

NEWTON MEARNS PARISH CHURCH HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In relation to achieving compliance with the guidance issued by the Church of Scotland, there is a requirement to develop congregational arrangements for Health and Safety. In so doing, it is necessary to consider two important factors. Firstly, suitable provisions must be in place for Health and Safety, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for its management.

Secondly, it is important to develop and implement a Health and Safety Policy that demonstrates the congregation's commitment to Health and Safety and how health and safety arrangements will be implemented. The Health and Safety policy and identified provisions for health and safety form the foundations for our unique health and safety management system that reflects our building's use and the activities carried out by our congregation and in our role as facilities providers to external user groups.

GENERAL

Within the "Master Safety File" for Newton Mearns Parish Church we will identify/cover -

- the general principles of congregational health and safety
- who is responsible for congregational health and safety
- the roles and responsibility of the Financial Board (The Session), and
- how we will develop a congregational health and safety policy.

General Principles of Congregational Health and Safety

All employers must fulfil a number of obligations to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. Some of these obligations also extend to protecting members of the public, volunteers, contractors and anyone else who might access church buildings. For example, if any buildings are let to other organisations or groups, it is necessary to ensure that the condition of the buildings and any equipment provided are safe and suitable for use.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to:

- Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of all their employees
- Provide and maintain plans and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health
- Ensure that employees can use, handle, store, and transport articles and substances safely and without avoidable risk
- Provide information, instruction, training, and supervision to protect the health and safety of employees
- Provide employees with safe access and egress to their place of work without risk to health
- Provide and maintain a safe working environment which does not present a risk to health and have adequate facilities and arrangements in place for employee welfare at work.

Newton Mearns Parish Church must also ensure that all work activities are carried out in a way that does not pose a risk to the health and safety of anyone not in their employment. This is very important, as churches are places of worship and therefore open to members of the general public.

Employees also have specific duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people potentially affected by their actions at work. Employees must also cooperate with their employers to ensure that both they and their employers comply with any legislative requirements relevant to Health and Safety.

Although the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the principal legislation relevant to health and safety in the UK, congregations must also be aware of a number of other regulations to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and those who use their buildings.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Responsibility rests with all relevant officers and users of the premises. If guidance is required on any Health and Safety, matters please contact Anne Dunn via the church office.

The Roles and Responsibility of the Financial Board (The Session)

The Financial Board (The Session) will ensure prudent use of funds to control and manage Health and Safety Risks.

Developing Our Congregational Health and Safety Policy

We will develop our policy through -

- Keeping up to date with legislative change
- Maintaining/updating Risk Assessments as necessary
- Maintaining records of all relevant statutory inspection requirements and addressing any key recommended corrective actions identified therein.
- Undertaking bi-annual inspection of the premises and taking corrective action where necessary
- Defect/near miss reporting
- Liaison as appropriate with external providers such as insurers/specialist statutory inspection providers