

## RISK INFORMATION – CHURCHES

### RISK ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES

Activities involving children and youth are subject to the requirements of state child protection legislation, e.g. “Working With Children Check”, “Blue Card”, etc.

A number of states require organisations to assess the risks associated with proposed (high risk) children’s activities to enable appropriate management of those risks.

This document summarises topics for consideration in conducting a risk analysis of children’s activities.

For the purposes of this guidance, risk can be considered to be the exposure to the possibility of things going wrong while preparing, participating or clearing-up for the activity. Things that could go wrong can include economic or financial loss, reputation loss, abuse, physical damage, death or injury.

The following topics should be considered in completing a risk assessment:

- Describe Activity
- Identify Risks (what can go wrong)
- Analyse the risk (consequence / likelihood)
- Evaluate the risk (overall risk level)
- Manage the risk
- Review the effectiveness of risk management (who and when)

If your church does not have an existing methodology in place to assess risks, we suggest using the Churches Activity Risk Assessment Tool (available from the Baptist Insurance website - [www.baptistinsurance.com.au](http://www.baptistinsurance.com.au)). We also recommend the Churches Risk Management document as a guide to understanding how to analyse and evaluate risks.

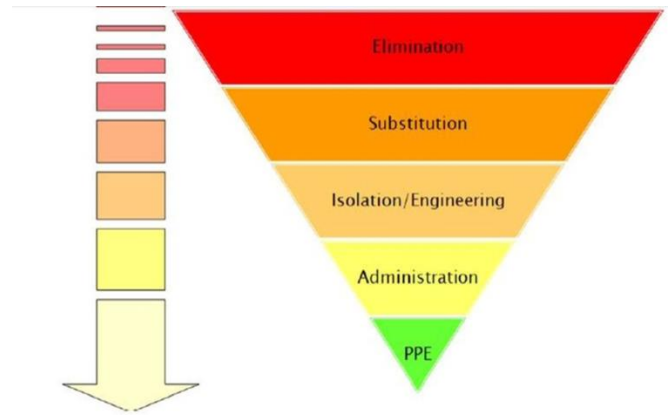
Having identified, analysed and evaluated risks, you are then responsible for ensuring that risks are managed. This is achieved by identifying and implementing appropriate control mechanisms.

In designing effective controls, remember to consider the Risk Hierarchy (see next page). It is better to eliminate a risk entirely than just provide Personal Protective Equipment or Administrative control measures.

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Risk Hierarchy Diagram



<p><b>ELIMINATION</b> Controlling the hazard at the source</p> <p><b>SUBSTITUTION</b> Replacing one substance or activity with a less hazardous one</p> <p><b>ISOLATION</b> Separating the process from people or people from the process, such as using barriers</p> <p><b>ENGINEERING</b> Modifying or installing equipment or methods</p> <p><b>ADMINISTRATION</b> Signage, Policies or Procedures, Safe Work Method Statements, etc.</p> <p><b>PPE</b> Personal Protective Equipment or clothing</p>
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The key to the achievement of effective controls is assignment of responsibility for their implementation, identifying:

- What is to be done?
- Who will carry out the task?
- When is the task due to be completed?

Some people extract the controls from the Risk Assessment to create a separate Risk Management Plan (a list of controls and actions to be undertaken to mitigate risk for a specific activity).

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On the following pages are examples of risks that might be identified for a particular activity.  
*Suggested control measures are provided in italics.*

Please use these examples to assist you in the development of the risk assessment for your activity – add to and subtract from the list to reflect the specific risks of the activity that you undertake.

For further consideration of the types of risks that can arise in child related activities please refer to the following Church Risk Checklists, available for download from the Baptist Insurance Services website:

- Youth Activities
- Sunday School / Kids’ Church

Also available for download from the Baptist Insurance Services website is a partially completed Activity Risk Assessment form (Child Activity Risk Assessment Template) which contains the risks and suggested controls from the following pages. This template form is intended to help you in the development of your own Risk Assessments.

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#### Example Activity Risks & Suggested Controls

