

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH RAYLEIGH

FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Objectives

- To help provide a safe place of work and a safe place for all visitors
- To reduce the risk of loss or damage to buildings and contents

Organisation and responsibilities

The organisation and responsibilities for fire safety are the same as those for other health and safety matters:-

Overall responsibility for fire safety rests with the Churchwardens who will ensure that suitable arrangements are in place.

The Team Rector and PCC have a general responsibility to ensure that adequate arrangements are put in place and that adequate resources are made available to ensure the safety of staff, voluntary helpers and those visiting the premises.

The Parish Facilities Manager is responsible to the PCC for the administrative management of the Parish, including ensuring that all aspects of health and safety legislation are fully implemented.

The role of the Health and Safety Coordinator is to advise and assist the Churchwardens, Team Rector, Parish Facilities Manager and PCC as regards fire safety.

All employees and voluntary helpers have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of fire safety arrangements.

Third party hirers are responsible for putting in place adequate arrangements to manage fire safety at their event or function

Fire Safety Management

A Fire Risk Assessment is carried out periodically, typically every three years, unless major changes have been made to the buildings or their operation. Significant findings are considered by the PCC.

The Parish Administrator checks the indicator panel of the fire warning system daily and checks that fire exits are available for use.

Monthly checks on the correct functioning of the fire alarm, emergency lighting and door release systems and correct positioning of fire fighting equipment and torches are carried out by the maintenance team and the results recorded in a log which is kept in the Parish Office.

Fire detection, fire alarm and emergency lighting systems and fire extinguishers are checked annually by specialist contractors. Portable electrical equipment is checked on a regular basis. The fixed wiring systems are checked at the recommended frequency by a suitably qualified contractor.

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 not occupied.

Training

Briefings on fire safety and the actions to be taken in the event of fire will be given periodically for clergy, members of staff, sidesmen, welcomers, bellringers, group leaders and others.

Services and events in the church

Before each service the senior sidesman must ensure that fire exit routes are clear and that all designated fire exit doors can be opened. For larger services in the church where more than 150 people are expected, the senior sidesman should also ensure that the west door is unlocked and the curtain drawn back, to provide an additional exit route.

Captive bolts should be in the open position. A sidesman or welcomer should be nominated to take charge of each fire exit in the event of an emergency evacuation.

The church aisles and the cross-gangways at the front and back of the church should be kept clear of obstructions. No loose chairs, tables, children's pushchairs, standing congregation or wheelchairs should be allowed in these areas.

Wheelchairs and pushchairs may only be positioned in the designated locations.

Wind up/ rechargeable 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.

The safe capacity of the church 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 should be allowed inside and the sidesmen should direct people to the Parish Centre via the external paths and Link corridor west entrance.

Services and events in the Parish Centre

The safe capacity of the various areas in the centre must not be exceeded. The following numbers may be used for guidance for all-seated or all-standing events. The numbers are not additive. Where there is a mix of sitting and standing, those in charge must assess the safe maximum number having regard to these figures and the additional guidance given below.

	All Seated	All Standing
Main Hall	150	300
Underspire	75	150
Yew Tree room	25	50
Cloister East	45	90
Cloister West	30	50
Courtyard room	35	50

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.

These capacities will need to be reduced if the space available is reduced by furniture etc.

All gangways and exit routes must be kept clear of obstructions. 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.

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 – they should always move towards a place of safety.

In the church, anyone discovering a fire should immediately tell one of the clergy or sidesmen who will raise the alarm using the audio system, if available, or by making an announcement.

A sidesman, welcomer or other person appointed by the Senior Sidesman on duty 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 and/or welcomers should go quickly to their exit door and ensure that it is fully opened. If the lights have failed they should use the torch provided by each exit to illuminate 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.

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

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. Group leaders or others who have been the last person to leave any room and know 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 needs to be kept free as it may be needed by emergency vehicles. Sidesmen/ group leaders should 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.