

Holy Trinity Church Rayleigh

Fire Safety Management for Events in Church

General

All gangways and exit routes including those at the front and back of the church must be kept clear of obstructions. No loose chairs, tables, children's pushchairs, standing congregation or wheelchairs may be allowed in these areas. Wheelchairs and pushchairs may only be positioned in the designated locations. If the blackout curtains are in use in the main hall then a designated person must be positioned close to each fire exit door and be ready to draw back the curtains in the event of an emergency. An 'emergency exit' sign must be attached to the curtains at the appropriate position.

Wind-up torches are provided at each fire exit and in the tower ringing chamber for use by sidesmen, welcomers and the Tower Captain in the event of an emergency and power failure. Reflective vests are provided for the sidesmen to use in an emergency. These are found in the plastic boxes on the top of the bookcases near the north and south doors of the church.

The safe capacity of the buildings must not be exceeded. This is limited to the number of people who can be seated in the pews and on any additional chairs that may be provided for large services in the music group area, in Alen Chapel and under the tower. For larger services, and if no seating is to be placed in that area, up to 30 people may be allowed to stand under the tower provided a route is kept clear to enable the west door to be opened quickly if required and to allow people who have been in the tower to exit safely.

For very popular services it will be necessary to arrange for an overflow service in the Parish Centre. Once the church is full to safe capacity, no one else can be allowed inside and the sidesmen should direct people to the Parish Centre via the external paths and Link corridor west entrance.

Seats should be fixed together in rows of between 4 – 12 seats, with no person more than 6 seats from a gangway. Gangways must be of adequate width and never less than 1.05 m wide.

Doors marked as Fire Doors must be kept closed when not in use.

Votive candles should only be used in the metal stand in the Alen Chapel and all candles should be extinguished when the church is locked.

Senior Sidesmen

Before each service ensure that fire exit routes are clear and that all designated fire exit doors can be opened. Captive bolts should be in the open position.

For larger services in the church where more than 150 people are expected, ensure that the west door is unlocked and the curtain drawn back, to provide an additional exit route.

Nominate a sidesman (or welcomer) to take charge of each fire exit in the event of an emergency evacuation and another person to contact the emergency services (see below).

Especially for large events, nominate a person to keep the access routes clear for the emergency services (see below).

In the event of a fire, raise the alarm and take control of the situation (see below).

Fire Emergency Plan

In an emergency the priority is to evacuate the building safely, as quickly as possible.

- No one should use fire fighting equipment unless they have been trained.
- No one should stop or return to collect personal belongings.
- No one should move deeper into the buildings – always move towards a place of safety.
- Calm evacuation is the safest, a crush may well lead to delay and injury.

In the church, anyone discovering a fire should immediately tell the Senior Sidesman on duty, who will raise the alarm by making an announcement, using the audio system if available.

The person appointed by the Senior Sidesman should use the fire alarm call point in the Link Corridor to sound the fire alarm and should call the Fire and Rescue Service using the office telephone if it is accessible; otherwise by mobile phone.

The address to give to the emergency services is:

***Holy Trinity Church
High Street
Rayleigh
SS6 8BA***

The designated sidesmen should collect a torch and reflective vest, then go quickly to their exit door and ensure that it is secured in the fully open position. If the lights have failed they should use the torch to illuminate the exit. However, if the fire is beyond your door, close and secure it.

Members of clergy, sidesmen, welcomers and churchwardens who are present who are not responsible for an exit door should assist the congregation in leaving the building calmly and quickly. Wheelchair users and people with poor mobility may need assistance.

The **assembly point** for the church and for the Cloister and Courtyard rooms and the Clergy Vestry is the High Street pavement in front of the church.

In the Parish Centre anyone discovering a fire should use one of the fire alarm call points to sound the fire alarm.

Group leaders/organizers should assist people to leave via the fire exit routes, closing the door of any room that is empty as they leave.

The group leader/event organizer should call the Fire and Rescue Service using the office telephone if it is accessible; otherwise by mobile phone if they or a member of their group has sounded the alarm.

The address to give to the emergency services is:

***Holy Trinity Parish Centre
Rectory Garth
Rayleigh SS6 8BB***

The assembly point for the Underspire, Yew Tree Room and Main Hall is in the car park.

Following an evacuation the senior sidesman or group leader/organizer should meet and brief the Fire and Rescue Service when they arrive. The sidesman or other person who was the last to leave any room and knows that it is empty should tell the person who is briefing the Fire and Rescue Service so that the information can be passed on.

The route from the car park entrance to the Parish Centre porch must be kept free as it may be needed by emergency vehicles. Sidesmen/ group leaders must keep people away from this area and should not allow it to become congested by people attempting to drive away.

It is important to be alert to the needs of people who have evacuated the building and care arrangements may be needed for vulnerable people, particularly in poor weather.

No one must re-enter the buildings or silence the fire alarm until the Fire and Rescue Service has given the all clear.