

Health and Safety

All churches need to be safe, for the protection of worshipers, visitors and any employees. Although churches do not generally present significant safety hazards, hazards must be identified, risks assessed, and action taken where necessary.

The Health and Safety Executive issues guidance on assessing risks. Where a church has employees and under certain other circumstances, various legal duties arise, details of which can be found in the HSE's publications. Our sponsors, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, have available guidance on church Health and Safety which you can access [here](#).

Recently, a person was tragically found dead from hypothermia on church premises after having been accidentally locked in. Those locking church premises – church buildings and halls – must make sure that proper checks are made of all areas to which the public have access, including WC cubicles. WC doors should be able to be opened from the outside in the case of an emergency. Where facilities are being provided or renewed, it may be desirable for a gap above or below the door or a vision panel to be provided to enable checks to be easily made.

Where a church is undertaking significant building works, duties arise under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007. Your architect or surveyor will be able to guide you on making the necessary appointments. Advice can be obtained [here](#).

The safety of gravestones in burial grounds has been a controversial issue in recent years, because of safety concerns following accidents. The Ministry of Justice has produced guidance that will help churches in assessing and managing the safety risk. You can download it [here](#).

Concern has recently been expressed at the need for safety inspections of lifting equipment in churches, such as winches that raise and lower chandeliers, font covers and sanctuary lamps. The Health and Safety Executive produces useful guidance on the relevant regulations, including the circumstances under which there is a need for regular inspections.

A church's inspecting architect/surveyor will be able to give guidance on particular situations.

Your church's insurer will be willing to give advice, both on specific issues and with general advice. Our sponsors, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group can provide advice on local Insurance Consultants and Surveyors (including a lookup tool to enable customers to find contact details for their local surveyor). You can access this guidance by [clicking here](#)