



# The Church of Scotland

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Law Department

## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT FOR CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CONGREGATIONS**

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### INTRODUCTION

Under Health & Safety legislation all employers of five or more employees are required to have a written statement of their health and safety policy. There is no statutory prescription as to the content of the policy, but the need for and the terms of such a policy are intended to ensure that the employer has a clearly defined understanding of what his health and safety responsibilities and goals should be.

Individual Church of Scotland Congregations are distinct employers. This circular contains a form of basic policy document which has been designed to fit their needs. It largely consists of a statement of general principles which Financial Boards should be following. Church premises are, or should be, low-risk environments, and health and safety requirements (particularly risk assessments) should be straightforward enough to be applied by office-bearers without any specialised knowledge or training. It is critical that regular risk assessments (including fire risks) be carried out and recorded in addition to adopting a health and safety policy. Again, in the congregational environment these should be well within the scope of the ordinary layman.

A leaflet *Five Steps to Risk Assessment* is available from the Health and Safety Executive website [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) (In the Search box for Health and Safety topics on the right, select “Risk assessment”).

So far as fire safety assessments are concerned, please see the documentation referred to in the Law Department’s circular Health and Safety and Fire Safety General which is available from the Church of Scotland website (see below).

Further advice is given in the general Health & Safety circular. Advice on the requirements of the Regulations covering the management of asbestos is contained in the Asbestos circular, and there is also a circular on Gas and Electricity Safety. Copies of these can be obtained through the Church of Scotland website: [www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk) (search “Law Department circulars”).

It is strongly recommended that this policy statement (or a variant of it adapted to the needs of a particular congregation) be adopted by all congregations regardless of their number of employees. A copy should be displayed along with the poster referred to in the aforementioned general circular.

Finally, there is a separate, optional section which covers particular rules that may have to be applied to the use of hall premises by outside groups. Whether this section will be required will depend on the nature and use made of the particular congregation’s accommodation. Such rules do not need to be part of the policy statement and could be issued as a separate document to hall users or referred to in any letting agreement. Clearly, it is important that all users are aware of their fire safety responsibilities.

# **This is the Health & Safety Policy Statement of Uphall South Church of Scotland Congregation.**

The general policy of the Kirk Session of Uphall South Church of Scotland Congregation is

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from all of the Congregation's activities;
- to consult with employees and any other relevant persons on matters affecting their health and safety;
- to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment;
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees, where required;
- to ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training, if necessary;
- to prevent accidents, so far as reasonably possible;
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions and premises

## RESPONSIBILITIES & RISK ASSESSMENT

Responsibility for health and safety matters rests with the Stewardship Group which will carry out regular risk assessments (including fire safety assessments) for all of the Congregation's properties. The Stewardship Convenor and/or Property Convenor shall be responsible for dealing with health and safety matters arising on a day to day basis. Employees, volunteers and those using the Halls should take appropriate steps to protect their own health and safety and all potential risks or concerns should be reported to the Stewardship Convenor as soon as possible.

## ACCIDENTS & FIRST AID

- A first aid box is kept in the hall kitchen
- All accidents and case of work-related ill health will be recorded in an Accident Book. The book is kept in the kitchen.
- The Stewardship Convenor is responsible for reporting accidents to the Health & Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 ("RIDDOR") where there is an obligation to do so.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### Fire and Evacuation

The Stewardship Group is responsible for ensuring that fire risk assessments are undertaken and implemented and that appropriate fire safety measures and evacuation procedures are in place.

## MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS

The Stewardship Group has put in place an appropriate asbestos risk-management plan and will ensure that it is kept up to date.

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## USE OF HALLS AND SANCTUARY

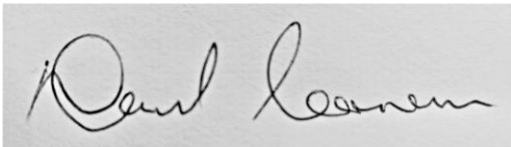
All users of the Halls and Sanctuary, particularly non-Congregational groups, and the leaders thereof are reminded that they are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure that their activities are safe and the persons that they are responsible for are not subject to risk. In particular all users and leaders should be aware of fire safety procedures. The following rules will apply to use of the Halls and Sanctuary. Group leaders and members of groups are required to comply with these rules as a condition of using the Halls:-

Use of the premises and its facilities is subject to the following rules and in the case of hirers, as well as the conditions specified in the Hiring Agreement.

