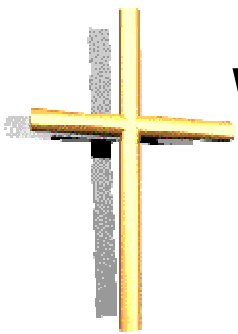




Well Street United Church, Buckingham



Well Street United Church

Health & Safety Policy

Date: 01 April 2009	Authorised by: Peter Downing
Review date: 07 April 2009	Reviewed by: Ian Thornton (Elder)



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1. Health & Safety Statement

Well Street United Church (WSUC) recognises and accepts its responsibilities for providing so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe environment with a view to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all those who use the church premises and engage in its activities. Where risks are identified WSUC will seek to reduce them by putting into place such control measures as are reasonably identified.

2. WSUC will so far as reasonably practicable, take all necessary steps to meet its responsibilities by:

2.1. Maintaining the church premises in a condition that is safe and without risk to health and providing and maintaining means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks:

2.2. Providing and maintaining furnishings and equipment which are safe and without risks to health

2.3. Assessing the risk to the health and safety of those who use the church premises and engage in its activities or events

2.4. Ensuring the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage of articles and substances

2.5. The provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of those who use the church premise or engage in church activities and events

2.6. The provision and maintenance of a proper environment for the church's employees, leaders, helpers, and volunteers that is safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare

2.7. Consulting where necessary, with all employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers on the implementation of any changes to this policy

2.8. Ensuring that adequate funds and resources are made available for the implementation of this policy

3. WSUC has given the overall responsibility for the fulfilment of this policy to **Peter Downing** as the church's Health and Safety Officer but subject hereto the Eldership (Trustees) will be responsible for carrying out the implementation of the church's policy and for the issue of supplementary policy statements where this may be necessary. Any issues of liability as a result of this policy or its implementation will be treated as the corporate responsibility of the Trustees acting on behalf of WSUC

4. The Health and Safety Officer will



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- 4.1. Carry out appropriate risk assessments (these to be reviewed annually) of the church's premises and activities and events and report to the Eldership as necessary (see Appendix 'A')
- 4.2. Co-ordinate the implementation of the church's Health and Safety Policy (including Fire Safety)
- 4.3. Carry out investigations of any accidents and recommend measures for preventing their recurrence
- 4.4. Ensure that accident and other appropriate records are maintained and returned to any appropriate bodies as necessary
- 4.5. Ensure that all appropriate arrangements are made to provide for first aid
- 4.6. Ensure that all food hygiene safety legislation is complied with
- 4.7. Ensure that safety training courses are arranged, as may be necessary or desirable, so that specific legal requirements are adhered to and that any changes in such requirements are complied with and communicated to employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers as necessary
- 4.8. Ensure that, where necessary, all relevant safety regulations are prominently displayed, that all emergency procedure notices are properly exhibited and clearly visible at all times
- 4.9. Ensure that access to and from emergency exits and fire equipment are not impaired and that corridors and stairs are kept free from obstructions other than of a temporary and partial nature.



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Appendix 'A'

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy for Well Street United Church (WSUC). The purpose of this document is to provide a guide and template to the risk assessment process WSUC will use for its premises activities and events.

1.0. Risk assessments are not difficult. The Health & Safety Executive have some excellent examples on their website www.hse.gov.uk along with other material and guidance.

1.1. WSUC **will** be proactive in improving the safety of those people working for, with, or attending the church its events or activities. It is vital that we all place safety as a high priority, and ensure any risk assessment and the control measures identified in support of the event or activity are adhered to. Failure to do so puts people at risk and in some circumstances may commit criminal offences and make the church, its trustees or individuals liable. However, the whole principle should be that we continue to enjoy the full benefits of our premises, activities and events (we just need to make them as safe as possible).

2.0 WSUC will follow a five step cycle in the approach to health and safety:



Step 1:
Identify the Hazards



Step 2:
Decide who might be harmed and how



Step 3:
Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions (control measures)



Step 4:
Record your findings and implement them



Step 5:
Review your assessment and update if necessary



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2.1 Don't complicate the process. In many cases, the risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply. You probably already know, for example, whether you are likely to have to move heavy loads and so could damage your back, or where people are most likely to slip or trip or suffer injury in an activity. If so, check to ensure that you have taken reasonable precautions to prevent injury. You don't have to be a health and safety expert and are most likely already considering risks and putting control measures in place without thinking. We often call this a 'dynamic risk assessment'. Many aspects are just a case of applying common sense, and most people can conduct their own risk assessment. You are the best person to be able to identify the associated risks. WSUC will always offer support and will conduct risk assessments on an ongoing basis. Please speak to a member of the Leadership Team if you require any assistance. WSUC also has a health and safety representative – **Pete Downing**. Certain activities and events will require their own risk assessment.

