



WATER LANE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 2JZ

Charity No. 1129836

Fire Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement

Water Lane URC will undertake to do all that is reasonable to prevent fires and will comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Fire precautions will be in place to minimise the effect of a fire should it break out. In the event of a fire occurring, the first priority must be to save lives. Saving of buildings and equipment is a secondary consideration.

Responsibilities

Fire prevention is the responsibility of all staff and leaders of organisations and groups using the premises. However, it is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure adequate Fire Prevention and detection systems are in place.

Fire Risk Assessment

The foundation of good fire prevention procedures is a programme of inspections and assessments, which has the object of identifying fire hazards, assessing the risks and devising control measures. A formal fire risk assessment will be carried out as required and this will identify the significant fire hazards and what needs to be done to reduce, to as low as is reasonably practicable, the risk of those hazards causing harm. In addition, the fire risk assessment will identify what physical fire precautions and other arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of all people in the premises if a fire does begin.

Training

If deemed appropriate the church officials will receive Fire Awareness training including use of fire extinguishers.

Fire Equipment

Appropriate fire equipment will be installed i.e.

- A suitable means of raising the alarm should a fire break out
- Fire Detection where appropriate (kitchen areas)
- Suitable firefighting equipment i.e. Fire extinguishers and fire blankets. A list of fire extinguishers and their location can be found in Appendix 3
- Emergency lighting to aid evacuation in fire situation
- Suitable means of escape with appropriate signage

All of the above will be subject to the necessary checks and inspections as identified below:

All firefighting equipment will be inspected annually by an external contractor

The following will be checked as part of monthly in-house Health and Safety inspections

- Visual check of all fire extinguishers
- Fire detectors
- Emergency lighting
- Fire exit routes and doors

Fire Notices

Fire Action notices (see Appendix 1) will be prominently displayed throughout the building as well as more in-depth Fire Instructions (see Appendix 2) placed in strategic locations.

In the event of an alarm or fire, the Fire Emergency Procedures below will be followed. All users of the premises will be made aware of the following procedures (included in lettings agreements).

Fire Procedures

(for all leaders of groups and users of the Church Premises)

At the start of your visit, please ensure:

- All fire exits are clear of obstructions and can be easily opened
- Fire doors and exit routes are clearly labelled
- All fire extinguishers are in their designated positions

Please ensure you are familiar with the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire and familiar with the escape routes.

Please make sure you have a list of those present at each gathering.

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE:

Immediately raise the alarm and phone 999

Only use the fire extinguishing equipment to attack the fire once people have been evacuated, you can do so without endangering your own safety and if you feel confident in using the equipment.

WHEN THE ALARM IS RAISED:

Leave the building immediately by the nearest safe exit and report to the assembly area at the front of Florence Walk.

CHURCH OFFICIALS OR GROUP LEADER - ONCE ALARM IS RAISED:

Ensure all not engaged in fighting the fire leave the building

Supervise and assist in tackling fire only if safe to do so

If fire is out of control or smoke is spreading, evacuate building completely and close doors where possible.

Check that everyone has left the building and reported to the assembly area.

Once the fire brigade arrives provide information required by them.

Appendix 1

Fire Action

In the event of fire:

1. Raise the alarm
2. Call the fire brigade
3. Tackle the fire using appliances provided only if safe to do so
4. If in doubt - GET OUT

On hearing the alarm:

1. Leave the building by the nearest available route
2. Close all doors behind you
3. Report to the assembly point - front of Florence Walk
 - Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
 - Do not return to the building for any reason until authorised to do so
 - Do not take risks.

Appendix 2

Fire Instructions

If you discover a fire:

- Immediately raise the alarm and call 999
- Call for assistance
- Only use the fire extinguishing equipment if you can do so safely and feel confident in doing so

When the alarm is raised:

- Leave the building immediately by the nearest safe exit and report to the assembly area at the front of Florence Walk.

Church Officials/group leaders - after the alarm is raised:

- Ensure that everyone not engaged in fighting the fire leaves the building
- Supervise and assist in fighting the fire only if safe to do so
- If smoke is spreading or fire is out of control, evacuate building completely, closing doors where possible
- Check everyone has left the building and reported to the assembly area
- When the fire brigade arrives assist them with any information they require.

Appendix 3

Fire Extinguishers - location and type

Church

Location	Type
Welcoming Area	Foam
Sanctuary left of dais	Water
Fire Exit left of dais	CO2
Kitchen	CO2, Fire Blanket
Balcony	Water, Foam, CO2

Revised July 2020 (updated September 2025)