

Emergency Evacuation and Fire Policy

Introduction

This fire safety policy has been prepared by The Elders and Church Meeting as the 'responsible person' for the premises known as Hinckley United Reformed Church to comply with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [FSO].

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety from fire of all relevant persons on, in or in the vicinity of the premises by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures.

This policy will be used to ensure the provision of suitable and sufficient general fire precautions, assessment of risk and management of necessary fire safety arrangements.

As such the Finance Committee will be delegated to assist the Elders in carrying out their duties under the FSO.

Fire prevention is of vital importance. It is the responsibility of all volunteers, service leaders and others responsible for events in the Hinckley United Reformed Church buildings, to be familiar with the following instructions.

In the event of fire or other emergency requiring the evacuation of the building the prime objective is the safe evacuation of all persons from the building.

The second objective is to notify the emergency services so the emergency can be dealt with by the appropriate authorities.

These objectives will be met by appointing Fire Wardens from each group meeting on the Premises

Procedure in the event of a fire:

1. On discovering a fire, operate the nearest red fire alarm call point by pressing the button – call points exist by all exit doors.
2. On hearing the fire alarm, leave the building by the nearest or safest exit in a calm manner. Do not stop to collect personal belongings. The Fire Wardens will ensure that toilets are also evacuated.
3. Assemble in the area in front of the Nationwide Building Society.
4. The Fire Wardens responsible for your group will dial 999 and alert the Fire Service if a fire is confirmed.
5. Remain at the assembly point until instructed it is safe to return by the Fire Warden(s) or the Fire Service.
6. Once the building has been evacuated safely the fire may be tackled by the Fire Wardens or other responsible person with the appropriate extinguisher, if it poses no risk to them.

Emergency Exits

The Emergency Exits are shown on the attached pages together with the preferred exit route. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers of all organisations to see that these exits are kept clear of any obstructions at all times.

Fire doors must be kept closed at all times and may not be wedged open.

When the church is in use the main entrance doors at the front of the building, and security gates on both sides to the rear of the church must be unlocked. For security reasons it is permissible to lock the entrance door on the Nationwide side of the building by turning the handle providing that the door is not locked by a key.

When the Lower Rear Hall is in use the security gates on both sides of the building to the rear of the church must be unlocked. For security reasons it is permissible to lock the entrance door on the Nationwide side of the building by turning the handle providing that the door is

not locked by a key.

When the Upper Rear Hall is in use together with the Dance Studio the main exit will be via the Vine entrance and the security gate on that side of the building giving access to the lower hall and church may remain locked. A key is available by this door should it be required in an emergency

When the Upper Hall is in use by itself then the security gates and access arrangements should be as for the Lower Hall

Duties of Fire Wardens

It is the responsibility of the Fire Wardens to direct the evacuation of the building, check each room in their designated area is clear. Fire Wardens need to have particular regard for the needs of any persons, adult or child, with a disability which may prevent them from leaving the building.

Senior Fire Wardens will be appointed who have had special training on the operation of the control panel situated in the entrance foyer at the front of the church. One senior fire warden will take responsibility for collecting together information from all other fire wardens present and for liaising with the fire service in the event that they have been called out. The senior fire warden taking responsibility will wear a yellow high visibility jacket so that they can be identified. The jacket will be kept near the control panel.

Designated Fire Wardens

An updated list of Fire Wardens is attached to this procedure

Fire Warden Areas

The building has been divided into the following five areas...

Church: The warden is responsible for checking the Church Sanctuary, Westfield Room, Front Vestibule, Front Office (if unlocked) and Rear Office (photo copier room)

Lower Hall: The warden is responsible for checking the Lower Hall, the four toilets, the kitchen, Storage area – 'Steptoos Yard' (if unlocked) and rear main entrance area.

Upper Hall: The warden is responsible for checking the Upper Hall, Far end meeting room (if unlocked) and two upstairs toilets.

Dance Studio: The warden is responsible for checking Dance Studio and entrance foyer

Vine Book Shop: The warden is responsible for checking the Shop area, the Vine Office and the toilet and entrance vestibule.

Fire Warden Procedures

- In the event of a fire, Wardens must direct evacuation of their designated area, ensuring all rooms/spaces are cleared.
- The Fire Warden taking overall responsibility will wear a high visibility jacket so they can be easily identified by the Fire Service.
- Once wardens are satisfied that everyone is accounted for, they will report to the senior fire warden taking responsibility. Any missing persons must be reported immediately.

Risk Assessment

An annual risk assessment will be made by the Finance Committee and reviewed annually by the Elders of the Church. It will...

- identify any persons or groups particularly at risk and make plans for their safe evacuation
- review the Evacuation Plan for each area
- review the last year's records of fire drills, fire log books and fire risk assessment sheets
- ensure an adequate provision of training
- review instructions to visitors to the building

Fire Warden Training

All groups meeting on the premises will provide the names of at least two people who will receive instruction in fire evacuation procedure and who will become the Fire Wardens for that group. Some Fire Wardens will receive additional training in the operation of the Main Control Panel which is in the Front Vestibule of the church. Management of groups using the building should ensure that at least one Fire warden with additional training is present on site whenever the building is in use.

This training will be recorded in the fire log book. Refresher courses will also be given and recorded.

All non-regular users of the halls or church will be given basic fire evacuation instructions and will be required to give a housekeeping announcement at the beginning of their session detailing fire procedure, exits, etc. For larger events a trained Fire Warden should be present.

Fire Drills

The Church will carry out regular fire drills for the benefit of the users of the premises. The fire drills will range from an audible test not requiring evacuation to a full evacuation drill. Leaders of organisations will be notified in advance and these events will be recorded in the fire log book.

Testing of Safety Equipment

There is one fire alarm system which links the whole of the site. If an alarm is activated the alarm will sound in all of the halls and in the church.

Each fire exit has an alarm call point next to it so that the fire alarm can be activated as you exit the building. A test of the alarm system will be carried out twice monthly by operating a call point and the result recorded in the fire log book.

The church and buildings are also fitted with emergency lights. These lights will be tested monthly to ensure that they are functional and the result is recorded.

All fire extinguishers will be tested by an approved company once per year.

The testing of all the above will be recorded in the Fire Log Book.

This policy was last reviewed on

History – Issue 10 passed by AGM on 19th November 2023 (Changes made to attachments – no change to this document)

Attachments:

- 1) Fire exits dated November 2020
- 2) Usage of Premises - Updated 2023
- 3) Fire Wardens – Updated 2023
- 4) Fire Warden instructions – Basic and Full – These instructions were Issued separately and dated 8th November 2023