

# Health & Safety Training

For Volunteers & Staff

St. John's Church  
Southbourne  
West Sussex

Version: 1.1  
Date: May 2025  
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Please direct all questions and comments to the Church  
Wardens - [wardens@stjohnssouthbourne.com](mailto:wardens@stjohnssouthbourne.com)

## Contents:

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Risk Assessments
- Section 3 – COSHH & PPE
- Section 4 – Working at height
- Section 5 – Kitchen & Food
- Section 6 – Technology, Audio & Visual
- Section 7 – Accidents, First Aid, and Fault Reporting
- Section 8 – Manual Handling

## Section 1: Introduction

This guide aims to provide health and safety information and training to help you to:

- Understand our policies and implement best practice
- Work safely and without risks to health
- Develop a positive health and safety culture, where safe and healthy working becomes second nature to everyone
- Meet our legal health & safety duties

It is our responsibility to keep the Church and grounds safe, secure and fit for purpose. All staff and volunteers have a part to play, and all tasks need to be carried out in a safe and suitable way.

Please read this guide thoroughly and do contact the wardens if you have any questions or comments. We ask volunteers to read and sign our 'essential documents' including this one. The link to sign can be found on the Safeguarding page of our website.

In each section of this guide a link to further reading has been given. If you want more information about a topic covered, these links are a good place to start.

Further reading:

- HSE Health and safety training, a brief guide
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg345.pdf>

## Section 2: Risk Assessments

As part of managing the health and safety of the Church, we seek to control the risks in and around our buildings. We do this by looking at what might cause harm to people and deciding whether we are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm.

We use the Diocese of Chichester risk assessment form to record our findings, see image below.

Our risk assessments cover most of the day to day activity, services, groups and office working. For one off activities and special events we create a new assessment by working with those involved and exploring the different elements involved. All risk assessments are delegated by the PCC to the leaders of each event, and are stored in our Google Workspace Drive. Hard copies are printed for the start of new events.

No new activity should take place without consultation with the wardens or vicar. A risk assessment and/or PCC approval may be required before commencement.

If you are responsible for using the Church building, centre or grounds for any activity, you should have read the relevant risk assessment.

Group or activity leaders should brief attendees or team members on the relevant safety information found in the risk assessment.

For more information or to discuss risk assessments, please contact the wardens.

**St John's Southbourne**  
**Generic Risk Assessment Form**

**Location:** St John's Church Centre  
**Person with responsibility:** Sue McNeil, Jon Robinson  
**Name of assessor:** Jon Robinson

**Date of assessment:** March 2021  
**Time/Frequency:** Yearly  
**Review date:** March 2022

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Tables, chairs & obstructions in the seating area	All users & visitors • Trips & falls • Injury from damaged / unsuitable furniture • Exits becoming blocked / obstructed	• Area checked and managed by Coffee Connect when open (see specific risk assessment) • Area periodically checked by staff & wardens • All faults / issues reported and dealt with swiftly • Cleaner employed and supervised • Carpets cleaned annually • Regular H&S inspection of area • First aid kit supplied • Suitable insurance in place	Ask administrator to check area on their way in/out of the building	Wardens Administrator CC Team	When in use Periodically	
Lift	All users & visitors	• Lift regularly serviced and	Ensure faults are swiftly reported and	Wardens	When in	

sample risk assessment form

Further reading:

- HSE Risk Assessments, a brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

## Section 3: COSHH & PPE

COSHH stands for 'Care Of Substances Hazardous to Health', and covers everything from cleaning materials to soaps and oils.

