

Church security guidance

The purchase and installation of safes



These notes are intended to provide guidance to parishes that wish to purchase and install a freestanding safe.

Safe rating

Safes are given security ratings by several organisations as well as by the manufacturers. These technical ratings are expressed as a maximum overnight cash holding. Grades of protection range from 0 up to 7. A safe with a Euro rating of 0 will have a cash rating of £6,000 rising to £100,00 for a safe with a Euro rating of 5. It is normal to allow valuables, such as the communion plate, to ten times the cash rating. Thus a safe rated at £6,000 could hold £6,000 cash or £60,000 of valuables or a combination of cash and valuables which equates to the cash rating (e.g. £3,000 cash plus £30,000 valuables etc.).

Ecclesiastical can supply a list of safes in current manufacture which have a particular cash rating.

Fixing of safes

The main security value of a safe is that it substantially increases the time that a thief has to spend in order to gain access to their target. It is therefore vitally important that a safe cannot be easily removed, which would allow the thief to work on it at their leisure.

Safes must always be fixed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This usually involves setting bolts into concrete in the floor and then dropping the safe over the bolts and securing with nuts on the inside of the safe.

Any safe weighing less than 1 tonne should be fixed to the floor or wall.

Location of safes

Safes are not easy items to relocate so care should be exercised in choosing a place to site a safe. Some points to consider are:

■ Security

It is better to locate a safe out of sight in a locked area such as a vestry.

■ Alarm protection

If the safe is located in an area covered by an intruder alarm this will provide even greater protection as it will substantially reduce the time the thief has available to work on the safe.

■ Ease of use

Check that the safe door has room to open fully and that there is sufficient room for those who will use the safe to gain easy access. Many safes can be purchased with the doors hung either right or left.

■ Floor strength

It is essential to check that the floor in the intended position is strong enough to bear the weight of the safe.

■ Aesthetic considerations

Will the safe spoil the appearance of the part of the building where it will be located?

Purchase of safes

Safes can be purchased direct from the manufacturer or from local safe suppliers or security centres. It is suggested that quotations should be obtained for several safes with the appropriate cash rating. Always ensure that all quotations include supply, delivery, installation and fixing.

Ecclesiastical should be consulted before an order is placed.

Insafe are an Ecclesiastical preferred supplier for safes. They offer a special service and discount for Ecclesiastical insurance customers. You can find out more at www.insafe.com/Ecclesiastical.

Safe sizing

The size of a safe has no impact upon the cash rating. It should be ensured that the safe is of sufficient size to hold all the valuables and other items that require protection.

Particular care should be taken if it is intended to use the safe for the storage of large items such as crosses and candlesticks.

Second-hand safes

Many second-hand safes are perfectly acceptable and may provide the same security as a new safe with a substantial saving in cost. It is important that second-hand safes are adequately reconditioned. Reconditioning should be carried out to the requirements of the relevant British Standard, BS 7582.

Ecclesiastical can advise upon the cash rating for a particular second-hand safe.



Identification of safes

Safes are described by the manufacturer's name followed by a model name (e.g. Chubb Lichfield, Tann Consort 2 etc.). Please quote this information when contacting Ecclesiastical to check on a cash rating.

In addition, safes have a serial number stamped on the door or body which can also be used to identify the safe.

Keys and combinations

Many safes are available in either key or combination versions. There is no difference in security between the two locking methods so the version which most suits the user can be chosen. The advantages of a combination safe, however, are that there is no risk of the loss or unauthorised duplication of keys. As many church officers as necessary can have the combination and the combination can easily be changed if there is a change of personnel.

The security of a safe is only as good as the security of the keys or combination. Under no circumstances should keys or combinations be kept on the same premises as the safe. An inventory of who holds keys or combinations should be kept in a secure location away from the safe. If it is suspected that key or combination security has been compromised then the lock or combination should be changed.

Fire and data safes

Security safes are not normally intended to protect documents or computer records from fire although they will normally provide some limited protection. If a safe is required to protect these materials then please contact Ecclesiastical who can give further advice.

Wall safes and underfloor safes

In addition to the freestanding safes described above, wall safes, which usually have a low cash rating, and underfloor safes, which can have a substantial cash rating, are also available. If a parish is interested in one of these types of safe then Ecclesiastical can give further advice.

A Faculty may be required prior to any installation.

Need to contact us?

For further advice Ecclesiastical customers can call our risk advice line on **0345 600 7531** (Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm, excluding bank holidays) or email us at **risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com** and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

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