##### Before the activity

###### People

- Leaders not checked for child protection compliance - *ensure all leaders hold current state based working with children authorisation*
- Leaders do not have the necessary skills to organise and supervise the activity – *check relevant experience and skills of leaders; if necessary train them*
- Drivers not licenced – *check all drivers have current drivers’ licence; check boat drivers are licenced etc. Consider asking questions about drivers’ accident history*
- Parents not provided with sufficient information about activity and associated risks – *application/permission form to describe activity and risks to enable informed consent to be provided by parents*
- Participants do not have permission to attend; leaders do not have authority to arrange medical treatment - *obtain completed permission forms for all participants (ensure that these come from parent with custodial rights); obtain medical permission forms for all participants*
- Leaders lack parents’ contact data – *ensure contact details provided on permission forms*
- Inadequate first aid facilities for the activity – *ensure leaders include properly trained first aid practitioners; ensure first aid kit obtained*
- Leaders not trained in lifesaving (for water based activities) – *ensure leaders include trained lifesavers; arrange for local SLSC to monitor participants in water*
- Not enough leaders to adequately supervise campers – *determine the desired ratio of leaders to participants and recruit the required number of leaders (gender specific)*
- The activity increases the risk of injury to participants, e.g. collisions, drowning, anxiety, disorientation, and getting lost – *develop procedures and instructions to minimise the risk*
- Activities beyond the capability of participants – *include appropriate questions in application forms; evaluate individual capacity prior to participation*

###### Environment

- Indoor venues with slip or trip hazards – *visually inspect the venue and have hazards removed or remedied*
- Extreme weather conditions make the activity dangerous – *monitor weather 5 days out and the day prior to the activity; arrange shade for sun protection; have wet weather alternative plans in place with agreed “triggers” for implementation*

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- Watercourse water levels make the activity dangerous - *check creek / river levels before-hand*
- Outside venue contains hazards that increase risk of injury, e.g. holes, uneven ground, roots, low branches – *inspect the site and remedy hazards, prepare instructions for participants*
- Increased risk of danger to property at the venue or to adjacent 3<sup>rd</sup> party venues – *ensure location for activity clearly delineated; prepare instructions for participants; advise neighbours of proposed activity*

#### Equipment

- Not able to provide sufficient equipment of the desired quality to participants – *assign responsibility for equipment procurement; check equipment for suitability*
- Equipment safety requirements not properly understood or met – *equipment expert to provide explanation of required safety features (e.g. boats need fire extinguishers, life jackets); assign responsibility to ensure required safety equipment is obtained (refer **Safety Equipment** below)*

#### **During the activity**

#### People

- Excessive exposure to sun by participants – *ensure hats are worn and sunscreen applied for outside activities*
- Poor/bad behaviour of participants – *communicate expectations to all participants; leaders actively monitor behaviour of participants; reinforce rules where appropriate, use “time out” sanction where appropriate*
- Outside parties cause problems to activity - *monitor behaviour of other people near to where the activity is being undertaken*
- Lost participants - *account for people at regular intervals*
- Participants do not know what they are doing and when – *leaders prepare rosters for participation in the activity plus any duties that need to be undertaken (e.g. meal preparation, washing-up etc.)*
- Participants injured during activity – *render first aid; follow **Emergency Response** steps set-out below*
- Bad driving practices during transport to venue – *obtain drivers declaration regarding driving history and vehicle safety; record details of all incidents no matter how minor*

#### Environment

- Environment causes injuries – *on day of activity check venue for hazards, e.g. holes and tree roots for outside venue, trip and slip hazards for indoor venues*

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- Unexpected extreme weather impacts safety of activities – *on the morning of the activity check the weather forecast for the day; have wet weather alternative plans in place with agreed “triggers” for implementation*
- Introduction of physical hazards to the venue during the course of the activity – *leaders continue to visually monitor the venue for hazards*

#### Equipment

- Equipment not being properly used or worn - *provide instruction to participants in the correct usage of any equipment; on-going monitoring of the activities of equipment users and operators*
- Equipment failure when being used - *check equipment and safety equipment before the activity and at regular intervals during the activity*
- Participants injured using unfamiliar equipment - *provide instruction to participants in the correct usage of any equipment; on-going monitoring of the activities of equipment users and operators*

#### **After the activity**

#### People

- Lost / unaccounted for participants - *check participants are accounted for and are loaded onto transport or given into care of parents/guardians*
- Participants traumatised – *arrange for formal debriefing and, possibly, counselling*
- Unreported injuries to participants - *check for any injuries*
- Participants dehydrated – *arrange for supplies of water; ensure participants rehydrate*

#### Environment

- Venue left in untidy state – *schedule clean-up of the area used*

#### Equipment

- Equipment worn or damaged - *check equipment for damage; maintain where necessary*
- Equipment not returned to owner – *assign responsibility for equipment pack-up and return*

#### **Safety Equipment**

- First aid kit
- Water
- Protective equipment suitable for the activity, e.g. life vests, helmets, eye protection

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#### **Emergency Response**

- Stop activity
- Assess nature and extent of injury
- Render first aid
- Call ambulance
- Contact other leaders
- Contact parents
- Keep remainder of group occupied
- Record details in incident register

#### **Emergency Contacts**

- Ambulance
- Police
- Medical centre / hospital
- Leaders
- Parents

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