- It is our policy to store all potentially hazardous materials appropriately either in a locked cupboard or out of reach of children, item dependant.
- The cleaning cupboard is located under the back staircase in the Centre, and must remain locked when not attended.
- Outside of storage, COSHH items should **not** be left unattended or within easy reach of children
- Manufacturer's instructions should be followed when using and storing any COSHH substances. If there is any uncertainty do not use the product and consult the wardens
- All items should be stored in the original containers and/or correctly labelled.
- Fuels, oils and similar are stored in the outside container, which must be kept locked when not attended
- Only persons with legitimate need should access the container - contact the wardens for guidance.
- No COSHH substance should be used or stored on the premises without being approved by either the kitchen manager or the wardens

PPE stands for 'Personal Protective Equipment' and includes items such as aprons, gloves, ear defenders and hard hats.

- A supply of cleaning related PPE can be found in the cleaning cupboard
- A supply of cooking related PPE can be found in the kitchen
- Use PPE as appropriate – if PPE equipment is needed, obtain before starting a task and ensure it is used correctly
- Our risk assessments may identify certain tasks where PPE is required, ensure that this guidance is followed
- If you are uncertain of what is required or have any comments or questions, please contact the kitchen manager or wardens

Further reading:

- HSE COSHH Advice Sheets
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/direct-advice/index.htm>
- HSE Personal protective equipment (PPE) at work, a brief guide
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg174.pdf>

## Section 4: Working at Height

Our policy states that no work should be undertaken by staff or volunteers that requires standing more than 1 meter off the ground. If you have a task that requires working higher than 1m, please discuss with the wardens before starting.

If you are considering working at any height please apply the following:

- Can you avoid working at height in the first place?
- Can you prevent a fall from occurring?
- Can you minimise the distance and/or minimise the consequences of a fall?
- Is a step, stepladder or ladder the right solution for the task?

Before working at height please consider the following:

- Is the area safe to work and clear from people and obstructions?
- Are you physically and mentally able to undertake the task?
- Is your clothing and footwear suitable for the task?
- Do you have someone on hand during the task?
- Have you visibly checked the equipment for damage and suitability?

What to look for when checking steps, stepladders and ladders:

- Check the stiles – make sure they are not bent or damaged, as the ladder could buckle or collapse
- Check the feet – if they are missing, worn or damaged the ladder could slip. Also check ladder feet when moving from soft/dirty ground to a smooth, solid surface to make sure the foot material and not the dirt (eg soil, chippings or embedded stones) is making contact with the ground
- Check the rungs – if they are bent, worn, missing or loose the ladder could fail
- Check any locking mechanisms – if they are bent or the fixings are worn or damaged the ladder could collapse. Ensure any locking bars are engaged
- Check the stepladder platform – if it is split or buckled the ladder could become unstable or collapse
- Check the steps or treads on stepladders – if they are contaminated they could be slippery; if the fixings are loose on steps, they could collapse. If you spot any of the above defects, don't use the ladder and notify the wardens

Other considerations:

- Never use a box, chair, desk or any other item not specifically designed for the task for working at height. If this activity is seen, please report it to the wardens.
- Some tasks may be deemed more suitable for an external contractor to undertake. This is a decision for the Standing Committee or PCC and not the individual
- Never feel that you are under pressure to complete a working at height task. You have the right to decline a task.

Further reading:

- HSE Working at height, a brief guide
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf>
- HSE Safe use of ladders and stepladders, a brief guide
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>

## Section 5: Kitchen & Food

We have a set of policies and risk assessments in place that cover the kitchen, food preparation, food service, food storage and hygiene. Along with our team, these help us keep our work safe, clean and up to the correct standard.

The main kitchen should only be used when a trained and authorised person is present. Training covers food hygiene, use of the equipment and understanding our policies. Other people using the kitchen should take their direction from the trained person, and observe good practices throughout.

The kitchen needs to be kept in a clean and orderly state at all times, and must be cleaned according to policy at the end of use. Cleaning materials and PPE are provided for your use.

All food and drink, whether it is prepared on site or not, should be handled, stored, and served according to our policy. A list of ingredients should be available at point of service and retained for later reference. Allergens need to be identified clearly labelled and all involved in preparation/service need to know how to access allergen information.