1. **Maximum capacity:** The premises have a maximum capacity of 250 (Sanctuary) and 80 (Hall), persons of any category (i.e. audience, staff, performers, officials). On no account shall this figure be exceeded.
2. **No smoking:** There shall be no smoking anywhere on the grounds or premises, including toilets.
3. **Equal opportunities** The Kirk Session commits to not unlawfully discriminating on grounds of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
4. **Safety regulations:** Nothing shall be done which will endanger the users of the building and the policies of insurance relating to it and its contents. Serious breaches of these requirements may result in termination of hire contracts during a hire session. In particular:
  - a) Obstruction must not be placed in gangways or exits, nor in front of fire extinguishers or emergency exits, which must be immediately available for unimpeded public egress.
  - b) All groups are expected to arrange their own fire drills in order to familiarise themselves with evacuation procedures.
5. Fire fighting apparatus shall be kept in its proper place and only used for its intended purpose.
6. Fire doors must not be propped open except for short periods when furniture or large equipment is being moved. A responsible person must ensure that this rule is complied with.
7. The Fire Brigade shall be called to any outbreak of fire, however slight and details of the occurrence shall be given immediately to the Stewardship Convenor.
8. Hirers shall not bring flammable gases or liquids into, nor use such substances in any part of the premises without written permission from the Kirk Session. Any drapes, curtains or cloth fabric used as part of productions on the stage or in any of the rooms must comply with Fire regulations – BS5867. No candles, oil lamps or portable heating appliances shall be used by hirers on the premises without the written permission of the Kirk Session.
9. The First Aid box and the Accident Book are located in the Kitchen.
10. All electrical equipment bought into the building shall comply with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. All electrical equipment used in conjunction with public entertainment must comply with the recommendation of HSE GS 50.
11. **Supervision:** The hirer or person in charge of an activity shall not be under 18 years of age and shall be on the premises for the entire period of the hire, or duration of the activity.
12. **Safety of Young Children:** Children's groups will require that the relevant provisions of the Children Act 1989 and any conditions required by the Department of Health and Social Care are complied with and in the case of all hirers, it is the responsibility of the organisers of the activities concerned to ensure that only fit and proper persons have access to young children, and that such persons shall at all times be in attendance upon young children who are on the premises for the activities concerned.
13. **Intoxicating Liquor:** No intoxicating liquors are permitted on the premises.
14. **Music in the Premises:** Hirers and organisers of events in the Hall are responsible for ensuring that the noise levels of their functions is not such as to interfere with other activities within the building, nor to cause inconvenience to the occupiers of nearby houses and

apartments. It is the responsibility of any independent user group which uses recorded music in its activities to check whether it requires a licence from PPL and if so, to obtain one.

- 15. Betting, Gaming and Lotteries:** Nothing shall be done on or in relation to the premises in contravention of the law relating to betting, gaming and lotteries and persons or groups responsible for functions held in the Hall shall ensure that this ruling is adhered to. The Hall does not hold licences for such activities.
- 16. Heating:** Fully automatic heating systems are installed. Controls must not be interfered with. Any malfunction must be reported to the Stewardship Convenor. Correct functioning of the heating system requires that the external emergency doors and the doors into the corridors are kept closed.
- 17. Loss of property:** The Church cannot accept responsibility for damage to or loss or theft of, hirer's property and effects.
- 18. Nuisance:**
  - a) Litter shall not be left in or around the Hall premises.
  - b) Except in the case of assistance dogs, animals are not permitted on the premises.
  - c) Hirers and organisers of events in the Hall are responsible for ensuring that the noise level of their functions is not such as to interfere with other activities within the building, nor to cause inconvenience for the occupiers of nearby flats and houses.
  - d) The emergency exit doors in the Hall must be kept closed where this is necessary to prevent a noise nuisance.
- 19. Cleaning and Security:** All use of Hall premises and facilities is subject to the user accepting responsibility for setting out required furniture and equipment, returning everything to their original positions and for securing doors and windows of the premises. All lights must be turned off on leaving the premises. The premises will be checked by a church representative at the end of the hire period. All users shall also leave the premises and surrounds in a clean and tidy condition. Failure to do so will result in additional charges being imposed.
- 20. Waste Disposal:** All users of the premises are required to remove all waste materials from the premises on conclusion of the hire period. Failure to do so will result in additional charges being imposed.
- 21. Breakages/Damage:** All breakages/damage to fittings, fixtures and equipment must be reported promptly to the Stewardship Convenor.
- 22. Static Equipment and fittings** must not be interfered with or adjusted without permission from the Stewardship Convenor.



16<sup>th</sup> March 2023