

## Emergency planning Parish church



If a church is unfortunate enough to suffer a significant event, e.g. fire or flood, this could pose a major challenge for you to continue providing services to worshippers or others who may use the premises.

The existence of an emergency plan is an important feature to support recovery from a major event such as fire, flood or terrorism attack. The plan will hopefully never be used, but, if the worst happens your emergency plan should help minimise the impact and ensure your response is quicker and more effective.

It is important to keep the plan simple so it is easy to follow – it doesn't have to be complicated. The plan is a compilation of information and instructions to assist you if an adverse event occurs.

We have created this guidance note to assist you. By following the simple steps set out in the guidance you will be able to develop a plan to meet the needs of your church.

### The importance of being prepared

Spending some time now developing a plan will help you respond more quickly to a major incident and help protect your reputation.

Once written, regularly review the plan to ensure it remains up-to-date. This will ensure you are well-prepared to respond to any future events that could impact your mission and activities.

The templates included in this pack will provide a framework to support your planning and response.

### Risk Advice Line

Should you have any additional questions on this topic or other risk-related matters, as a valued Ecclesiastical customer you can contact us through our Risk Advice Line on

**0345 600 7531**

(Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding bank holidays)

and one of our in-house risk professionals will be able to assist.

Alternatively, you can email us at

[risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com](mailto:risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com)

and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

## It is important to keep a copy off-site and make colleagues aware of where it is located

It is also recommended you check with your Insurer that cover under the Loss of Income Section of your Insurance Policy adequately meets your financial needs to support continuity of service.

There are 3 steps to completing your plan.

## Step 1 – Threat assessment

The aim of this step is to identify the key threats facing your church and to put in place appropriate measures to reduce the impact of the threat occurring.

### Areas to consider

- **What are the key property threats facing your church e.g. fire, flood and theft?**
- **Review existing precautions to manage these threats and decide if additional measures are needed**
- **Are the additional measures identified affordable and realistic to implement in a church environment?**

### Example measures:

#### Fire

- Complete periodic inspection and maintenance of the fixed electrical installation.
- Implement a risk based portable electrical appliance testing (PAT) programme.
- Review your fire risk assessment annually.
- Ensure an annual service of fire extinguishing appliances.
- Consider electrical surge overvoltage protection if you have a lightning conductor.

#### Flood/Water Damage

- Have a supply of portable flood barriers and sandbags available.
- Fit a frost thermostat device to your heating system to ensure the building temperature stays above freezing.
- Ensure a programme of regular gutter clearance is in place.

#### Theft/Criminal Damage

- Ensure the church is locked at night.
- Keep matches, straw, petrol and combustible items away from the church.
- Ensure suitable locks are fitted to external doors.
- Store valuable portable items in a secure area if the church is open during the day.

It is important at this stage to consider what key services or functions you would need to maintain should a significant event occur, and what resources are needed to deliver these at a minimum level e.g. alternative accommodation and key equipment to support resumption of worship. This will ensure that services are back up and running as quickly as possible.

## Step 2 – Incident planning management

This step is to create an emergency plan to assist the church in the immediate period after a serious incident. The safety and welfare of people will be your initial focus.

The immediate response to an adverse event can have a significant impact on the speed and effectiveness of recovery of your church.

Your response should include the following:

- Secure the building to reduce the possibility of additional damage or injury e.g. further damage caused by weather events to an already damaged or open property and the protection/removal of valuable items.
- Communicate and cooperate with those who need to be aware of the event (including your Insurer). It is important to record emergency contact details electronically and within your emergency plan.
- Some organisations agree to enter into informal partnerships arrangements where you agree to support each other following an adverse event e.g. you may wish to share facilities with other churches in your locality.
- Arrangements to keep key services up and running where possible.

#### You should have the following documentation available:

- Emergency key contact list. The list should record key people associated with the building i.e. those people you need to inform of the adverse event and those from whom you may need assistance. See appendix 1.
- Building plan. The plan can be developed from an existing plan or drawn free hand. It is important to show exits, doors, electric boxes, gas meters and key architectural features e.g. monuments/screens and portable contents that you wish to protect. The plan should be laminated. One copy should be stored off site and one copy in your emergency box (see below) for use by the emergency services who attend. See appendix 2
- Create an emergency box to assist in managing the event and response measures required. The box should contain the following:
  - A plan of the building – see above.
  - A salvage inventory list – see appendix 3. The focus should be on saving items that may have significant monetary or historical value to the church e.g. records, monuments, silverware, textiles, fixtures or other valuable portable items.
  - Salvage cards. For each entry on the salvage inventory list a salvage card need to be created – see appendix 4. Size/handling information recorded will assist the emergency services.
  - Terrier or Inventory of church contents.
  - Insurance documents.
  - Emergency contact list.

## Step 3 – Review plan and upkeep

Review your plans to ensure they are relevant. Changes identified as part of your review should be incorporated into a revised plan.

