



# **Health & Safety Policy**

**Hazelbank Presbyterian Church  
Hazelbank Road  
Coleraine  
BT51 3DY**

**January 2010**

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1974 and the regulations made under it.

**To all employees, voluntary helpers and contractors:**

*The success of this policy will depend on your co-operation. It is therefore important that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for Health & Safety.*

The policy is in three sections:

**Section A** – General statement of policy

**Section B** – Organisation and responsibilities

**Section C** – Arrangements

Section A    General Statement of Policy

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, contractors and voluntary helpers, and to provide such information, training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We will also endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregation, visitors and others who may visit the church and associated buildings. The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements that we will make to implement the policy are set out below. The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to our buildings or activities. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed regularly and the appropriate changes made. In order to ensure that Health & Safety matters are kept constantly under review, employees and voluntary workers will be consulted on a regular basis in order to seek their views on Health & Safety matters.

Signed on behalf of the Session & Committee:

Alan TF Johnston  
Minister

Robert T Blair  
Clerk of Session

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010

## Section B Organisation and Responsibilities

### **1. Responsibility of the Session & Committee**

The Session & Committee has overall responsibility for Health & Safety and will ensure that arrangements are in place to satisfy Health & Safety Regulations and appropriate Codes of Practice. Specific responsibilities may be delegated to church personnel.

### **2. Responsibility of the Health & Safety Sub-Committee**

The Health & Safety Sub-Committee will ensure that the arrangements outlined in this policy are carried out and updated as necessary.

### **3. Responsibility of the Church Committee**

The Church Committee should be familiar with the Health & Safety Policy and has general responsibility to ensure that all aspects are adhered to including:

- a) Ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place.
- b) Ensure all church buildings, are clean and tidy.
- c) Ensure the church grounds are properly maintained.
- d) Ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required.
- e) Ensure that all plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained and in good condition and that all operators have received the appropriate training.

### **4. Responsibility of the Church Secretary**

The Church Secretary will ensure that an accurate list of the contact details of all leaders of organizations or users of the church or associated buildings is maintained and those persons receive a copy of the Health & Safety policy.

### **5. Responsibility of employees and voluntary workers**

All employees and voluntary workers have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this Health & Safety policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises. Employees and voluntary workers must therefore:

- a) Be familiar with the Health & Safety policy and arrangements and ensure they are observed.
- b) Comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures.
- c) Use protective clothing and equipment when it is required.
- d) Report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person.
- e) Report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards as soon as possible.
- f) Not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

## Section C Arrangements (implementation of the policy)

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise as far as is reasonably practicable risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregation, visitors and contractors.

### 1. Accidents and First Aid

First Aid boxes are located in:

Ministers Room  
Kitchen

Trained/qualified First Aiders are:

[Redacted]

The accident book is located in:

Church Office

All accidents and incidents must be entered in the accident book and the Minister advised.

### 2. Fire safety

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the **Fire Safety (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006**. In order to achieve this, we undertake the following:

- a) An assessment of the fire risks in the church and associated buildings. This is carried out either as a specific exercise or as part of our general Health & Safety risk assessments.
- b) A check that a fire can be detected in a reasonable time and that people can be warned
- c) A check that people who may be in the building can get out safely including if necessary the provision of emergency lighting and fire exit signage
- d) To provide reasonable fire fighting equipment
- e) A check that those in the building know what to do if there is a fire
- f) A regular check that our fire fighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that there is an annual maintenance contract in place with a reputable company.

#### 2.1 Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are in place throughout the church buildings and are checked and serviced regularly.

#### 2.2 Fire Alarm System

A Fire Alarm System is in place and is checked and serviced regularly.

#### 2.3 Evacuation Procedure

For Church Services or large gatherings our procedures for stewarding/evacuation are as follows:

- a) All designated fire doors must be unlocked before the service/event commences and be clearly marked as fire exits using the 'Running Man' symbol

- b) A check must be made that all doors can be opened
- c) A trained steward must be allotted to each door and have responsibility for persons in a specific part of the church
- d) Persons will assemble in the designated assembly point
- e) The emergency services must be contacted immediately (telephone located in the Church Office)

## **2.4 Evacuation**

All employees and voluntary workers should ensure they are familiar with escape routes and ensure these are kept clear and unobstructed.

## **2.5 If you discover a fire (no matter how small)**

- a) Immediately raise the alarm
- b) Telephone the emergency services
- c) Check the building for occupants
- d) Attack the fire if possible within your capability using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk
- e) If not possible to attack the fire or if you are unsure which fire extinguisher to use, assist in the evacuation of the building, ensuring that all doors are closed behind you. The general rule is people before property
- f) Evacuate to the designated assembly point
- g) Ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles

## **3 Electrical safety**

**3.1** A list of all portable electrical appliances must be maintained

**3.2** A visual inspection of plugs, cables and sockets will be carried out during yearly Risk Assessments to ensure that there are no loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed must be reported to a member of the Building Sub-Committee for action.