2.2 When thinking about risk assessment remember:

- A hazard is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer, a trip hazard etc.
- The risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be as a result.

3.0



Step 1: Identify the Hazards

First you need to work out how people could be harmed. When you are around a place regularly it is easy to overlook some hazards, so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- Walk around** and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.
- Ask others** what they think. They may have noticed or thought of things that you wouldn't and are not immediately obvious to you.
- Consider** contacting a member of the Leadership Team or Pete Downing to ask for some advice.
- Check manufacturer's instructions** and read and take note of any instructions or notices in relevant places.
- Check any previous accident or injury records.** These often help to identify the less obvious hazards (such as a pattern of injury through activity)
- Remember to think about long-term hazards to health** (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances).



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Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed, it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. young people attending, technical team, band members).

In each case, identify how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might result. For example people lifting speakers might be subject to back injury from repeated lifting of heavy objects.

Remember:

- Some people will be affected differently, e.g. elder people may be more subject to trip hazards.
- Visitors and contractors coming into the church environment who are unfamiliar with our hazards.
- Ask those you work alongside whether they can think of anyone you might have missed



Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions (control measures)

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice, checking and accepting against advice.

So first, look at what you're already doing, think about what controls you have in place and how both the activity or control measures are organised. Then think carefully about this to see if there's more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard. In asking yourself this, consider:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:

- Try a less risky option
- Prevent access to the risk by guarding or changing
- Reduce exposure to the hazard



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- Advise on any personal protective equipment (stout footwear, wet weather clothing etc.).
- Provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid equipment, first aides, washing facilities etc.).

Improving health and safety does not necessarily involve cost. It is more about awareness, supervision and control measures. Involve others working alongside you so that you can be sure that what you are proposing will work in practice and that they will not introduce any more hazards.



Step 4:

Record your findings and implement them

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will definitely make a difference and improve the safety for everyone involved.

Writing down the risk assessment and sharing it with the others involved is important. WSUC will maintain an over-arching risk assessment against the buildings. The risk assessment for the on-going activities and events will be the responsibility of the person in charge or leader of the group. But don't worry, if you're not sure ask, and a member of the Leadership Team or Pete Downing will advise and assist you.

When writing down your results, keep it simple, for example 'tripping over leads: all leads taped and routed to side of room, staff briefed on set up/pull down' or 'risk of injury: first aides present, staff briefed'.

A risk assessment will not be perfect, nor will it prevent everything, but it must be suitable and sufficient. You need to be able to show that:

- A proper check was made.
- You considered who might be affected.
- You dealt with all the significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved.
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low.
- You involved others in the process

There is a template at the end of this document for you to record your process. Further copies are available from the church office. You can complete the risk assessment electronically and it should be returned to the office where it can be quality assured by a health & safety representative.

If you find that there are a number of improvements that you can make, don't try and make them all at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first.



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A good plan of action includes a number of things such as:

- A few cheap and easy 'quick wins' – things that can be done quickly, perhaps as a temporary solution until more reliable controls are in place.
- Long term solutions to those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill health
- Long term solutions to those risks with the worst potential consequences.
- Arrangements for training of those people working with you on the risks that remain and the control measures in place to prevent them (i.e. Child Protection Policy).
- Regular checks to make sure that the control measures stay in place.
- Clear understanding as to who is doing what, and by when to address the risks.



Step 5:

Review your assessment and update if necessary

Things change! Your activities will be different. Aspects of the layout of buildings that have multi use change. People move on, and others become involved. The risk assessment process (both dynamic and written structured assessments) is an on-going one, and we should never simply be 'ticking the box' and thinking it's done. Keep people informed and involved. Look at your assessments again. Ask yourself 'has anything changed?' Have you learnt anything from any accidents or near misses?

Make sure your risk assessment is up to date!



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Activity/Event/Premise:	Date:	Name:
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Step 1 What are the hazards?	Step 2 Who might be harmed?	Step 3 What are you already doing?	Step 4 What further action is necessary?	Step 5 How will you put the assessment into action? By whom? Date?