### Desktop exercise

- A desktop review/practice of your plan can be very beneficial. This involves working with church members who will be supporting the plan should an adverse event occur. It is important you ask key questions: What if a fire or flood were to occur? Does the existing plan support a suitable response to this type of adverse event to minimise the impact to church activities? If you identify any shortcomings, the plan should be adjusted as appropriate.
- You should meet on at least an annual basis and review response options to ensure they are still valid in the light of any material changes e.g. building alterations or new assets acquired that require protection.
- It is important to record any key decisions taken in the event log.

### Upkeep

- It is important to ensure details (especially contact details) are reviewed regularly and updated. If details are not updated it will be extremely difficult to implement the plan.
- Review your plans to ensure they are relevant. Changes identified as part of your review should be incorporated into a revised plan.

## Further information

1. [www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/disaster-prevention-and-management](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/disaster-prevention-and-management)
2. [www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/emergency-and-fire/emergency-planning-advice](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/emergency-and-fire/emergency-planning-advice)

Please find attached a worked example to assist you.

## Worked example

### Emergency Plan for St Peter's church – Appledown

Business Continuity Team Member	Example measures:	Contact Details
John Lane	Churchwarden	07779 632 456

## Step 1 – Threat assessment

Threat	I can reduce likelihood by	Implementation target date	Completed
Electrical fire from defective electrical installation	Periodic wiring check (last checked 2017)	2021	No
Lightning strike causes fire damage	Regular inspection/maintenance of lightning protection system (last inspection 2018)	2020	Yes
River Wigston Flood	Implementing flood plan	Done	Yes
Water pipe burst causing water damage to nave	Installing frost stat to heating system and lagging pipes.	2020	No

## Step 2 – Incident management planning

- Secure the building
- Communicate with key people
- Train staff/volunteers on measures to be taken in the event of a serious event
- Keep key services up & running (see example below)
- Liaise with any neighboring churches who could provide support

Core Activity	Resources	Response Time
Provide weekly services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Alternative location e.g. village hall</li><li>● Hire fees £30 per week</li><li>● Churchwarden to organise</li></ul>	7 days
Youth work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Alternative location e.g. village hall</li><li>● Hire fees £30 per week</li><li>● Youth leader to organis</li></ul>	14 days

### Step 3 – Review plan and upkeep

Last desktop exercise date .....

#### Improvement Areas

Issue identified from review/ desktop exercise	Action required	Date for implementation	Action Owner	Done

Next desktop exercise date to be completed by.....

Next planned review be completed by.....

Ensure contact lists are in printed format and easily available.

#### Event Log

Date/time	Action taken and why	Decision taken and why

## Appendix 1 - Emergency key contact list e.g. church officials, architect, builder, plumber, electrician etc.

Name	Contact No
Vicar	07771 833 333 or 01453 11111
Churchwarden	07771 902 6530 or 01453 222222
Churchwarden	07771 902 6531 or 01453 222223
Church Treasurer	07771 902 6534 or 01453 222224
Church Secretary	07771 902 6535 or 01453 222225
Archdeacon	07771 902 6536 or 01453 222226
Diocese	07771 902 6537 or 01453 222227
Insurer	07771 902 6547 or 01453 222237
Church Architect	07771 902 6538 or 01453 222227
Key Contractor	07771 902 6539 or 01453 222228
Key Contractor	07771 902 6541 or 01453 222229
Utility Company	07771 902 6542 or 01453 222232

## Appendix 2 – Building plan



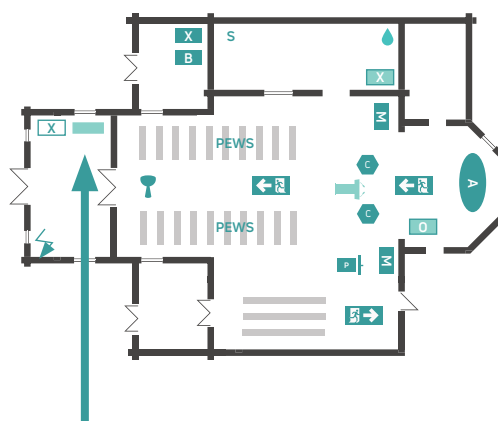
### Appendix 3 – Salvage inventory list

	Object Type	Object Description	Priority	Floor	Position	Storage/Action
1	Furniture	Oak Chest	1	Ground	Adjacent to Tower	Vicarage Garage
2	Metal	Altar Cross & Candlesticks	1	Ground	Altar Table - Chancel	Vicarage Garage
3	Metal	Silver Communion Plate	1	Ground	Vestry - Cupboard	Vicarage Garage
4	Metal	Thomas Monument	2	Ground	Adjacent to Vestry	Cover with protective sheeting

### Appendix 4 – Salvage cards

For example, chest containing historic records

- Item - carved oak chest
- Current location - north transept
- Description - stone monument with canopies
- Fixed - yes
- Weight - significant (may require team lifting)
- Security - none
- Relocate to - Vicarage



Thomas Monument

- Item - Thomas Monument
- Current location - Chancel arch
- Description - stone monument with canopies
- Fixed - yes
- Weight - irremovable
- Security - none
- Location: protect in situ - use fire resisting curtain





This guidance is provided for information purposes and is general and educational in nature. It should not be used as a substitute for taking professional advice on specific issues and should not be taken as providing legal advice on any of the topics addressed.



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