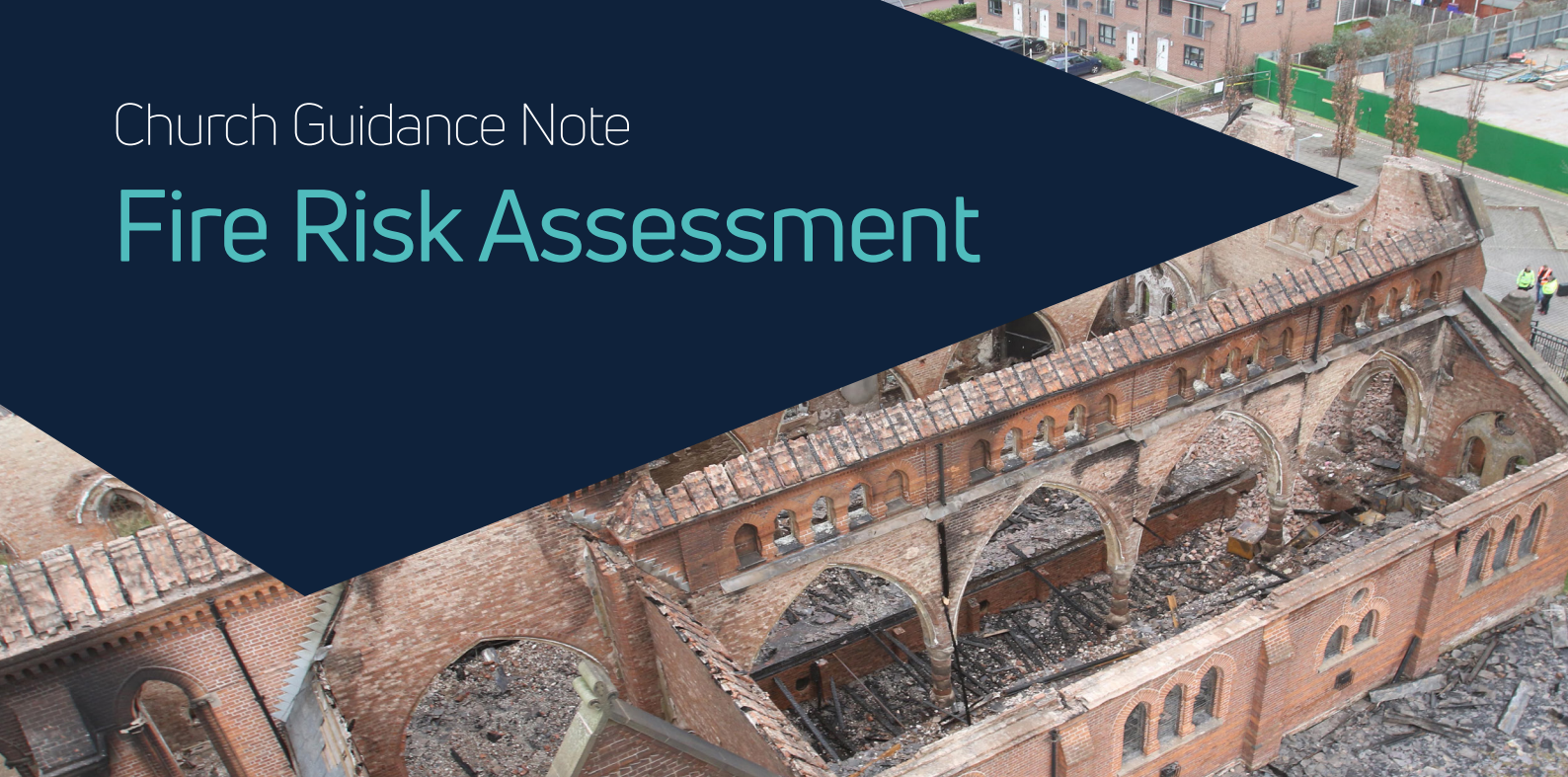


Fire Risk Assessment



Churches are required to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In Scotland, fire safety duties are contained in part 3 of The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005, as amended and The Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Ecclesiastical has developed this Fire Risk Assessment based on our own expertise. This assessment can only be used by churches whose normal activities are limited to what might be expected in a church building such as services and occasional public events such as concerts.