All food waste and contaminated items need to be disposed of properly. Please refer to our policies, risk assessments and training for further information.

We would like to remind all those involved with the kitchen, food or drink service that items may be very hot, very cold, sharp, reactive, slippery or similar. Please take care when working in this area and stop working/ask for advice if in doubt,

Kitchen training is conducted by the Kitchen Manager, who can be contacted via the Church office – [admin@stjohnssouthbourne.com](mailto:admin@stjohnssouthbourne.com)

Further reading:

- Food Standards Agency Food hygiene for your business
- <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-hygiene-for-your-business>
- Food Standards Agency Managing food safely
- <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/managing-food-safety>

## Section 6: Technology, Audio & Visual

If you use devices like computers, laptops, screens, tablets, phones and audio/visual equipment for church matters, it is important you do so in a safe, comfortable and appropriate way.

To help keep everyone safe, please consider the following:

- Visually check any piece of equipment for damage, faults and hazards before use. Do not use an item if you feel it is **not** suitable / safe to do so
- Ensure equipment is suitable for the task – is there a more suitable item/method that can be used?
- Position the equipment in a comfortable and suitable position for you – make use of any adjustments and support devices
- Take the time to adjust brightness, volume and similar (where appropriate)
- Take regular breaks for the item/task, move around as appropriate
- If a fault occurs or you feel an item is damaged or unsafe, stop using the item and report this issue to the wardens or relevant person with responsibility. If possible and appropriate, remove the item and mark it as damaged

Other points:

- If you are using cables or extension leads, ensure they are appropriately routed and do not cause unnecessary hazards
- It is good practice not to use more than one extension lead in a single run
- Please keep equipment tidy and use it/position it in a way that minimises hazards and risk
- Return items to the correct storage place after use
- Use equipment as directed by the manufacturer and/or policy. If using multiple items together, ensure they are safe and appropriate in use in this way
- We have risk assessments in place that cover equipment, services, events and outdoor activity involving technology. Please make yourself aware of these or ask for a briefing before commencing a task

Further reading:

- HSE Working safely with Display Screen Equipment
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/>



## Section 7: Accidents, First Aid, and Fault Reporting

Safety is everyone's responsibility and the Church has taken steps to minimise the chance of injury whilst on site. If an accident or injury does occur, it is important we all know what to do.

### Accidents & Injuries

- If you or someone you are with is injured or becomes sick, stop what you are doing and assess the situation
- If necessary, call 999 and ask for an ambulance. There is a phone in the Church office and the address is St. John's Church, Main Road, Southbourne, West Sussex, PO10 8LB.
- There are a number of trained first aiders on the team, if possible and appropriate please seek their help and/or guidance
- Administer First Aid as appropriate
- Seek medical attention/advice as appropriate
- Report ALL accidents and injuries, no matter how small, by contacting the office or wardens

### First Aid

- There are first aid boxes located outside the main kitchen, upstairs above the counter and near the main doorway inside the Church
- Please report any usage/missing items to the office or wardens
- There are a number of trained first aiders on the team, if possible and appropriate please seek their help and/or guidance

### Fault Reporting

- If you find an item damaged, or in need of repair or replacement please complete a 'Building Maintenance Form' Form' on the church website: <https://stjohnssouthbourne.churchsuite.com/-/forms/gffzhbgl>
- We strongly advise that you do not attempt to repair or rectify anything yourself, without consultation with an appropriate person/Church official
- If you find a defect that is a risk to others, please contact the office, wardens or vicar promptly. If possible, necessary, and safe to do so, please close or cordon off the area

Further reading:

## Section 8: Manual Handling

We have a duty to protect our staff and volunteers from the risk of injury from incorrect manual handling in the Church setting. Manual handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. A load can be an object, person or animal.

### Further Reading:

- HSE Manual handling at work
- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manual-handling/index.htm>