contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake. This 'permit to work' will also specify any safety precautions they must undertake.

17. INFORMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Colchester Borough Council Environmental Health Department is the enforcement agency to which enquiries or reports of major accidents should be addressed. It can be contacted as follows:

Colchester Borough Council
Rowan House
33 Sheepen Road
Colchester
Essex
CO3 3WG

Telephone: 0845 300 9923 (accidents) or 01206 282581 (other enquiries)

Email: customerservicecentre@colchester.gov.uk