A fire risk assessment is a legal document. If using this template, you should check that it matches your specific circumstance exactly. If it doesn't, you should amend it to do so.

Churches with a wider range of activities such as night shelters, lettings and nurseries should consider appointing an accredited fire risk assessor to support them in completing their Fire Risk Assessment. Example accredited certification bodies include the Institute of Fire Prevention Officers (IFPO), Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) and Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE). It is important any assessor appointed has knowledge in completing fire risk assessment in heritage and faith buildings.

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.

How to use this Fire Risk Assessment

The assessment has the following sections which you will need to read and then complete:

Part 1 – Information About Our Church

Part 1 of the assessment is about collecting together all the information you need about your church so that you can perform the Fire Risk Assessment. It is broken down into various sections which are summarised below.

A Our Church Details

Basic information about our church location and the person responsible for the Fire Risk Assessment.

B Parochial Church Council Declaration

A declaration about the awareness and understanding of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) or other church management committee of the requirements of the Order to be signed by the appropriate person.

C General Information About Our Church

Description of the church building and how it is used.

D Potential Fire Hazards At Our Church

Details of fire hazards, sources of ignition and their elimination or control.

E Our Fire Protection Arrangements

Details of the current arrangements we have in place for fire protection.

F Our Fire Detection, Warning And Extinguisher Equipment

Details of the equipment we have in place and its testing and maintenance.

G Our Fire Safety Management

Information about our plans should a fire occur.

Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

Part 2 of the assessment is about the fire risks at our church and how we will go about fulfilling our obligations under the order.

Part 3 – Our Arrangements for Fire Safety At Our Church

Part 3 of the assessment details the measures we have taken to offset the risk of fire at our church.

Part 4 – Our Action Plan To Reduce Fire Risk At Our Church

Part 4 details any gaps in our fire protection arrangements and outlines what we are going to do to address them.

Appendix 1

Examples to help you complete Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment.

Appendix 2

Examples to help you complete Part 3 – Our Arrangements For Fire Safety At Our Church.

Appendix 3 Fire Action Notice

A specimen notice that needs to be placed near all exit doors and in separate areas such as vestries, which you will need to complete for your church.

Part 1 – Information About Our church

A. Our Church Details

Name of church:

Address:

Responsible person:

Employer or other persons having control of the relevant premises e.g. PCC.

In the diocese of:

B. Parochial Church Council Declaration

As a church, we understand that we are required to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (in Scotland, fire safety duties are contained in part 3 of The Fire Scotland Act 2005, as amended and The Fire Safety Scotland Regulations 2006) even if we have no employees.

We note that we are required to take such general fire precautions as will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of employees, if we have any, and to take such general fire precautions as may reasonably be required in the circumstances to ensure that the premises are safe for all other visitors to the church including volunteers, members of the congregation, and contractors. Our Fire Risk Assessment and arrangements are therefore directed to the safety of people rather than the protection of the building itself.

We understand the PCC is the responsible person, and we will appoint one or more competent persons as appropriate to assist us in undertaking the preventative and protective measures.

We understand it is the responsibility of the **Responsible Person(s)** to fully record the following information in the fire risk assessment:-

- All findings from their fire risk assessment regardless of the size or purpose of the premises in full.
- Fire Safety Arrangements that show how you manage fire safety in the building. These can be anything from procedures you need to have written down to policies you have in place.
- Details of the appointed Fire Risk Assessor who undertakes or reviews any or all of the fire risk assessment.

In carrying out our Fire Risk Assessment, we have followed the Government guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (for Scotland – Scottish Government's Police and Community Safety Directorate, HM Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland, the Scottish Building Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive) and have noted from this document that the action we take should be common sense and in the main, not expensive. We have also noted Appendix C of the guidance for Fire safety risk assessment: small and medium places of assembly which refers to listed and historic buildings and note that we will need to endeavour to strike a balance between ensuring sufficient fire safety measures are in place for the safety of people, yet avoid extensive alterations and helping to maintain the character of the building.

Signed on behalf of the PCC:

Persons appointed to assist the PCC in undertaking fire preventative and protective measures:

Date fire risk assessment was completed:

Suggested review date:

(The risk assessment needs to be reviewed regularly to keep it up to date, particularly where there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid, or there has been a significant change in the matters to which it relates.)

You can see the full documentation referred to above at the links below:

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made

Government Guidance including a fire risk assessment form is available from:

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/firesafety/firesafetylaw/aboutguides/

A document that may also be of assistance is the Fire Safety Risk Assessment Small and Medium Places of Assembly:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-legislation-guidance-for-those-with-legal-duties

For Scotland, a document that may be of assistance is Practical Fire Safety Guidance for Places of Entertainment and Assembly:

www.firesafetyfirst.co.uk/freedownloadspublications.html

C. General Information About Our Church

THE BUILDING:

Number of floors:

Floor area (approximate overall size in square metres):

(You will need to measure the building to calculate things like the number of fire extinguishers required and travel distances. See also 'Plan' below.)

Building description:

(Describe what the building comprises noting if there is one main undivided area and then separate parts which can be closed off from the main area which could prevent the spread of a fire, e.g. The main undivided area of the church comprises a lofty nave and chancel with north and south aisles and organ chamber. There are north and south porches and a vestry all of which can be closed off from the main part of the church by substantial oak doors. There is a tower at the west end of the church which is completely separated from the rest of the church and can only be accessed from an external door.)

Basic construction details:

(For example, The church is built of stone/brick with a slate/tile roof on a timber frame. The floor is of solid construction covered with tiles.)

Use of the church:

Note the use of the building and how often it is occupied, e.g. The church is used for services twice on a Sunday but otherwise the use is very limited. There is the occasional concert.

You should draw a plan of the church which can be used during the risk assessment process and then as a part of your fire safety arrangements documentation. This should be roughly to scale and should identify by name the main parts of the church and note all doors both internal, which separate different parts of the church, and external, which provide means of escape.

The plan can be used to note the location of fire extinguishers and other relevant information.

You can use a tape measure or rule to measure the building but an easy way is to pace along the outside walls and note down the distances. A good pace is about 1 metre.

There is a blank page at the back of this document for you to draw a plan of your church.

PEOPLE AT RISK:

Occupants:

Approximate average number attending a normal service:

Approximate maximum number attending special services and events such as weddings and at Christmas:

Approximate number of employees and/or volunteers in the church at any one time:

OCCUPANTS AT SPECIAL RISK FROM FIRE:

Give details of any persons with disabilities who attend the church who would need help in evacuating the building:

Give details of any children who attend the church and whether they occupy a different part of the building during services such as a Sunday School in the vestry:

Give details of the number of persons who occupy remote parts of the building and when:

(For example, do bell ringers practice when there is no-one else in the church. Does the organist practice alone or does someone undertake maintenance in an enclosed boiler room?)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Previous fire losses:

Detail any fires or related incidents that anyone can remember even if it did not result in an insurance claim:

Other relevant information:

Note any other information which could have a bearing on the risk of fire such as the nature of any nearby or adjoining premises or evidence of arson:

D. Potential Fire Hazards At Our Church

Where the answer is NO then some action may be required in order to ensure that your fire safety arrangements are satisfactory. This needs to be noted in the Action Plan at the end of the assessment. If the situation does not apply, enter N/A.

