

Accidents and First Aid



If someone is taken ill or is injured at your church or church hall, it is important that immediate assistance is provided to them. First aid can save lives and may prevent minor injuries becoming major ones.

In many cases, you will need to make suitable arrangements to administer first aid; to preserve life or minimise the consequences of injury or illness until professional medical help can be obtained. It will also be needed to treat minor injuries, where these occur.

Legal requirements

Generally, if someone is injured you may need to show that you have met your duty of care.

If you are an employer, you must also comply with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations. Broadly, these require employers to:

- Provide adequate and appropriate first aid equipment and facilities
- Provide a suitable number of qualified first aiders
- Appoint a person to take charge where first aiders are temporarily absent or the provision of first aiders is not necessary (due to the nature of the activities; the number of employees; and location)
- Inform employees (and volunteers in these circumstances) of the first aid provisions made – including the location of any equipment or facilities and the identity of the first aider(s) or appointed person(s).

Risk Advice Line

Should you have any additional questions on this topic or other risk-related matters, as a valued Ecclesiastical customer you can contact us through our Risk Advice Line on

0345 600 7531

(Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding bank holidays)

and one of our in-house risk professionals will be able to assist.

Alternatively, you can email us at

risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

Some accidents may need to be reported to the Enforcing Authority (e.g. the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)), with certain records being kept. This is required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (commonly known as RIDDOR). You will have to do this where:

- You are an **employer** – to report any work-related deaths, and certain work-related injuries, cases of disease, and certain near misses involving your employees wherever they are working
- You are in **control of premises** – to report any work-related deaths, certain injuries to members of the public and self-employed people on your premises, and dangerous occurrences that occur on your premises. Further information on what you need to do in these circumstances is provided at: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm.

Hazards to look out for

The first aid arrangements you will need depend on the type of hazards people may come across in your church or church hall. These could include:

- Machinery and equipment that could cause injury when in use
- Chemicals or other dangerous substances used for cleaning, maintenance and gardening
- Higher-risk activities such as using ladders or other access equipment
- Large numbers of employees and volunteers (more than 25) or visitors
- Employees who travel a lot, work remotely, alone or 'out-of-hours'
- The remoteness of your church or church hall from emergency services
- Periods of absence which might mean that there may not be adequate first aid support
- Fundraising activities, concerts, services or other community activities (e.g. night shelters)*.

Precautions you can take

Typical precautions include:

- Appointing a person(s) to take charge of first aid arrangements
- Providing a suitably stocked first aid box
- Providing an adequate number of first aiders
- Providing additional training for first aiders where there are special hazards
- Checking that employees and others know the precise location of first aid equipment and identities of nominated person(s) or first aider(s)
- Informing the emergency services of specific hazards etc. in advance (e.g. bell tower access)
- Issuing personal first aid kit
- Ensuring adequate first aid cover for annual leave or other absences (planned, unplanned or otherwise)*.

*This list is not exhaustive.



Action

1. Check your first aid arrangements and facilities are adequate for your church and its activities.

Identify any additional precautions that might be required.

Guidance

If you are an employer, you will need to complete formal risk assessments. These should help you identify hazards or activities that may require you to provide different levels of first aid provision. The hazard list on the previous page might also help, but it is not exhaustive and there may be other things to consider, reflecting your own particular circumstances.

It is also useful to see if there have been any accidents before. This may help you get an idea of the sort of hazards people have come into contact with previously.

If you are an employer, you will then need to complete a first aid needs assessment. Useful information on how to do this is provided at www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/needs-assessment.htm.

If your church or church hall is small with low-level hazards (e.g. type found in offices and shops), you may only need to:

- Appoint a person to take charge of first aid arrangements
- Provide a suitably stocked first aid kit.

For larger churches, those running certain events or having other activities, you may need additional arrangements and facilities – possibly including trained first aiders.

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations do not require employers to make first aid provision for non-employees (such as, the public). However, it is strongly recommended that they are included in any assessment of first aid needs and that provision is made for them.

2. Implement any additional precautions that might be necessary.

General provisions include:

- A **first aid box** – properly sited, stocked and identifiable (i.e. a white cross on a green background). There is no mandatory list of items that need to be kept in it. This will depend on your particular circumstances.

A minimum stock of first aid items could include:

- a leaflet giving general guidance on first aid (e.g. HSE's leaflet 'Basic advice on first aid at work', INDG347 (rev2) see: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.htm)
- individually wrapped, sterile plasters (assorted sizes) that are appropriate
- sterile eye pads
- individually wrapped triangular bandages, preferably sterile
- safety pins
- large, sterile, individually wrapped, unmedicated wound dressings
- medium-sized, sterile, individually wrapped, unmedicated wound dressings
- disposable gloves.

continued overleaf

Action

Guidance

Depending on your circumstances, additional first aid equipment (e.g. a burns kit for the kitchen) may be appropriate. Tablets and medications should not be kept in the box.

