

RISK CHECKLIST – CHURCHES WORSHIP SERVICES

Generally the church activities with highest numbers attending are the Sunday worship services. Large numbers of people will multiply the impact of a negative event should one occur. Potential risks attached to a worship service should be identified together with appropriate mitigation strategies.

This checklist sets out topics for consideration in conducting a worship service risk analysis.

Premises

- What issues are associated with the set-up of the venue, e.g. manual handling, chairs, musical instruments, platforms, etc.?
- What issues are associated with venue clear-up?
- Are there slip, trip or fall hazards either within the venue or in the grounds leading to the venue, e.g. carpet condition, floor level, steps, ramps, lifts, handrails, electrical leads? Are these checked on a regular basis, especially before services?
- What risks arise when congregation size exceeds standard available seating?
- Will the service adversely impact neighbours (traffic movement, parking, noise etc.)?
- Consider the impact of technology (sound and video equipment, computer use, electricity) on the service and participants.
- Does the venue have appropriate toilet and washing facilities? Are these checked during the service?
- Do participants have access to other parts of a complex? Is access to children's ministry areas restricted to authorised persons? Do we check that premises are empty at end of day?
- Have we catered for participants with physical disabilities?
- Are first aid kits available? Are trained first aid practitioners on duty?
- Is responsibility clear for venue heating and cooling?
- Who is able to access and operate technical equipment such as a sound system?
- When the baptistery is in use, are there controls in place to restrict access to the baptistery, especially children? Ensure that those in the water do not touch anything electrical including corded microphones (either use battery powered or suspended microphones).
- Is lighting adequate both within the venue and in the grounds leading to the venue?
- Are hazardous materials (chemicals, gas bottles etc.) protected?
- Are there premises nearby that could create a risk to staff, volunteers or congregation members? e.g. service station, clubs, pubs, hospitals

The information provided is of a general nature only and may not identify all matters that need to be included in the design of effective controls for the subject area. Professional advice should be obtained on individual circumstances.

RISK CHECKLIST – CHURCHES WORSHIP SERVICES

- What emergency evacuation processes are in place? Are volunteers trained in the procedures? Have these been tested? Do they cater for multiple emergency types: fire, tempest, physical attack?
- Does the church have medical emergency procedures in place? Are roles clearly understood, including responsibility for accessing emergency (ambulance) medical assistance?
- Have the fire prevention facilities been inspected and maintained as required by regulation?
- Are fire exits clear of any obstruction?

Leaders

- Do leaders have working with children certification?
- What measures are in place to ensure compliance with copyright law in relation to music and other resources used in the worship service? Does this include audio or video copies available to the public?
- Are protocols in place to protect the privacy of individuals in the context of the worship service? Does this extend to prayer and healing ministries?

Participants / Congregation / Volunteers

- Do you have a policy for dealing with “Persons of interest”? Note that your church should have an existing policy in relation to “Persons of interest” that needs to be followed.
- Will lone or isolated workers be safe? e.g. flower arrangers, people in technical control areas (control booths), door stewards
- What processes are in place for dealing with disruptive, aggressive or abusive people in or near the worship service?
- Do you have policies for dealing with possible physical attacks?
- Are volunteers properly trained?

People Movement

- What are the risks associated with people entering or leaving the venue?
- Do you have appropriate traffic management protocols in place for participants, volunteers and leaders moving around the venue? Do these cover all areas where people might visit including: foyers, auditorium, baptisms, refreshment areas, backstage areas, and technical and music team assembly areas.
- Are site maps posted, to assist people to know their location?
- Does the venue have adequate signage?
- Will transport assistance be provided to congregation members?

The information provided is of a general nature only and may not identify all matters that need to be included in the design of effective controls for the subject area. Professional advice should be obtained on individual circumstances.

RISK CHECKLIST – CHURCHES WORSHIP SERVICES

- If a church bus is used, are existing controls complied with, e.g. licencing of drivers, police checks, etc.?
- If private vehicle use is contemplated, what are the risks (e.g. P plate drivers)? What are the insurance implications? What are the expectations of drivers in relation to road safety?
- What car parking arrangements are in place?

Other Activities

- When personal contact information is obtained, is it clear how that information will be stored and used?
- Does the church bulletin in any way compromise any individual's privacy?
- Are separate risks associated with special services considered and evaluated? e.g. healing ministries, prayer ministries
- How do you respond to media presence in the service?

Security

- Has the potential for theft of equipment, food or belongings been considered? The potential for property damage?
- What cash handling protocols exist? What protocols exist in relation to credit card details provided either in the offering or in payment for other activities?
- Is there potential for intruders or outside parties to disrupt the service?
- What emergency contact arrangements do you have in place?
- What incident reporting processes do you have in place? Does this include analysis after the fact, to support learning?

Food (not including church cafes)

- What are the consequences of providing tea and coffee making facilities (hot liquids)?
- Are food preparation and handling practices compliant with regulatory requirements?
- Do communion preparation standards ensure hygiene of the elements served to the congregation?