



Keeping People Safe

CHURCH HEALTH & SAFETY TOOLKIT

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS



Environmental changes are putting our church buildings at an increasingly greater threat from the elements. Whilst we must do all we can to prevent environmental pollution at a local level we also need to ensure that we adapt our church buildings and protect them from the impacts of climate change.

Some of the key environmental considerations for churches include:

Oil storage

Corroded, damaged or faulty tanks and pipework can leak oil into the ground. Potentially polluting rivers, streams and groundwater; contaminating drinking water supplies, killing vegetation, and affecting other properties or amenities.

Typical precautions if storing oil in a container with a capacity of 201 litres or more include:

- Selecting a container that meets suitable design standards e.g. British Standard 5410: Code of practice for oil firing
- Using a double skinned, plastic, storage container
- Choosing someone competent to install your oil storage tank
- Siting the container somewhere that minimises the risk of it being damaged by impact and away from watercourses
- Providing impact protection (e.g. barriers, bollards) where there is a risk of the tank being struck by vehicles etc.
- Providing secondary containment (i.e. either a drip tray beneath the container or a bund - an outer case which holds the container). Fixed tanks must be banded, and any bund must be able to hold 110% of the capacity of the container. If you do not have a bund, check your secondary containment has the required capacity, depending on what kind of container it's holding.
- Providing a suitable drip tray if the tank is remotely filled outside the secondary containment
- Regular checking for leaks or damage to pipework or other safeguards
- Ensuring proper maintenance in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Further information is available at www.gov.uk/topic/environmental-management/oil-storage



Flooding

Flooding in your church and associated properties can cause inconvenience and heartache to your church community. It is not possible to completely flood-proof your church properties, but there are some simple actions you can take to reduce the damage a flood may cause.

Typical precautions include:

- Finding out if you're at particular risk of flooding by making suitable checks
- Taking simple steps to protect your church property (e.g. using temporary flood barriers)
- Making your church building more resilient (e.g. relocating more vulnerable items to higher levels)
- Developing a simple emergency plan that can be implemented should a flood occur
- Making suitable arrangements for recovery after a flood (e.g. opening doors to reduce humidity).

Further information is available at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/churchguidance/church-storms-and-bad-weather/flood-advice/index.aspx

Waste

Disposing of any waste (including hazardous waste and waste electrical/electronic equipment) properly not only protects the environment but also stops it from becoming a nuisance to others.

Most waste from churches will be classified as 'household' waste. Occasionally though, you may have to dispose of waste which is hazardous or electrical. Here, you may have to take certain steps to ensure that this is disposed of or recycled safely.

Further guidance and information on what you have to do will be available from your Local Council.

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 **www.ecclesiastical.com/healthandsafety**

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 contact us?

If you would like to speak to someone about health and safety in churches you can either:

Call our Risk Management Advice Line on 0345 600 7531
(Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 17.00 - excluding Bank Holidays)

Or email us at risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

This guidance is provided for information purposes and is general and educational in nature and does not constitute legal advice. You are free to choose whether or not to use it and it should not be considered a substitute for seeking professional help in specific circumstances. Accordingly, Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc and its subsidiaries shall not be liable for any losses, damages, charges or expenses, whether direct, indirect, or consequential and howsoever arising, that you suffer or incur as a result of or in connection with your use or reliance on the information provided in this guidance except for those which cannot be excluded by law. Where this guidance contains links to other sites and resources provided by third parties, these links are provided for your information only. Ecclesiastical is not responsible for the contents of those sites or resources. You acknowledge that over time the information provided in this guidance may become out of date and may not constitute best market practice.