Electrical

Is the fixed electrical system inspected and tested by a competent person at least every five years?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

If YES, state the name of the competent person and the date of the last inspection

Are all portable electrical appliances including those belonging to outside bodies annually tested? (PAT testing)	Yes	No
---	-----	----

If YES, state the name of the tester and the date of the last test

Are any electrical items that fail the testing removed immediately from the church?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Is the use of trailing leads and multi-point adaptors restricted as far as possible and subject to control?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Heating

If portable electric heaters including electric fan heaters, and radiant 'bar' type fires are used, are they included in the PAT testing programme and are they kept away from combustible materials?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

(Remember to check areas that you would not normally visit such as the ringing chamber or clergy vestry.)

If portable LPG (liquid petroleum gas) heaters are used, are they fixed away from combustible materials and are the arrangements for the storage and replacement of spare cylinders satisfactory?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

If heating appliances burning coal or other solid fuel, e.g. wood pellets, are used, are arrangements in place to ensure fire cannot spread accidentally?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

Are gas boilers subject to an annual maintenance contract with an approved Gas Safe registered contractor?	Yes	No	N/A
--	-----	----	-----

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

Are oil-fired boilers subject to an annual maintenance contract with an approved OFTEC contractor?	Yes	No	N/A
--	-----	----	-----

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection

Are oil tanks suitably bunded or double skinned and fitted with a safety cut-off valve?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

Do you ensure that all heating appliances are kept clear of combustible materials?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Arson

Have you considered the risk of arson and malicious attacks?	Yes	No
Is the storage of combustible materials and flammables such as petrol for mowers kept to a minimum and in a secure place where the risk to people is minimised?	Yes	No
Have you removed or kept secure anything which could be used by an arsonist such as matches and candles?	Yes	No

Cooking

If you have a kitchen or servery in the church, are measures in place to prevent fire as a result of cooking?	Yes	No	N/A
If kitchen equipment includes filters or ductwork, are they cleaned regularly? If YES, state how often	Yes	No	N/A
Are suitable fire extinguishers and a fire blanket located in the cooking area?	Yes	No	N/A

Lightning

If the church has a lightning conductor, is it inspected by a competent, specialist Lightning Engineer at recommended intervals?	Yes	No	N/A
If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection			

Combustible Materials

Has combustible material been removed from the church as far as possible? <i>(Examples of combustible material which can accumulate are hay and straw used in Christmas cribs, articles collected for jumble sales but never sold, waste paper collected for recycling and old Christmas trees.)</i>	Yes	No
Are all exits and escape routes kept clear of combustible materials?	Yes	No

Contractors and Building Works

Are outside contractors subject to control when working in the church and are they required to use a 'hot work' permit system when necessary?	Yes	No	
If volunteers undertake maintenance work in the church, are suitable precautions taken such as the use of a 'hot work' permit system and the provision of suitable fire extinguishers close to the location of the work?	Yes	No	N/A
Are both contractors and volunteers aware of safety arrangements including provision of fire extinguishers and escape routes during building works?	Yes	No	

E. Our Fire Protection Arrangements

Means of Escape

Are there a suitable number of exits from the building?

Yes

No

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(As a guide, it should be possible to evacuate the building in less than 2.5 minutes although this time may be extended for low-risk buildings such as churches. Guidance also indicates that one exit is sufficient for up to 60 persons but if the building can accommodate more than 60 persons there should be more than one exit. It will not normally be possible to increase the number or width of doors in a church, but remember that doors not normally in use such as external doors to vestries may be used.)

Do the exit doors open in the direction of escape?

Yes

No

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(It is likely that all of the doors in the church are inward opening and impossible to change as they are an integral part of the historic fabric.)

Can exit doors be opened easily?

Yes

No

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Is the travel distance acceptable where there is only a single escape route?

Yes

No

Is the travel distance acceptable where there are alternative means of escape?

Yes

No

(The travel distance is the furthest a person would have to travel from a point within the church in order to reach an exit door. For areas with seating in rows, such as is found in the majority of churches, guidance suggests the following travel distances:

Where there is only a single escape route, the maximum distance is 15 metres for a normal fire risk area and 18 metres for a lower fire risk area;

Where there is more than one escape route, the maximum distance is 32 metres for a normal fire risk area and 45 metres for a lower fire risk area.

