

London Diocesan Advisory Committee



DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is vital to ensure, as far as is practically possible, the health, safety and welfare of all users of and visitors to your church building. In the unfortunate event of an emergency affecting a church building, it is essential that an appropriate procedure is already in place to deal with the situation. Emergency situations may be varied in nature and can range from fire to flooding and explosions to general building hazards.

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2. THREE KEY STEPS

The three key steps that need to be taken are: risk assessment; emergency planning; and recovery planning. Each of these steps is referred to below and links are given where appropriate. This document concentrates on the second of these steps: emergency planning.

2.1 Risk Assessments

For further advice on this element please see **Fire Safety in Churches** and **Fire Safety Flow Chart**, also in [DAC In Depth Advice](#). There are other risks in addition to fire, such as asbestos, general health and safety and those issues outlined in [Section 1](#), which should also be taken into consideration either in one combined risk assessment or in separate risk assessments.

2.2 Emergency Planning

Your risk assessment(s) will determine all measures which you may require to take to reduce or manage your risks. These measures will be particular to your own church building. In particular, you are likely to require a written evacuation plan, covering such matters as assembly points; identification of key escape routes; means of warning of emergency; and means of liaison with emergency services. For further detail see [Section 3](#).

2.3 Recovery Planning

You should refer to your Archdeacon, the Care of Churches Team (020 7932 1230) and the Diocesan Registry (020 7593 5015) for advice and assistance on what to do, in the period following immediate emergency action.

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3. EMERGENCY PLANNING

It is important that you produce and display basic advice as to the standard procedure and precautionary steps that should be followed in the event of an emergency situation occurring.

3.1 Action Plan in Emergency

(a) An Action Plan in Emergency should be put together. A sample version can be found in [Action Plan](#). This is a printer friendly document which can be filled in, using a permanent marker, with details particular to your own church. Before entering any personal details, you should obtain the agreement of those concerned. Please note that in point 3 of the

action plan, you should write the number of your principal electricity supplier. This document should be mounted in a clearly visible position close to the main entrance of the church.

(b) Note that additional steps are likely to be required of individual churches, dependent on the outcome of your church's risk assessment(s).

3.2 Steps to be taken in emergency after alerting the Emergency Services

(a) A document should also be put together providing details of those people/bodies that should be contacted after the emergency services have been alerted to an incident.

(b) A sample document outlining the level of information required can be found in [Steps to be Taken](#). Again, this is a printer friendly document so it is best to use a permanent marker pen to fill in the spaces provided with the appropriate details. Please note that office numbers should be used not home numbers.

(c) Two copies each of Action Plan Stage 1 and Stage should be kept: laminated copies should be mounted close to the main entrance of the church; another copy of each should be kept off site with a churchwarden. Laminated copies may be obtained from the Care of Churches Team.

3.3 Plan of the Church

(a) A properly put together architectural plan of the church and any attached buildings will be of great use to the emergency services. A copy of the plan should be mounted in a clearly visible position near to the main entrance of the church (next to the [Action Plan](#) document).

(b) The plan should accurately depict the church, showing all walls, doorways and staircases and any obstacles sited in the main internal walking route. Any upper levels or buildings attached to the church should also be shown in plan.

(c) The location of the following, where applicable, should be clearly marked:

- Emergency exits
- Emergency assembly point(s)
- Fire extinguishers (including their type) and other firefighting equipment
- Electricity inlet (fuse box)
- Gas inlet
- Hose reels and dry risers
- Mains water stop cock
- External water mains in the curtilage of the church

- Pressurised cylinders
- Any flammable or other hazardous substances

(d) Any areas such as kitchens which may be the site of a hazard, or may from time to time contain hazardous substances, should also be highlighted.

(e) A copy of the plan should always be given to a nominated salvage person (usually a churchwarden) so that he/she can identify to the emergency services where articles of value are situated in the event of an emergency.

(f) You may wish to consult your Quinquennial Inspector (QI), should you require assistance in putting together an appropriate architectural plan.

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4. INSURANCE

(a) You should take cognisance of your church building insurance company's published advice and always adhere to the conditions of your insurance policy.

(b) You should also note that your church may have a copy of a Health and Safety File under the Construction, Design, and Management Regulations 1994. If so, a copy of the file should be kept in a location other than the church. The insurance company should be advised as to the location of both this file and the Asbestos Report (if not part of the Health and Safety File) in the event of an emergency. If you cannot locate your copy of the Asbestos Report contact the Diocese of London's Director of Property's PA on (020) 7932 1215 or the Care of Churches Team on (020) 7932 1230.

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5. GENERAL POINTS

(a) Remember that general good maintenance and housekeeping will assist in mitigating the consequences of any future cases of disaster affecting your church premises.

(b) This guidance is only intended to assist with situations arising from your church buildings. Instructions from the emergency services should be sought regarding any situation affecting the wider vicinity, such as a terrorism incident. In such cases, churches may be able to provide valuable help and comfort to those affected – as they did during the July

7th bombings – in consultation with the advice and instructions of the civil authorities.

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6. USEFUL LINKS

(a) The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority can provide further detailed information. Their website is www.london-fire.gov.uk.

(b) The Care of Churches Team (020 7932 1230) is available to help with enquiries about churches generally as well as the subject of this guidance paper.

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**Diocese of London
Care of Churches Team
September 2007**

ACTION PLAN IN EMERGENCY

Key information

Name of Church:

Address:

Plan of action

1. Raise the alarm

Raise the alarm and make sure that you and others around you leave by the nearest safe route.

Do not re-enter the building until given the all clear by the emergency services.

Location of fire alarm call point(s):

Location of nearest assembly point:

2. Call the emergency services on 999 or 112

When asked, be ready to state whether you require the fire brigade, police or ambulance services.

Location of nearest public telephone:

3. If utilities are affected contact the supplier

For gas, call National Grid: 0800 111 999

For flooding, call Thames Water: 08459 200800

For electrical faults, call:

4. Ensure there is clear access for emergency vehicles

5. Contact at least one of the following:

Incumbent Name:

Tel:

Church Warden Name:

Tel:

Church Warden Name:

Tel:

STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN EMERGENCY **AFTER ALERTING THE EMERGENCY SERVICES**

As soon as the emergency services have been alerted to an incident, there are several people/bodies that need to be contacted and alerted to the situation. The order in which these bodies should be contacted will vary according to each individual circumstance.

1. Your Archdeacon

Name:

Tel:

2. Your Quinquennial Inspector (QI)

Name:

Tel:

3. The Care of Churches Team (which includes the Diocesan Advisory Committee office) and the **Diocesan Registry**, for advice on the building and faculties.

Care of Churches Team tel: (020) 7932 1230

Diocesan Registry tel: (020) 7593 5110

4. Your insurance company, who are likely to want to visit the site. Do not carry out works without the agreement of the insurance company.

Name:

Tel:

5. The Local Authority

Name:

Tel:

6. The Health and Safety Executive

Tel: (020) 7556 2100

7. It is useful to keep handy details of local contractors, who can be called upon in the event of an emergency.

Name:

Tel:

Name:

Tel: