

St Thomas of Canterbury Woodford Green

Fire Safety Policy

Introduction

Fire has a unique capacity to threaten life, damage property, harm the environment and compromise our mission. Accordingly, we are committed to taking reasonable and necessary measures to prevent fire and protect life safety in the event of fire in the context of the activities of St Thomas'. The OFM and Parish Council have legal obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO) and other relevant legislation. The FSO applies to our non-domestic properties and some domestic premises where there are common parts, substantial mixed use and where the property includes 2 or more domestic premises units e.g., buildings converted into flats.

The Responsible Person

The Parish Priest and Guardian are the Responsible Person for fire safety in the context of the FSO

Duties of the Local Responsible Person

- Carry out a fire risk assessment and keep it up to date
- Implement reasonable and necessary measures to:
 - Control fire hazards and reduce the spread of fire.
 - Provide adequate means of escape.
 - Provide means of fighting fires.
 - Provide adequate means of warning occupants in case of fire.
- Develop procedures in the event of fire, train such procedures to key personnel e.g. clergy, employees and volunteer workers and communicate such procedures to other relevant persons e.g. contractors, people hiring our premises and members of the public. (See Emergency procedures below)
- Where the premises are occupied by third party duty holders e.g. part of the premises is leased or licensed to another employer, contractors, ensure that there is adequate co-operation and communication to maintain fire safety standards for all occupants.
- Undertake regular fire safety checks, maintain installed fire safety systems/ equipment and keep records to demonstrate compliance.

Emergency procedures

Emergency procedures must be specific to the building to be evacuated in the event of fire. This means giving due consideration to the relevant factors including but not limited to:

- The number of occupants

- Vulnerable occupants e.g. disabled occupants, people unfamiliar with the building, people who are alone in the building or in a remote location, people who are asleep.
- Separated family groups
- Occupants on a balcony or gallery
- The available means of escape e.g. number, location and size of fire exit doors, inward opening doors, fire exit doors fitted with locks which require unlocking

Outline emergency fire procedure:

If you discover a fire:

Raise the alarm according to the specific arrangements in your premises e.g. shout FIRE, activate the nearest fire alarm call point etc.

Remember to warn occupants of neighbouring building(s) who are likely to be at risk if the fire spreads

Call the fire brigade by dialling 999 from the nearest available telephone. If this is a mobile phone give the full postal address of the premises and, if asked, confirm that there is evidence of fire (e.g., smell or sight of smoke and flames).

Clear the building and switch off any plant or equipment which might make the fire worse e.g., cooking equipment, ventilation equipment but without taking personal risk

Only attack the fire if you have been trained to do so using the appliances provided, but without taking personal risk.

Evacuate the building by the nearest available exit to the fire assembly point which will be a place where people will be safe from the fire

Try to close all doors and windows behind you as you leave, without taking personal risk

DO NOT STOP TO COLLECT PERSONAL BELONGINGS. AWAIT THE FIRE BRIGADE AND

DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD IT IS SAFE TO DO SO

Additional emergency fire procedures may need to be developed to account for specific risks or where occupants cannot easily be accommodated into the general emergency procedures e.g. personal emergency evacuation procedures (PEEPs) for disabled occupants.

Emergency fire procedures will be clearly displayed. As a minimum this should be on fire exits and at fire points (location of fire extinguishers and fire alarm break glass call points). Industry standard notices can be purchased from safety signage suppliers.

Fire incidents

Small fires which did not require attendance by the fire and rescue service should be recorded locally and must be reported to the Parish Office Manager.

Fire incidents which involved attendance by the fire and rescue service must be reported to the Health & Safety Committee.

Enforcement Activity

The Local Authority Fire Officer may visit premises for a number of reasons such as:

- following a fire incident ;
- a routine compliance visit; or
- as a result of a complaint or concern from a third party e.g. member of the public

Any visits by the Fire Officer must be reported to the Health and Safety Committee.

Competence

The Department of Communities and Local Government Fire Safety Risk Assessment guidance defines competence as:

“A person with enough training and experience, knowledge and other qualities to enable them properly to assist in undertaking the preventative and protective measures.”

Professionally competent fire risk assessors have been appointed by the OFM and any report will be presented to the Health & Safety Committee to agree actions and keep matters under review.

Fire Risk Assessment Programme

The fire risk assessment programme follows a three year cycle (unless a material change occurs e.g., alteration to the layout of the premises, change of use). Material changes MUST be notified to the Health and Safety Committee.

Year 1 2024 – Fire risk assessment completed by an authorised OFM fire risk assessors.

Year 2- The local Responsible Person usually undertakes a review of the fire risk assessment and ensures follow up action has been progressed in line with the recommendations of the fire risk assessor. Where there is a cause for concern e.g., follow up action cannot be confirmed to have been implemented or the last risk rating for the premises was substantial or intolerable, the authorised diocesan fire risk assessor may be involved in the annual review process.

Year 3 – The fire risk assessment is undertaken by an authorised fire risk assessor.

Information and Training

Relevant safety induction training, which includes emergency fire procedures, should be provided to all clergy, paid or volunteer workers, hirers/ licensees, contractors, and visitors. Training to support the local Responsible Person and those who assist them in the discharge of their fire safety duties will be provided and repeated as necessary. Local Responsible Persons, or a nominated representative, are expected to attend such training. The local Responsible Person may identify and arrange additional fire safety training where they consider this necessary.

The policy will be reviewed by the Health & Safety Committee bi-annually.