In the case of vestries that have their own external door, travel distances will normally fall within these guidelines.

The main body of the church may be regarded as a lower fire risk area and in most cases the travel distances should be within the guidelines.

However, you do need to measure travel distances in order to answer this question. Where they exceed the guidelines, it will need to be addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.)

Are escape routes suitably protected from fire and kept clear of obstructions at all times?

Yes

No

(In practice, unlike many other buildings, traditional churches have very few corridors so the 'escape route' is effectively the whole of the building. The porch is the most likely area to pose a risk of obstruction during an evacuation and must be kept clear of obstructions and combustibles such as free-standing noticeboards and displays.)

Are the means of escape suitable for persons with disabilities?

Yes

No

(Compliance with Equality legislation probably means that access to the church and therefore also egress is suitable for wheelchair users. If not, it will need to be addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.)

Is an Emergency Escape Lighting System installed?

Yes

No

If NO, detail your means of providing light in the event of a main lighting failure, e.g. hand lamps, torches etc.

If YES, is it subject to regular testing?

Yes

No

N/A

If YES, state the intervals of testing and the date of the last full annual maintenance inspection

Are Fire Exit signs displayed?

Yes

No

If NO, describe here the arrangements in place to direct people to exits

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Are Fire Safety Signs and Notices displayed?

Yes

No

(Signs need to be displayed indicating the location of fire extinguishers and the types of fire for which they are suitable. Fire Action Notices need to be displayed indicating what to do in the event of a fire.)

F. Our Fire Detection, Warning And Extinguisher Equipment

Is there a manually operated fire alarm such as a rotary gong or bell which is operated in the event of a fire?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

How often is it tested?

Is there an electric, manually operated fire alarm with 'break glass' panels to operate the alarm?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

If YES, is it subject to a maintenance contract?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last maintenance visit

Is there an automatic fire detection system and alarm which incorporates smoke detectors to activate the alarm in the event of a fire?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

If YES, is it tested on a regular basis?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

If YES, is it subject to a maintenance contract?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last maintenance visit

If none of the above are provided, then describe here the arrangements for giving warning of a fire

Are suitable and sufficient portable fire extinguishers in place?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

If YES, are they subject to an annual maintenance contract?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

If YES, state the name of the contractor and the date of the last inspection visit

(Guidance indicates that there should be one 9-litre water extinguisher for around each 200 square metres of floor space with a minimum of two per floor. Note – a 6-litre hydro-spray extinguisher will have the same fire extinguishing capacity as 9 litres of water and is only two-thirds the weight making it much easier to lift and use.

In addition, 2Kg Carbon Dioxide extinguishers should be provided to deal with fires involving electrical equipment.

One certainly needs to be provided near the organ and one near the main electrical intake. If there is a kitchen or servery, a 6-litre Wet Chemical extinguisher should be provided together with a fire blanket to smother any clothing which may catch fire.

Note that Dry Powder extinguishers are not suitable for use in historic buildings as they can cause irreparable damage to the building and contents. You should consult your extinguisher supplier on a regular basis to ensure extinguisher arrangements follow current best practice).

G. Our Fire Safety Management

General Arrangements

Is there a suitable Emergency Plan for the building?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

(You are required to have an Emergency Plan and, for most churches, Fire Action Notices together with written procedures to be followed by Stewards for larger services and events will satisfy this requirement.)

Can the Fire Service be summoned easily?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

(You should have either a landline or ensure that there is someone with a mobile telephone in the church when it is occupied. In rural areas it may be necessary to check whether a signal is available, as often a signal cannot be obtained inside the building.)

Are persons nominated to assist in case of fire?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Is there a procedure to give persons with disabilities appropriate assistance in evacuating the building?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Training and Evacuation Drills

Are regular periodic evacuation drills carried out?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

(Even if your normal congregation is small you should carry out a practice to ensure that everyone can leave the building safely in the required time of less than 2.5 minutes. This can easily be done at the end of a normal service and should be undertaken say annually.