**3.3** Every year all our portable electrical equipment will be tested by a competent contractor (who is a member of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting), ECA (Electrical Contractors Association) or other approved body) to ensure that all appliances are safe. Any unsafe equipment must be safely disposed of immediately.

**3.4.** Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

- a) Visually check all electrical equipment before use
- b) Report all faults immediately to a responsible person
- c) Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment
- d) Portable electrical equipment brought onto church premises must be in a safe and serviceable condition with no loose wires, damage to plugs, casings etc.
  - e) Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods
  - f) Flexible cables should be so positioned and so protected that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage.

## **4. Hazardous Substances**

The Church Officer will maintain a list of all hazardous substances used in the church/hall. Where possible, the use of hazardous substances should be avoided. Where this is not possible, our safety arrangements are as follows:

For all hazardous substances, which include substances marked as 'harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, very toxic, flammable, highly flammable, extremely flammable, explosive, oxidising or dangerous for the environment', data sheets or product information provided by the manufacturers are used to determine the correct method of use, protective clothing needed, method of storage, and action to take in the event of an accident.

Do not mix chemicals.

Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

## **5. Safety of plant and machinery**

The responsible person will maintain a list of all items of plant and machinery. The procedures for checking and rules for use are as follows:

**5.1** Employees and voluntary workers must not operate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use

**5.2** Employees and voluntary workers must not ride on any parts of machinery not intended for that use

**5.3** Machinery must be switched off before any adjustments are made

**5.4** After carrying out maintenance and adjustments, all guards must be replaced before the machinery is used

**5.5** Before using any item of plant or machinery, a check must be made to ensure it is in a safe working condition, correctly adjusted, and there are no loose nuts, bolts or other defects

**5.6** The appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery

**5.7** Persons under the age of 18 may use hand tools only and are not permitted to operate any power driven item of plant or machinery

**5.8** Ladders may only be used when other equipment such as tower scaffolds or mobile elevated work platforms cannot be used and for work of short duration provided they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties

**5.9** Any defect and damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported to the responsible person

**5.10** All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained and a schedule kept of maintenance requirements.

## **6. Slips, trips and falls –condition of floors, steps and paths**

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, regular inspections will be carried out of:

**a)** All floors and stairs in the church and hall.

**b)** All paths and steps around the church buildings.

Particular note will be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths. Any defects will be reported to the Building Sub Committee who will arrange for repairs or remedial measures to be carried out.

**c)** During periods of frost/snow conditions all paths in use must be treated with approved grit.

## **7. Lighting**

In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, regular inspections will be completed to ensure that all lights in the church, halls and outside areas are in working order. Any faults found should be repaired promptly ensuring that the safety procedures are followed.

## **8. Working at high levels**

The appropriate training will be given to those involved in this type of maintenance.

## **9. Preparation of food**

**9.1** The appropriate regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs must be followed at all times.

**9.2** All food handlers must have received approved instruction and training and be supervised regularly.

**9.3** Before any preparation commences, all surfaces coming into contact with food must be properly prepared.

**9.4** Food stuffs may only be prepared in the designated areas.

## **10. Manual handling –lifting, carrying and moving loads**

**10.1** Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable

**10.2** Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible

**10.3** The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling

**10.4** Only those persons who have received the appropriate training are authorised to undertake manual handling tasks.

## **11. Display screen equipment**

Our policy is to assess the risks to all habitual users of computer workstations and to reduce those risks to the lowest level possible. The following factors will be considered when carrying out risk assessments:

Stability and legibility of the screen

Contrast and brightness of the screen

Tilt and swivel of the screen

Suitability of keyboards, desks and chairs

The workstation environment

The user friendliness of the software

Daily work routines will involve periods away from the screen. Where necessary risk assessments will be carried out by the responsible person.

## **12. Hazardous buildings/glazing**

**12.1** Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are inspected regularly.

**12.2** Any defects noted are immediately reported and the procedures put in hand for repairs

**12.3** Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out

**12.4** A check is made of all glazing in the buildings to ensure that any glass in windows below waist height and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height is of a safety material or is protected against breakage

## **13. Child protection**

A policy upholding our procedures is in place. The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to work with children. A permanent record will be maintained of all accidents involving children.

#### **14. Risk assessments/activities**

Risk assessments will be carried out on all areas of the church premises and all activities that carry a significant risk at regular intervals by a competent person in order to meet our obligations under The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

#### **15. Contractors**

Anyone entering church premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

**15.1** Have their own Health & Safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same

**15.2** Produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employers' liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained

**15.3** Comply with all the requirements of this Health & Safety policy and co-operate with the church officials in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation

**15.4** Where plant and machinery is brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show where necessary that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation

**15.5** Contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the church officials. However, responsibility will remain with the contractors

**15.6** All contractors will be given detailed instructions regarding the areas where they are permitted to work and the extent of the work they are authorised to undertake. This 'permit to work' will also specify any safety precautions they must undertake.

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