Boxes should be checked periodically and re-stocked if necessary.

- **An appointed person** – this is a minimum requirement, even in a small, low-hazard premises where first aiders are not considered necessary. Those fulfilling the role need no first aid training, but they should not attempt to provide this unless they have been properly trained.

Their role is to:

- look after first aid equipment and facilities
- call the emergency services when required
- provide emergency cover where a first aider is absent due to unforeseen circumstances.

You don't need to make this appointment if you have an adequate number of appropriately trained first aiders.

- An adequate number of **first aiders** – this will be determined by your needs assessment. Usually, a first aider is someone who has been properly trained in first aid at work (FAW) or emergency first aid at work (EFAW). However, other first aid training may be appropriate to your particular circumstances.

Further advice on determining the right number of first aiders to provide is detailed in the HSE publication 'First aid at work, Your questions answered', INDG214 (rev2) available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf.

3. Ensure that employees and volunteers know what to do in the event of an accident.

Make a note of any information or training that is provided to individuals.

If you are an employer, you must tell your employees (and volunteers in these circumstances) about the first aid arrangements you have made. This will include the location of equipment, facilities and personnel who will provide assistance.

One simple way of doing this is to display first aid notices. Another way is to provide this information for new staff and volunteers when they start. Whatever method is chosen, the information needs to be clear and easily understood by all.

If you provide first aiders, they will need to be trained by a competent training provider and hold a valid certificate to a recognised standard. These are usually valid for three years, but it is strongly recommended that first aiders undertake annual refresher training during any three-year FAW/EFAW certification period. This will help them maintain their basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to first aid procedures.

Making a start

Action

4. Record details of any accidents that do occur and any first aid assistance provided.

Guidance

It is sensible to make a note of any incident where first aiders attend. This should include:

- Date, time, place and circumstances of the accident
- Name and job of the injured or ill person
- Details of the injury/illness and first aid treatment given
- What happened to the person immediately afterwards (for example, went home, went to hospital)
- Name and signature of the first aider or person dealing with the accident.

Any first aid records will need to be kept in accordance with any data protection requirements.

These records are not the same as the statutory accident book, although the two might be combined. You will need an accident book if you have more than 10 employees under social security law, see www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/accident-book.htm.

Where you have reported injuries, ill health or a dangerous occurrence to the Enforcing Authority under RIDDOR, you must keep suitable records. This could include a copy of the online reporting form that will be automatically emailed to you when you make a notification.

For more serious accidents, you may want to investigate what happened in more detail. Try to do this as soon as possible as the information you collect may be useful in the defence of a claim. This could include witness statements (which are signed and dated); photographs; sketches and drawings (showing any measurements where applicable); risk assessments; training records etc.

Please do not wait for a claim to be made. If you are aware of an incident which has resulted in personal injury for which you may be responsible, please tell us about it as soon as possible. We also have an easy to follow checklist you can download.

Further information is available at: <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/claims/personal-injury/>

5. Document your arrangements and responsibilities for first aid and review these where you suspect that they are no longer valid.

If you have prepared a health and safety policy, record these as part of it.

You can use our Church Health and Safety Policy template if you haven't done this and need one to comply with health and safety law.

Want to know more?

We have produced other useful resources to help you get started or simply check the adequacy of what you have already done. All are available at https://ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/articles/?q=&facet_productService=&facet_articleType=35515.

Further guidance and resources are also available at www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/.

Note: if you are in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, then regional variations might apply. In this instance, you should check the guidance provided by the Enforcing Agency for your region. This will be freely available on their website.

Need to report an incident involving an injury?

If an incident occurs that may result in a claim for injury, please retain any accident investigation records, e.g. accident book entry, photos etc. and contact our specialist claims team on **0345 603 8381** (Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm) for advice. Where you have received correspondence about a claim being made against you, it is important that you notify us immediately and email a copy to our experts on casualtyclaims@ecclesiastical.com.

Policy cover queries

For queries about your policy cover, call our specialist church team on **0345 777 3322** (Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm, excluding bank holidays) or email us at churchteam@ecclesiastical.com.

Alternatively, please visit www.ecclesiastical.com/church.

This guidance is provided for information purposes and is general and educational in nature. It should not be used as a substitute for taking professional advice on specific issues and should not be taken as providing legal advice on any of the topics addressed.



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