An evacuation drill also needs to be carried out for those times when the church is full, say at weddings or at Christmas. On these occasions there may be people there who are not familiar with the building. You can simulate these situations by asking for the cooperation of the local school for example and use pupils to represent the maximum number who may be in the church. Having undertaken this exercise, it does not necessarily need to be repeated every year.)

Is there fire safety training for persons nominated to assist in case of fire?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

This is addressed under the arrangements for Fire Safety Management.

Record Keeping

Are records kept for tests of the emergency lighting system in a log book or similar document?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

Are records kept for tests of the fire alarm system in a log book or similar document?	Yes	No	N/A
---	-----	----	-----

Are records kept of evacuation drills in a log book or similar document?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Are records kept of fire safety training in a log book or similar document?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Part 2 – Our Fire Risk Assessment

Once you have gathered all the information in Part 1, you can then complete the actual Fire Risk Assessment below.

Our Fire Risk Assessment

Having completed our fact-finding, we now feel confident that we are fully aware of the fire hazards present in our church and the risks to people using the building. We have noted the precautions that we already have in place and where we have noted any deficiencies these will be rectified as soon as practicable. These matters are set out in **Part 4 – Our Action Plan**. **Part 3 – Our Arrangements For Fire Safety On Our Church** sets out how we will deal with fulfilling our obligations.

Our assessment of the fire risk has been based on the following factors (**see Appendix 1 for some example descriptions**):

Occupation – How your building is used by people.

Fire Detection – Information about any fire detection systems you have in place.

Escape – In the event of an emergency, how people will exit your church.

Fire Load – How easily the structure of your building could ignite and flames could spread in a fire.

Likelihood – In your experience, what is the possibility of a fire at your church taking into account the history of the building and existing precautions.

Overall Fire Risk Assessment

Based on the factors set out in the Fire Risk Assessment above, the overall Fire Risk Assessment is as follows:

1. Potential consequences of fire:

Please tick one:

Slight harm: Outbreak of fire is unlikely to result in serious injury or death of any occupant.

Moderate harm: Outbreak of fire could foreseeably result in injury (including serious injury) of one or more occupants, but is unlikely to involve multiple fatalities.

Extreme harm: Significant potential for serious injury or death of one or more occupants.

2. Likelihood of fire:

Please tick one:

Low: Unusually low likelihood of fire as a result of negligible potential sources of ignition.

Medium: Normal fire hazards (e.g. potential ignition sources) for this type of occupancy, with fire hazards generally subject to appropriate controls (other than minor shortcomings).

High: Lack of adequate controls applied to one or more significant fire hazards, such as to result in significant increase in the likelihood of fire.

Table

Based on the answers above, you can now map the amount of risk in the table below.

Potential consequences of fire	Slight harm	Moderate harm	Extreme harm
Likelihood of fire			
Low	Trivial risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Medium	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial risk
High	Moderate risk	Substantial risk	Intolerable risk

The overall assessment of the fire risk at our church and the risk to persons, based on the table above and the answers in 1 and 2, is:

Part 3 – Our Arrangements For Fire Safety In Our Church

This section details the arrangements for fire safety in our church. For some examples of content for this section, please see Appendix 2.

Our Arrangements For Fire Safety Management

Emergency Lighting

Manual Fire Alarm

Automatic Fire Detection System

Exit Doors

Major Services and Events

Stewards and Training

Record Keeping

Bell Ringers (where applicable)

Due to the various differing risk factors applicable to Tower areas, this section should be completed following discussions with the Tower Captain. The agreed controls should be inserted in this section.

Part 4 – Our Action Plan To Reduce Fire Risk At Our Church

Action Plan

Schedule of actions to be taken as a result of our fact-finding exercise in order to maintain our risk as low and to meet our Fire Safety Management Plan.

Action to be taken	Target completion date	Person responsible

Please use this page to draw a plan of your church that identifies your evacuation arrangements.

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