

Personal Safety Plan



Personal safety – issues to consider

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you know how you would react if faced with a situation where your personal safety was in danger?
- What about if this threatened your family or others you are responsible for?
- Have you thought about this in advance or would you simply rely on instinct?
- Do you have a personal safety plan? If not, why not? If you do, do others know what it includes and how they can help you?
- Do you require additional training to provide support or guidance when dealing with visitors or parishioners who require special attention, e.g. mental health issues or other disabilities?

Personal Safety Plans should:

- Include an assessment of the hazards and risks encountered
- Be sensitive to location/activity
- Be clear and easy to understand
- Outline safety actions/control measures
- Be made known to all who need to know the content
- Be regularly reviewed

Remember – it is OK to put the safety of yourself (and family) above the needs of others!

Remember – You should take suitable precautions to prevent an accusation of inappropriate behaviour with a child or vulnerable adult.

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 suggested control measures/actions

At Home/Office

- Complete a security assessment of the property (i.e. Are boundaries, doors and windows adequately secure? Is there security lighting/an intruder alarm/CCTV fitted, as appropriate?). Financial support may be available from the diocese
- Check who is at the door before opening (i.e. use a spyhole or security chain)
- Ensure keys to the home and car are not obviously visible or easily accessible from the door/windows
- Consider whether you need to let uninvited callers into the home (i.e. could you have seating outside, in clear view of the house, where you could sit and talk?)
- Plan how you will deal with requests for food/money from unexpected visitors (i.e. place in a bag so that you can pass it to them with one hand, leaving the other free to close the door quickly, should you need to. Keep your foot or a doorstep planted firmly behind the open door to prevent it being forced open). Keep the office separate from the home, where possible
- Don't leave visitors alone in your home/office
- Read the situation/visitor – have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting (i.e. "I've got another meeting now so need to leave." "Can we re-schedule for another time?")
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- Establish an emergency code/phrase with your family so that they know you are concerned (i.e. "I am expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?") and that they know what to do if you say it
- Try to plan meetings when others will be at home
- Do not let uninvited callers know that you are alone in the house
- Keep a record book for visitors who are unexpected

At Cathedrals/Church/Churchyard

- Try not to be in situations where you are alone at the church
- Ensure someone knows when to expect you home
- Ensure you have an escape route from the building
- Ensure your car keys are to hand and you are parked so that you can get away easily
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- Ensure that your mobile phone is easily accessible and in good working order
- If worried about a situation, take whatever action you need to escape to safety
- Be aware of your surroundings and visitors unknown to you
- Read any information or instructions for working alone at the location
- Ensure suitable first aid facilities are available

Visiting Others (at their homes and elsewhere)

- Ensure your family and others know where you are and when to expect you to return
- Ensure that your mobile phone is easily accessible and in good working order
- Ensure that you have emergency contact telephone numbers programmed into your mobile phone (if possible, consider adding these as 'speed dial' shortcuts)
- Consider having a personal attack alarm available and ensure that others know what to do should they hear it
- If possible, try to meet people in public locations, rather than a location that you are unfamiliar with

- Establish an emergency code/phrase with your family so that they know you are concerned (i.e. "I am expecting a call from John Smith, could you let me know when he calls?") and that they know what to do if you say it
- Read the situation/visitor – have a prepared excuse to terminate the meeting (i.e. "I've got another meeting now so need to leave." "Can we re-schedule for another time?")
- Arrange for a family member (or another person) to call you at regular intervals to check that you are safe (NB: ensure that this conversation does not further alarm an agitated person or worsen a situation by using agreed coded messages)
- If worried about a situation, take whatever action you need to escape to safety
- If meeting at someone's home, make a mental note of the layout and how to escape quickly if you need to. Be aware of how the door locks/unlocks
- Allow the host to lead the way, so that doors cannot be locked behind you
- Sit as close to the door as possible
- If you use your car for transport, make sure you park so that you can leave quickly, if needed. For example, reverse into a space.

Remember – always report any suspicious incidents or persons to the Police, your Archdeacon and/or others that might need to know.

Want to know more?

Other useful health and safety information is 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.

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 churches@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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